ARTS-UG 1606 | FALL 2015

CLASS: WEDNESDAYS, 6:20 PM - 9:00 PM
SCREENINGS: THURSDAYS, 6:20 PM - 7:35 PM

193 MERCER STREET, ROOM 303

instructor

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course description

This arts workshop explores the question of identity through the cinematic expressions of different cultures, while guiding the participants to create and develop their own visual storytelling journey.

Students will be introduced to the practical stages of an independent digital production, and will generate, as a final project for the course, a short film [3-5 minutes] that represents their unique storytelling identity, translating their personal point of view into a coherent narrative experience.

These narrative tools will emerge from the first part of the course, which focuses on the analysis of short and feature film productions from Asian, European, and Latin American directors. In considering these global examples, we will study the approach to storytelling through the influences of texts of faith, and social and cultural identities.

In-class screenings will include In the Mood for Love [2000, Wong Kar Wai, Honk Kong], Kaos [1984, Paolo e Vittorio Taviani, Italy], Wings of Desire [1987, Wim Wenders, Germany], Moebius [1997, Gustavo Mosquera, Argentina], Amores Perros [2000, Alejandro Inarritu, Mexico], Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown [1988, Pedro Almodóvar, Spain], Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain [2001, Jean-Pierre Jeunet, France], Nebraska [2011, Alexander Payne, USA], and Stoker [2013, Chan-Wook Park, USA].

visit the course website: https://wp.nyu.edu/storytellingid/
learning goals

To explore the rich diversity of global storytellers, and analyze the distinctiveness of an artist through the cultural and personal subtexts in his/her narrative choices.

To experience the stages of a storytelling journey, from the inception to the final narrative piece.

With the guided creation of their own video essays and final short film projects, the students will achieve a hands-on insight of the practical tools to generate an independent digital production.

To recognize and stimulate the student’s personal voice and journey within the story— and articulate it into a distinctive visual experience.

required texts

Aristotle, Poetics
Robert McKee, Story
Paul Auster, Smoke & Blue in the Face

Hand-outs will include original film and television screenplays, as well as selected readings from global authors and filmmakers.

course requirements + assessment

attendance and active class participation [25%] : students are expected to attend all classes and be on time. Active participation involves working out ideas through discussion and creative reasoning. Students are encouraged to expose their insight and perspective on the screened material as well as each other’s work— but in return must propose their personal take to the issue they are addressing.

written assignments [15%] : the participants will be assigned to turn in a weekly paper analyzing the narrative structure, visual approach and social and religious subtext of each film screened.

outline and evolution of the individual short film project [15%] : the final short film project is composed of a first phase that covers the story proposal, pitch, storyline, narrative and visual presentation, and finished script.

video assignments [20%]: throughout the second third of the class, the students will develop a series of 30 - 60 seconds visual essays to explore the tools of the cinematic language.

final presentation of short film project [25%] : the final short film project is composed of a second and final phase that covers the recorded material, first assembly, final cut, and trailer for the short film.

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technology

As the sessions progress we will make practical use of cellphones, laptops and tablet devices as digital tools for assembling the narrative audiovisual assignments.

Use of such devices outside the given parameters will result in the lowering of grading.

expectation of 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: www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html

list of screenings

analysis and comparison: Broadchurch [UK] and Gracepoint [US]
El Laberinto del Fauno [2006, Guillermo del Toro, Spain]
Infernal Affairs [2002, Andrew Lau & Alan Mak, Hong Kong]
Let The Right One In [2008, Tomas Alfredson, Sweden]
3-iron [2004, Ki-duk Kim, Korea]
Le Fabuleux Destin d’Amelie Poulain [2001, Jean-Pierre Jeunet, France]
Mujeres al Borde de un Ataque de Nervios - Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown - [1988, Pedro Almodovar, Spain]
Nebraska [2013, Alexander Payne, US]
An Angel at my Table [1990, Jane Campion, New Zealand]
Der Himmel Über Berlin - Wings of Desire - [1987, Wim Wenders, Germany]
Stoker [2013, Chan-Wook Park, US/Korea]
In the Mood for Love [2000, Wong-Kar Wai, Hong Hong]
Madadayo [1993, Akira Kurosawa, Japan]
Kaos [1984, Paolo e Vittorio Taviani, Italy]
Moebius [1997, Gustavo Mosquera, Argentina]
Amores Perros [2000, Alejandro Iñarritú, Mexico]

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SYLLABUS

Keep in mind that the current Syllabus is a proposed road map. And that even though we may know our destination, the mystery of the Journey is what makes the trip worth taking.

This course includes an additional, required meeting hour [Thursdays, 6:20-7:35 PM] for weekly film screenings.

