

3/20/19

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CINEMA STUDIES AND MEDIA PRODUCTION

Self-Determined Major Proposal

SELF-DETERMINED MAJOR RATIONALE

I believe that a liberal arts education develops an individual's ability to see multiple viewpoints and continually challenge their own. It promotes curiosity, strengthens critical thinking and develops strong writing and speaking skills. I decided to study at Skidmore College in order to secure a strong liberal arts education in an environment where creativity drives and empowers students to find their way in the world. I am creating a Self-determined Major proposal, so I can integrate my interest and passion of cinema studies and media production into a meaningful liberal arts educational pathway while at Skidmore and after graduation into a fulfilling, effective career, meaningful life and service to society.

Studying cinema and media production has altered my perspective of the world in many ways. For centuries, literature provided us with the source material to study art, humanities and the sciences. Since the commercial explosion of film in the 1950s, cinema has become one of the most widely used and well-understood art forms for reflection on the human condition. My first semester of junior year at Skidmore marks my sixth year of taking media and film courses academically. I am learning that the history and politics behind film creation is just as important as the creation itself. I am seeing how the importance of certain cultural and historical events has changed our world. The study of cinema has opened my mind to how events have changed people, changed our perspectives, and how life is shaped by occurrences. It has also greatly informed my political and social understanding of the consequences associated with making a piece of art within such a universal and accessible medium.

Through years of watching film I am acquiring the critical lens necessary for analyzing film and TV on a technical level as well. The films I have been challenged to watch and subsequently analyze have contributed to my understanding of cinematography, editing and, directing. My experience with this art form, more than any other, has led to my solid understanding of narrative discourse and three act structure. Studying film is not my sole academic passion, I am also passionate about making films. I have

found that mimicking styles of directors that resonate with me as well as pulling influences from favorite works has furthered my knowledge of the field both foundationally and experimentally. Producing and studying media and film are where my academic passion and life interests both lie and intersect.

My self-determined major proposal aims to create an interdisciplinary, unique major that will afford me the opportunity of a strong liberal arts education combined with a focus on the history, theory and production of cinema. Cinema studies will allow me to explore the artistic, cultural, economic and political implications of cinema. Film production will provide me with a proficiency in cinematography, sound recording, editing, and directing in order to produce work that is informed by these social-ideological values. This combination of interpretive and production skills will enable me to negotiate the world of visual narratives. By learning the art of filmmaking as well as criticism, I will develop the creative and critical skills necessary in many areas of media. This holistic approach to cinematic arts will serve as a foundation for life-long learning and prepare me for a wide range of careers, from film production, digital distribution, and film criticism to arts management, educational programming and public affairs work.

In the process of writing my proposal I researched universities with acclaimed film departments. The B.F.A. in Film at Pratt Institute “prepares students to become innovative and professional moving image artists by developing each student’s creative vision. Graduates are expected to demonstrate excellence in artistic vision, professional skills, and a contextual understanding of their work in contemporary culture.” Pratt students analyze cinema from a theoretical, historical and cultural context and apply this knowledge in the production of time-based projects. Students gain technical, aesthetic and conceptual proficiency in pre-production, production, post-production, and exhibition of time-based media. Students in the B.A. in Cinema Studies at NYU Tisch School of the Arts, “focus on history, theory and criticism of motion pictures and related media, examining cinema as both an art form and as a form of mass culture.”

Film major programs at both New York University and Pratt Institute, contain a dual focus of production and cinema. For this reason, I have organized my proposal into courses based in camera production and instruction on software for creating visual design and classes based in the cultural, historical and theoretical aspects of cinema. In addition, both Pratt and NYU students complete a sequence of liberal arts courses in: writing, foreign language, foundations of contemporary culture and foundations of scientific inquiry which is akin to Skidmore's beliefs. Through the core curriculum I will gain an appreciation of how art and history relate to each other and to society in a changing world. While quantitative reasoning and natural science courses provide the knowledge needed to be an independent-minded citizen in a world increasingly shaped by science and technology.

Currently there is no other major that fulfills what this SDM proposes. If I were to exclusively major in art or minor in film and media studies, I would not have the opportunity to focus on the breadth of classes that are so instrumental to my goal. My proposed conglomeration of major courses for a SDM in cinema studies and media production is the only way to pursue a rigorous course load that incorporates the art of filmmaking as well as the exploration of the effects of social-ideological values on our society. I hope that I am afforded the opportunity to pursue this SDM and I am confident it will provide me with a path to follow my passions.

