"Materials are indifferent; but the use we make of them is not."
—Epictetus

Course Description
Montage is the way we arrange things. It tells the whole story. Consider a sequence of film clips. A man smiles, a shot is fired, he frowns. That’s one story. Now re-arrange those very same clips: A man frowns, a shot is fired, then he smiles. Same material, different story. In class, we will draw from this insight, fundamental to film theory, to construct compelling written narratives. In particular, we will explore the ways we make choices not only about what to describe but also about how to arrange those descriptions, and how in making these choices we begin (whether we intend it or not) to make an argument.

Goals
You will learn to think of a written story as a functional object, the utility of which is determined by the elegance of its construction. Together we will take apart and reassemble film sequences and magazine articles, and you will set about assembling and reassembling written works of your own. The two major projects will be: To report and write a short article based on a conventional structure and a longer feature, the structure of which will be your own invention. Ultimately, you will come to recognize the narrative techniques that inform all of the arts (indeed all of life) and draw on those techniques to make your own work more persuasive and beautiful.

POLICIES

Grading
Eighty percent of your grade will be based on your written work. The remainder will be based on classroom participation. Part of your classroom participation grade will be based on your completion of in-class writing exercises and quizzes. Please note that classroom participation, including prompt attendance, is worth the equivalent of three full letter grades. Participation, especially when we discuss each other’s stories, will be central to your success. Please come to class prepared.

Late Papers
Meeting a deadline is important. Being clear about why you can’t meet a deadline is even more important. Unless you make a reasonable request for an extension, late papers will be penalized, and the penalty will grow with each passing day.

Academic Integrity
As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website: gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/integrity.html.
MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

1. Museum Outline
One way to better understand the linear nature of a narrative is to walk through one. To do so, you will select a museum exhibit (or other suitable space), visit it and take notes, then write an outline of the space that presents it as a narrative experience. (Worth 10 percent of grade.)

2. Short Article
Like songwriters or poets, narrative writers can borrow established forms. The easiest way to emulate a given narrative form is to outline several examples, noting not the specific content, but rather the underlying purpose of each paragraph or section. This assignment has two parts. First, you will select at least three examples of a specific form (a review, say, or a column) from a specific publication (*The New Yorker*, the *Times*, etc.) and outline their common “generic” structure. Second, you will write an original story that follows that generic outline and thereby emulates the form. (Worth 20 percent of grade.)

3. Long Article
The long-form exercise will invert the priority of the short-form exercise. Rather than find a form and shape the facts to it, students will find the facts and then determine the best means by which to arrange them. This assignment has five parts. 1. Write a pitch. 2. Gather material. 3. Create an outline based on the material. 4. Write a draft based on the outline. 5. Revise the draft. (Worth 50 percent of grade.)

GRADING

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<th>MUSEUM OUTLINE</th>
<th>SHORT ARTICLE</th>
<th>LONG ARTICLE</th>
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Points are cumulative: 97-100 A+; 93-96 A; 90-92 A-; 87-89 B+; 84-86 B; 81-83 B-; 77-80 C+; 74-76 C; 70-73 C-; 0-69 F

SELECTED READINGS AND VIEWINGS

Most of the readings are available on the Classes site. Please consult the syllabus and read all assignments before class. I may also require additional reading. If you miss class, please check with me or a classmate.


*Rear Window Loop*. Dir. Jeff Desom. 2010. Video
*Strike*. Dir. Sergei Eisenstein. Goskino/Proletkult, 1925. Film.
*The Sunbeam*. Dir. D.W. Griffith. Biograph, 1912. Film
CLASS PLAN

I. Museum Exercise

1. WHY MONTAGE? (January 30)
   *What is a story? Moral implications of narrative. The structure of this class.*

2. SOMETHING FROM NOTHING (February 6)
   *The whiteness of the page. Eisenstein meets Coppola. The memory palace.*
   *2001: A Space Odyssey.* Stanley Kubrick. MGM, 1968. Film
   *Strike.* Dir. Sergei Eisenstein. Goskino/Proletkult, 1925. Film

3. MOVING THROUGH SPACE (February 13)
   *What is a cut? Montage vs. mise en scène. The bomb under the table.*
   *Touch of Evil.* Dir. Orson Welles, 1958. Universal Pictures. Film
   Museum outline, first draft due (5 points)

II. Short Article

4. BORROWED FORMS (February 20)
   *Music as metaphor. Song structure. What is a rubric?*
   Museum outline, revision due (5 points)

5. A WATCH THAT LAUGHS (February 27)
   *Montage as machine. Will it start? Story workshop.*
   *The Sunbeam.* Dir. D.W. Griffith. Biograph, 1912. Film
   *Variations on the Sunbeam,* Dir. Aitor Gametxo, 2011. Video
   Short article, generic outline due (5 points)

6. START, THIEF! (March 6)
   *When an editor re-writes. Parts and plagiarism. Can structure be stolen?*
   Short article, real outline due (5 points)

III. Long Article

7. STORY AS JOURNEY (March 13)
   *Hitchcock and Kuleshov. Narratives of Revelation. Where are you going?*
   *Rear Window Loop.* Dir. Jeff Desom. 2010. Video
   Short article, story and combined outline due (10 points)

8. A PITCH IS A PROMISE IS A DESTINATION (March 27)
   *Working from the outside in. Secrets of The Da Vinci Code. External and internal goals.*
   Pitch workshop: Pitch due.
   *Pitch revision due March 28 at midnight.* (10 points)
9. **GATHERING MATERIALS (April 3)**
   
   *Every story is an essay. Inside the morgue. Ikebana and buckets.*
   
   
   Inventory workshop: Inventory due.
   
   *Inventory revision due April 5 at midnight. (10 points)*

10. **THE OUTLINE IS THE TERRITORY (April 10)**

   *Lists all the way down. Direction and entasis. Scrivener.*


   Outline workshop: Outline due.

   *Group 1 rough drafts due April 14 at midnight.*

11. **GROUP 1 Rough Draft Workshop (April 17)**

   *Group 2 rough drafts due April 21 at midnight.*

12. **GROUP 2 Rough Draft Workshop (April 24)**

   *Group 3 rough drafts due on April 28 at midnight.*

13. **GROUP 3 Rough Draft Workshop (May 1)**

14. **MAKE IT TRUE (May 8)**

   *The power of montage. Hitler’s cat. Selection or censorship?*


   Final draft due (10 points)