

9-2013

MAR 101L.01M: Introduction to Media Arts

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Recommended Citation

Murphy, Michael R., "MAR 101L.01M: Introduction to Media Arts" (2013). *Syllabi*. 509.
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MAR 101L (01)

Introduction to Media Arts

Autumn 2013 - The University of Montana, Missoula

Professor Michael Murphy - McGill 229

Office Hours: M 2-3:30 W 1-3 R 9:30-11

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The **purpose** of the course is to introduce you to the analytical processes involved in “reading” film narrative. We will cover three major areas: fictional, documentary and experimental, as well as introducing the basic concepts behind media advertising. On a broader level this course delivers experiences that should help you expand your ability to think creatively, develop your ideas through collaborative and lateral thinking processes, articulate core meaning and thematic concepts in existing films and your own work, and finally, begin to understand the context behind your personal point-of-view and to look empathetically at other global cultures whose context may be quite different from your own.

GOALS

I. FILM LANGUAGE AND STRUCTURES

A successful student will be able to understand and clearly articulate their understanding of film stories through the following modes of analysis:

- THE THREE LEVELS OF READING
- THE FOUR COMPONENT AREAS
 - Dramatic
 - Filmic
 - Structural
 - Literary
- GENRE DESCRIPTION/ CLASSIC PLOT MODELS
- NORTHRUP FRYE’S MODES OF NARRATIVE (HERO)
- ROBERT MCKEE’S STORY TRIANGLE
- FOUR MODES OF DOCUMENTARY

II. THE WORLD INSIDE—YOUR POINT-OF-VIEW AND CANONICAL STATE

Through these principles you will be able to articulate the nature of your “world view” as well as themes, characters and types of stories that might emerge from someone like yourself.

III. THE WORLD OUTSIDE—THE DEVELOPMENT OF EMPATHY

By focusing on other cultures and their stories you will be able to compare and contrast your context with theirs and therefore open up your mind to what stories might mean to them and you.

IV. THE ESSENTIAL CORE—THEMATIC RESONANCE

If humankind is essentially a meaning-making life form then you should leave this class with a much wider range of understanding in relation to the nature of core.

TEXT & MATERIALS

There is no required text for the class, but the class requires viewing of films that are to be your responsibility. This means having access to them via Netflix, iTunes, Amazon, or some other source from which you can access the materials. The rest of the material is available in documents and video packages that will be found on our Moodle shell.

MAR 101L Points Distribution	
Assignments (12 @ 3pts.)	36 pts.
Weekly Forum (12 @ 3pts.)	36 pts.
Core Forum (weekly)	8 pts.
On-line Mid-term Essay Test	10 pts.
Online Final Multiple-Choice Test	10 pts.
Total Points for the semester	100 pts.

Weekly Instructions

There are a total of fifteen Weekly Units that are to be completed in sequential order. Each unit has video material, documents and, most weeks, a movie to view. This is not a small amount of material so the best advice I have is: ***get started on your work early in the week and make sure to get movies lined up in advance!***

For the sake of consistency, each week will be structured in a similar manner:

Materials to study:

- 1) Murph Videos:** These instructional mini-lectures are from 3-6 minutes in length and get at the main focus of a given week's work. I highly recommend viewing each one at least twice—once before you read the week's documents and then once after!
- 2) Weekly documents:** These offer more detail than be contained in a short video and include the major vocabulary and concepts for the class.
- 3) Film Clips:** Sections of films referenced in the class live here in for purposes of re-viewing them.
- 4) Additional Resources:** This area gives you the opportunity to expand your research into film and additional topics generated through assignments and forums.

Weekly Activities:

- 1) Assignments (3pts. each)** Each week will have a written assignment due by Saturday night of that week by 11:55 pm. The criteria for each week and length of the assignment will be found through the link in the Assignment area for the week.

