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MART 101L.50: Introduction to Media Arts

Erin N. Hale

University of Montana, Missoula, erin.hale@mso.umt.edu

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MAR 101L.50 Introduction to Media Arts (01) 3cr. Spring 2016 School of Media Arts

Instructor Erin Hale - McGill 222

Office Hours: by appt. via Skype, phone or in person
email: erin.hale@umconnect.umt.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Stories are at the center of our lives. Why we tell them, how we tell them, and how we gain meaning from them is arguably the single most important skill you can develop. The purpose of the course is to introduce you to the analytical processes involved in “reading” and describing media stories. Since most of the vocabulary through which we do this is based in the language of filmmaking, analysis of films will take up most of our semester. We will cover three major areas: fictional, documentary and experimental filmmaking. In the last two Lessons we will also apply the principles we’ve been studying to the world of the Internet and the encoding of advertising.

While having more fun than anyone should be able to have, you will also fulfill the Literary and Artistic Studies portion of your **General Education Requirement**, if you gain a C or above.

On a broader level this course delivers experiences that should help you expand your ability to:

- think creatively
- develop your ideas through collaboration with your fellow students
- articulate core meaning and thematic concepts in existing films and your own work
- understand the context behind your personal point-of-view and to look empathetically at other cultures whose context may be different from your own.

OUTCOMES

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 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 the principles that broaden your understanding of the idea of storytelling, 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. These principles are based in:

THE THREE LEVELS OF READING
FOLK PSYCHOLOGY
THE CANONICAL STATE OF BEING
THE IDEA OF “CORE”
STORYTELLING AS A MEANING-MAKING PROCESS

III. THE WORLD OUTSIDE—THE DEVELOPMENT OF EMPATHY

By focusing on other cultures (outside and inside of our own country) 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.

!!!! IMPORTANT !!!!

TEXT & MATERIALS

There is **no required text** for the class. The reading and video lecture material is available in documents and video packages that will be found on our **main course shell**. We will watch quite a few movies and clips of films over the course of the semester and those will also be available within the class Moodle shell.

CLASS STRUCTURE

The class is constructed of Lessons, each of which represent approximately a week's work (3 hours class time 3 hours study time). The first section deals with the basics for understanding the principles and vocabulary necessary for analysis of films. At the end of this section you apply your work to the analysis of an entire film. The second half of the course deals with the expansion of your understanding of film story into non-classical forms, some important philosophies of film and the introduction of documentary work. At the end of the class you will analyze another film as you did at the mid-term.

There is quite a bit of material and viewing, but **it is manageable as long as you devote regular time to the process**. This may seem self-apparent, but if you haven't taken an online class before, make sure you ask questions early and often and work at creating a regular schedule for yourself. **In the case of a short-burst session like this one (3 weeks= 1 semester) your devotion needs to be daily.**

For the sake of consistency, each LESSON is structured in a similar manner:

I. Lesson Materials

You must thoroughly study of the MATERIALS provided for the LESSON before you proceed to the QUIZ.

MATERIALS INCLUDE:

- 1) **Instructional Videos:** These instructional mini-lectures are from 3-10 minutes in length and get at the main focus of a given week's work.
- 2) **Lesson Documents:** These offer more detail than be contained in a short

video and include material that is not in the videos, as well as opening up the major vocabulary necessary for the class.

3) **Vocabulary:** Each week we will add more of the language of film and story creation, both in the areas of production and literary analysis.

4) **Film for the Lesson:** Not all weeks Lessons have a full film to view but many do. All of the films you need to view can be found in the materials area for that week.

5) **Outside Links:** Sometimes the Materials include links to clips used in assignments as well as to sites that give you the opportunity to expand your research into film and additional topics generated through assignments and forums.

II. Lesson Quiz

Each Lesson has a quiz that is made to test your understanding of the materials for the week and expand on your understanding with additional input. They are meant to be enjoyable and only require completion to gain their points. Once you have studied the materials you are ready to enter this area. Quizzes aren't short. They have additional reading and viewing material within them so you should expect to spend up to an hour or longer on them.

III. Discussion Boards/Assignments

Each Lesson there will be an opportunity for you to engage with the materials and post online with each other or write and upload a short essay to your instructor(s).

IV. Film Analysis Assignments:

Twice a semester you will be required to write longer assignments devoted to the analysis of a film based on the principles and vocabulary of the class.

V. Final Assessment/Assignment

This is your chance to reflect on what you've learned this semester. You will also have a surprise task for this, which should be a fun way to end the class.

POINTS DISTRIBUTION

MART 101L POINTS	DISTRIBUTION
THE BASIC LESSONS (11@3pts)	33 pts.
WEEKLY DISC.OR ASSIG. (10@3pts)	30 pts.
Final 2 Week Forums (2@6pts)	12 pts.
Film #1 Analysis	10 pts.
Film #2 Analysis	15 pts.
TOTAL PTS.	100 pts.

NOTE ON EXTRA-CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES! THERE ARE NONE!

There are many points available in this class (see above) and they add up to your final grade. You simply have to devote the time needed. If you can't do that then you won't early and sustain your attention and commitment over the entire semester!

!!!TIME FOR THE RED WARNINGS!!!

!!!DEADLINES AND ALL THAT PRESSURE!!!

The main difficulty students have with online classes is one of time management. You have to make time to do the work. We have put together various tutorials and documents to assist you in succeeding here. Take advantage of them and always communicate sooner rather than later!

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT and the STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

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 WITH DISABILITIES OR SPECIAL NEEDS SHOULD INFORM THE INSTRUCTOR!!

Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting me. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). “Reasonable” means the University permits no fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications. For more information, please consult <http://www.umt.edu/disability>

CLASS SCHEDULE

Lesson 1 Week of Jan. 25	Logistics!
Lesson 2 Week of Feb. 1	The World of the Class (3 Levels of Reading)
Lesson 3 Week of Feb. 8	Story, Story and...Story (Dramatic Components)
Lesson 4 Week of Feb. 17	Structure and the Whole (Structural Components) Film: Casablanca (1941)
Lesson 5 Week of Feb. 24	Editing: The Language of Film (Filmic Components) Scene Analysis Due Sunday Night!
Lesson 6 Week of Feb. 27	Genre and the Power of Expectation (Development & Plot Types) Film: Brick (2001)
Lesson 7 Week of Mar. 7	Analysis of a Film (Formalism and Realism) Important Reading: “The Fish”

Lesson 8 Week of Mar. 14	Postmodernism and Cinema Film Analysis Film: Adaptation (1999)
Lesson 9 Week of Mar. 21	Documentary Storytelling Pt. 1: Narrative Meets Actuality Film: Hearts and Minds (1972)
Lesson 10 Tues. March 29	Documentary Storytelling Pt. 2 : The Return of Postmodernism! Film: The Fog of War (2003)
Lesson 11 April 4- April 8	SPRING BREAK!
Lesson 12 Week of April 11	Experimental Film: Beyond the Narrative Experience
Lesson 13 Week of April 18	Advertising and Encoded Messaging
Lesson 14 Week of April 25	The Internet: Design Meets Story
Lesson 15 Week of April 2	Final Film Analysis Final Paper/Personal Assessment/Survey!