CLASS #1 Wednesday, September 2nd

introduction and overview of course. goal of the workshop: to develop a narrative short film that represents your storytelling ID. the cinematic narrative tools. plot, character, setting. story and theme. text and subtext. the pitch.

weekly screening: analysis & comparison, Broadchurch [UK] and Gracepoint [US]

CLASS #2 Wednesday, September 9th

the three-act paradigm: analyzing the narrative template for contemporary film and television. action, reaction, revelation. building up pressure: points of no return. challenging the conventional template: the storyteller’s point of view.

reading, Poetics, Introduction, pp. 2 - 36
Story, pp. 3 - 66

assignment: turn in pitch

weekly screening : El Laberinto del Fauno [del Toro]

visit the course website: https://wp.nyu.edu/storytellingid/
CLASS #3 Wednesday, September 16th

**character development**: setup, evolution, conflict, change. the Journey of the Hero. interaction: main and secondary characters, protagonist and antagonist. building up the three levels of conflict. **what’s our personal device? character or story?**

reading, *Story*, pp. 100 - 131

**assignment**: storyline + narrative and visual proposal

weekly screening: *Le Fabuleux Destin d’Amélie Poulain* [Jeunet]

CLASS #4 Wednesday, September 23rd

**the setting**: landscape, politics and values of a fictional universe. *the storyteller and society*. in-class analysis: “Smoke”— transmuting a writer’s source material [Paul Auster’s short story] into film semantics [screenplay] and a final visual narrative [Wayne Wang’s film].

reading, *Story*, pp. 67 - 99
  *Smoke & Blue in the Face*, pp. 159 - 172

**assignment**: screenplay, final draft

weekly screening: *Mujeres al Borde de un Ataque de Nervios* - Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown - [Almodovar]

CLASS #5 Wednesday, September 30th

**the cinematic language**: the audiovisual construct of a narrative piece. *breaking up the linear narrative*. a multi-layered sequence study: personal choices that conform theme and subtext. *using our digital devices as storytelling tools*.

reading, *Story*, pp. 135 - 154

**assignment**: short film project phase #1: revised pitch, storyline, script, narrative + visual proposal

weekly screening: *In The Mood for Love* [Wong-Kar Wai]

CLASS #6 Wednesday, October 7th

**guest lecturer** [from Los Angeles, via Skype]: Josh Shader, Producer and Writer “The Chair”— a Prime-Time Original Filmmaking Experiment that follows two first-time feature film directors working from the same screenplay. Winner of the 2015 TV Critics Association and DGA Awards for Outstanding Reality Programming.

visit the course website: https://wp.nyu.edu/storytellingid/
reading, Story, pp. 233 - 259

assignment: visual essay—setting.

weekly screening: Kaos [Taviani]

CLASS #7 Thursday, October 14th

reading between lines: integrating the cinematic language into the written word. script breakdown and storyboards. Stages of a digital production, pre-production, shooting, post-production. guerrilla logistics: turning our technical limitations into creative advantages.

reading, Story, pp. 374 - 387

assignment: visual essay—characters.

weekly screening: Madadayo [Kurosawa]

CLASS #8 Wednesday, October 21st

in-class screening and study: DEUS IRAE. coverage of an overall independent film production, from the inception of an idea, to the finished narrative piece and release strategy. revision of the student’s upcoming week of shooting.

reading, Story, pp. 334 - 373

assignment: visual essay—reinvention of a movie sequence.

weekly screening: 3-iron [Ki-duk Kim]

CLASS #9 Wednesday, October 28th

in-class revision and sharing of experiences. enhancing the raw material. creating a narrative journey with sound. acoustic expressions of emotional states. music and film genres. exploring the potential of silence. contrasts.

assignment: turn in the short film project—raw material.

weekly screening: Let the Right One In [Alfredson]

CLASS #10 Wednesday, November 4th

revision of the short films’ first assemblies. creating a teaser trailer from the short films and raw material. analysis and structure of the film trailers for the screened films.

visit the course website: https://wp.nyu.edu/storytellingid/
assignment: turn in the short film project— first assembly.

weekly screening: Wings of Desire [Wenders]

CLASS #11 Wednesday, November 11th

creation and revision of a first narrative construct. exploring the individual point of view and integrating it into a working cinematic edition. exploring the linear and non-linear timelines, breaking new ground into space, character and story. pacing, title and graphic design.

assignment: turn in the teaser trailer for the short film project.

weekly screening: Amores Perros [Iñarritu]

CLASS #12 Wednesday, November 18th

giving the final projects life beyond class. logistics of a digital release. exporting and posting the video in high-end online platforms. the electronic presskit and media strategy. the festival schedule, online submissions.

assignment: the short film project— revised cut.

weekly screening : An Angel at my Table [Campion]

[November 25th : Thanksgiving Recess / University Holiday : no classes scheduled ]

CLASS #13 Wednesday, December 2nd

open revision, analysis and discussion of the in-class featured films. their connection with the participants' experience. what are the factors that influence a storyteller’s unique vision? is there such thing as a global narrative identity? does story and craft come before vision and individuality? how does our perception of reality affect the way we shape a story?

short film project phase #2: the short film, revised trailer and final cut.

weekly screening : Stoker [Chan-wook Park]

CLASS #14 Wednesday, December 9th

final class meeting. presentation, screening and discussion of the finished short films.

assignment: final short film project presentation.

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