Please Note:

When up-loading assignments please use the ***following file formats only:***
.doc .docx .pdf .jpeg or quicktime media files

****IMPORTANT****

When up-loading assignments use the following **format for file name:**

 Lastname_Assignment#.format

Example: My first assignment for unit one should look like:

 Murphy_assignment1.doc

- 2) Weekly Forums (3pts. each)** ***Each week*** of the course, a discussion question will be posted for your response. A guide, clearly describing how you will be assessed, is

available in the Syllabus area. This document and should be **thoroughly reviewed!** The content of your response should reflect a thorough study of that week's videos and reading materials. Discussions, like Assignments are *due by Saturday night at 11:55pm for the week assigned*

3) Core Forum (8pts.): This forum spans the entire semester. A grade will be entered at Mid-term and at the end of the semester, with total of 4pts available for each grading period. The forum will deal with issues and questions generated by viewing the series: *The Story of Film: An Odyssey*, as well as questions generated by the instructor and students.

There are only two events that separate from this pattern:

Online Tests

- 1) **Mid-term short answer essay test (10pts.)**
- 2) **Final multiple-choice test (10pts.)**

!!!DEADLINES AND LATE WORK!!!

!!!! Each week's work is to be completed DURING THAT WEEK! IF YOU MISS AN ASSIGNMENT OR FORUM DUE DATE THEN YOU WILL RECEIVE NO CREDIT. The only possibility for turning in work late is with Weekly Assignments. If you turn an ASSIGNMENT in during the week after its due date you may receive up to 50% of the points allotted for that assignment. However NO ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THAT "GRACE WEEK."

A NOTE ON VIEWING FILMS!! VERY IMPORTANT!!

We are in a brave new world of the film "experience." All of the movies we will be viewing this term were intended to be watched in the company of strangers, in a darkened theater. YOU, however, can watch them on your computer, and if you have a laptop, tablet, or smartphone, you could be just about anywhere – your livingroom, a café, the back of a car – and along with this comes infinite distractions. Out of respect for the films, filmmakers, and your own education (which, after all, is a big part of what we are all here for), please be a conscientious viewer. Minimize your distractions: turn off your phone, close the door, dim the lights. Do your best to watch these films without interruptions, as they were intended to be seen. You'll be glad you did!

ATTENDANCE AND THE ACADEMIC CODE

Each week's work is to be completed DURING THAT WEEK! *IF YOU MISS A FORUM DEADLINE, YOU WILL RECEIVE NO CREDIT.* If you turn an ASSIGNMENT in during the week after it is due, you may receive up to (i.e., a MAXIMUM) of 50% of the points for that assignment. However, NO ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THAT "GRACE WEEK." All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://www.umt.edu/SA/vpsa/index.cfm/page/1339>

STUDENTS NEEDING ACCOMMODATIONS SHOULD INFORM THE INSTRUCTOR & T.A.

Students with disabilities who may need accommodations for this class are encouraged to notify the instructor or TA and contact the Disability Services for Students (DSS) early in the semester so that reasonable accommodations may be implemented as soon as possible. Students may contact DSS by visiting the Center (located in the Lommasson Center Room 154) or by phoning 243-2243 (voice) or e-mailing dss@umontana.edu). All information will remain confidential.

MEDIA ARTS 101L WEEKLY SCHEDULE

<p>Week #1 Aug. 26</p>	<p>Story, Culture and Meaning-Making (What is Core?) Read: Word-Docs: Story and Meaning-making, 3 Levels of Reading, 4 C's Extended Analysis View: Murph Videos 1-2-3 ("Intro Core," "3 Levels of Reading," "The Canonical State,") and the 4-Triangle/Square Animation</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> Forum #1: Triangle/Square Animation—Story, yes or no? Assignment #1: Your Own Canonical Story</p>
<p>Week #2 Sep. 2</p>	<p>Editing: The Language of Film (Nature of Language) Read: Word-Docs: Editing and Film Grammar, Pudovkin v. Eisenstein, Shot Sizes, Aspect Ratio View: Murph Video 5—"Editing" ++The Story of Film: An Odyssey, Ep. 1: "The Birth of Cinema"</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> Forum #2: Mamet's "Where do we put the camera?" exercise Assignment #2: Find Pudovkin v. Eisenstein clips and articulate</p>
<p>Week #3 Sep. 9</p>	<p>Genre, Plot, Structure (Development and Lateral Thinking) Read: Word-Docs: Genre + Plot Types, Categories of Hero, Characteristics of Film Noir, The Ugly Duckling View: Murph Videos 6-7-8 ("Narrative, Plot, Story" "Genre", "Development/Plot Types"), ++The Story of Film: An Odyssey, Ep. 4 "The Arrival of Sound" Film: <i>Brick</i> (2005) dir. Rian Johnson,</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> Forum #3: <i>The Ugly Duckling</i>: Genre Scenarios in groups Assignment #3: Identify the elements of Film Noir in <i>Brick</i>. Also, describe the protagonist in terms of Frye's Categories of Hero.</p>
<p>Week #4 Sep. 16</p>	<p>The Whole Story—Structural Components (In Film/In Life) Read: Word-Doc: 4 C's Component Area. McKee Triangle View: Murph Video 9: Structure and Patterns Film: <i>Casablanca</i> (1942) dir. Michael Curtiz</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> Forum #4: <i>Casablanca</i> and the world of structure Assignment #4: Pick a character and articulate their character development and how that is related to structure.</p>
<p>Week #5 Sep. 23</p>	<p>The Whole Story—Dramatic Action Components (Relationships) Read: Word-Doc: Formalism v. Realism pt.1 View: Murph Video 10: "Formalism/Realism" Film: <i>Wendy and Lucy</i> (2008) dir. Kelly Reichardt</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> Forum #5: How is <i>Wendy and Lucy</i> different from <i>Casablanca</i> in terms of what we've learned so far? Assignment #5: a) (due this week) Describe a scene from your life and</p>

	<p>discuss it in terms of dramatic action.</p> <p>b) (due in two weeks) Rework your Canonical Story using Genre and 3-act structure</p>
<p>Week #6 Sep. 30</p>	<p>The Whole Story—Literary Components (Metaphor) Read: Word-Doc: Formalism v. Realism pt. 2 View: Murph Video 10: "Formalism/Realism" Film: <i>The Piano</i> (1993) dir. Jane Campion</p> <hr/> <p>Forum #6: Bring Formalist clips to the Forum and discuss with classmates Assignment #6: View <i>The Piano</i>, analyze a scene for Dramatic Action and shots.</p>
<p>Week #7 Oct. 7</p>	<p>MID-TERM WRITING: ASSIGNMENT #5 Developed and Due! ONLINE MID-TERM SHORT FORM ESSAY!</p>
<p>Week #8 Oct. 17</p>	<p>Beyond the Classical—New Structures, Principles and Cultures Read: Docs: "Culture, Philosophy and the Canonical State." View: Murph Video 11: "Context, Culture and Form" View: "What is Neorealism," by kogonada for <i>Sight & Sound</i>: https://vimeo.com/68514760 Murph Video 11: "Post WWII Canonical Shifts: Japan" ++<i>The Story of Film: An Odyssey</i>, Ep. 5: "Post-war Cinema" Film: <i>Ikiru</i>, dir. Akira Kurosowa (1952)</p> <hr/> <p>Forum #7: a) What is the history of Japan that led to the creation of the film? b) If you were to write a social drama based in Realism what issues would you want to explore? Assignment #7: Analyze <i>Ikiru</i> from the point of view of McKee's Triangle Frye's Hero Types, Genres, Plots and Structures</p>
<p>Week #9 Oct. 21</p>	<p>Beyond the Classical—Trends in Formalism (The Existential Auteur) Read: Doc: "The Auteur and Subjectivity" View: Murph Video 12: "The Formalist Auteur and Existentialism" ++<i>The Story of Film: An Odyssey</i>, Ep. 7: "European New Wave" Film: <i>Vertigo</i>, dir. Alfred Hitchcock (1958)</p> <hr/> <p>Forum #8: What are unique themes from your life that might be interesting in a film story? What did Hitchcock use in his film that was personal? Assignment #8: View <i>Vertigo</i>, and analyze a scene for D.A and shots</p>
<p>Week #10 Oct. 28</p>	<p>From Classical to Post-Modern—(Self-Reflexivity and New Structures) Read: Doc: "Post-modernism and Self-Reflexivity in Film" View: Murph Video 13: "The Post-Modern in Film: Irony Takes Hold?"</p>

	<p>++<u>The Story of Film: An Odyssey</u>, Ep. 14: "New American Independents and the Digital Revolution"</p> <p>Film: <i>Run, Lola, Run</i> (1998) dir. Tom Tykwer</p> <p>-----</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Forum #9: Discuss Self-Reflexivity, Post-Modernism and Philosophy in relation to <i>Run, Lola, Run</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Assignment #9: Rework Canonical Story using principles of Post-modernism.</p>
<p>Week #11 Nov. 4</p>	<p>Meanwhile, Back at Reality Ranch (Creative Truth)</p> <p>Read: Doc: Documentary Modes pt.1</p> <p>View: This week you'll view a series of short video clips taken from interviews with documentary filmmakers.</p> <p>Visit: http://films.nfb.ca/capturing-reality/#/39/</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Under the "topics" tab, choose "Exploring the Genre." Select "What is Documentary?" and view the 5 clips. 2. Return to the "topics" tab and "Exploring the Genre" again. Select "Cinema Verité: The Fly on the Wall" and watch the 6 video clips. 3. Return to the "topics" tab, choose "Truth, Perspective & Ethics." Select "Truth," and view the 4 clips. <p>Film: <i>Salesman</i> (1968), dir. Albert Maysles, David Maysles and Charlotte Zwerin</p> <p>-----</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Forum #10: Do you think documentary can be objective? Is <i>Salesman</i> an objective film? What ethical issues can you see in the film?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Assignment #10: Analyze <i>Salesman</i> using your understanding of the canonical state, structures and genre.</p>
<p>Week #12 Nov. 11</p>	<p>Post-Modern Documentary (Reflexivity)</p> <p>Read: Doc: Documentary Modes pt.2"</p> <p>View: Murph Video 14: "From the Voice of God to the Voice of Everyone"</p> <p>Films for Week 12/13: <i>The Fog of War</i> (2003), dir. Errol Morris; <i>The Gleaners and I</i> (2000) dir. Agnes Varda.</p> <p>-----</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Forum #11: What are Varda and Morris's films about? In what ways are they meaningful?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Assignment #11: Discuss the strategies and structures of Morris and Varda's films, and explain why you think they are truthful.</p>
<p>Week #13 Nov. 18</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THANKSGIVING WEEK</p>
<p>Week #14 Nov. 25</p>	<p>Poetic realities: experimental films</p> <p>Read: What IS experimental film?"</p> <p>View: Murph Video 15: "Outsiders and Manifestos"</p> <p>Films: <i>Fake Fruit Factory</i> (1986) dir. Chick Strand; <i>Castro Street</i> (1966) dir. Bruce Baillie; <i>Diary</i> (2010) dir. Tim Hetherington.</p> <p>-----</p>

	<p>Forum #12: Which of the three films captivated you the most, and why? What are these films about? Are they “documentary”?</p> <p>Assignment #12: <u>On last time</u>, look at your canonical story over the course of the semester. Where might it fit in best of all the areas we’ve ventured into and why?</p>	
<p>Week #15 Dec. 2</p>	<p>Eisenstein and the Semiotics of the Television Commercial</p> <p>Read: Doc: The Return of Eisenstein: Coding in Commercials</p> <p>View: Murph Video 16: “Coded Canonicals”</p>	
<p>Final Class!</p>	<p>1:10-3:10</p>	<p>Thur. Dec. 12</p>