SELF-DETERMINED MAJOR COURSES

DEPARTMENT	NUMBER	TITLE	CREDIT HOURS	COMPONENTS OF SDM	SEM
Media and Film Studies	MF 220 001	Introduction to Media Studies	4	Foundation	SP 2017
Art	AR 136	Digital Foundations	4	Foundation	F 2018
World Languages and Literatures	WLL 255	Introduction to Film Theory and Criticism	4	Foundation	*SP 2019
Art	AR 330	Advanced Photography	4	Methodology	*SP 2020
Art	AR 264J 002	Video Art	4	Methodology	F 2017
Art	AR 358	Motion Graphics and Animation Art	4	Methodology	*SP 2020
Documentary Studies	DS 302D 001	From Story to Screen: Film Crew Production	4	Methodology	SP 2018
Documentary Studies	DS 315C 002	Creative Research, Multimedia Storytelling	3	Theory	SP 2018
World Languages and Literatures	WLL 251	Contemporary German Cinema	4	Theory	F 2018
Media and Film Studies (New York University)	CINE-UT 206 c#5486	Films of Stanley Kubrick	4	Theory	SUM 2017
SDM Film Studies	ID 315A	SDM Prep Seminar	1	Capstone	*F 2020

SDM Film Studies	ID 371 or 372	Independent Study Final Project	4	Capstone	*SP 2020
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* = to be completed in upcoming semesters

REQUIRED COURSES PROVIDING DISCIPLINARY BREADTH

Visual Theory and Media History

The following courses provide me with the basics and introductory knowledge of film and media history. Digital Foundations and similar art classes provide the groundwork for digital visual design that I need to learn going forward.

- MF 220 001 Introduction to Media Studies (Spring 2017)
- AR 136 Digital Foundations (Fall 2018)
- WLL 255 Introduction to Film Theory and Criticism* (Spring 2019)

Practice

These courses equip me with the skill-set necessary for any creative projects that I hope to do in the future, as well prepare me for any professional opportunities involving camera and editing work.

- AR 358 Motion Graphics and Animation Art* (Spring 2020)
- AR 330 Advanced Photography* (Spring 2020)
- AR 264J 002 Video Art (Fall 2017)
- DS 302D 001 From Story to Screen: Film Crew Production (Spring 2018)

Film Theory

These courses lay the foundation for my all-around knowledge of film. From film history, to understanding composition, to sequential analysis of shots through editing. These classes are the backbone of my practical understanding of the subject.

- CINE-UT 206 c#5486 Films of Stanley Kubrick (New York University) (Summer 2017)

- DS 315C Creative Research, Multimedia Storytelling (Spring 2018)
- WLL 251 Contemporary German Cinema (Fall 2018)

SEQUENCE OF COURSES

ART

- AR 136 Digital Foundations (Fall 2018)
- AR 358 Digital Media 1: Motion, Graphics and Animation Art* (Spring 2020)
- AR 264J Video Art (Fall 2017)
- AR 330 Advanced Photography* (Spring 2020)

WORLD LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE (LITERATURE AND CIVILIAZTION)

- WLL 255 Introduction to Film Theory and Criticism* (Spring 2019)
- WLL 251 Contemporary German Cinema (Fall 2018)
- WLL 244 Viewing China Cinema* (Spring 2019)
- WLL 376D Narrative and Cinema: Japan (Spring 2018)

DOCUMENTARY STUDIES

- DS 302D 001 From Story to Screen: Film Crew Production (Spring 2018)
- DS 315C 002 Creative Research, Multimedia Storytelling (Spring 2018)
- DS 251D Doc Film Production; Form/Content* (Spring 2019)

PROPOSED ELECTIVE COURSES

- MF 251C 001 Film Noir! (Fall 2016)
- WLL 376D 001 Narrative and Cinema: Japan (Spring 2018)
- WLL 243 The World of Japanese Animation* (Spring 2020)
- AR 351G Special Topics in Studio Art: Photography* (Fall 2019)

- DS 351B 001 Doc Practices in Photography* (Spring 2019)
- DS 251C Documentary Storytelling* (Fall 2019)
- AR 358 Digital Media I: Motion, Graphics and Animation Art* (Spring 2020)
- AR 356 Computer Imaging II* (Fall 2019)

INTERDISCIPLINARY REQUIREMENTS /

EXPLORING A FULL RANGE OF LIBERAL ARTS COURSES

- SSP 100 018 (Scribner Seminar) Picturing Time (Fall 2016)
- EN 105 (Expository Writing) Writing Seminar II (Summer 2018)
- GE 101 (QR2/Natural Sciences) Earth Systems Science* (Summer 2019)
- AR 131 (The Arts) Visual Concepts (Spring 2017)
- MU 106 (Humanities) The Beatles (Spring 2017)
- WLL 376D (Foreign Language/approved class substitution) Narrative and Cinema: Japan (Spring 2018)
- RE 208 (Non-western Culture) Native American Religions (Fall 2017)
- MU 101(Elective) Rudiments of Music (Fall 2016)
- AN 102 (Elective) Anthropology of The Human Past (Fall 2016)
- MF 251 C (Elective) From Super-Heroes to Anxiety Attacks (Fall 2017)

CLASSES BY SEMESTER OUTLINE

Semester	ID	Title	Credits
Fall 2016 Freshman	SSP 100 018	Scribner Seminar: Picturing Time	4
	MU 101 001	Rudiments of Music	3
	AN 102 001	Anthropology of The Human Past	3
	MF 251C 001	Film Noir!	3
Spring 2017	MF 220 001	Introduction to Media Studies	4
	AR 131 001	Visual Concepts	4
	MU 106 001	The Beatles	3
	MP 281 021	Private Music Instruction Jazz Guitar	2
Summer 2017	CINE-UT 206 (NYU)	The Films of Stanley Kubrick	4
Fall 2017 Sophomore	MF 251C 001	From Super-Heroes to Anxiety Attacks, Or Comics Here and There, Now and Then	3
	RE 208 001	Native American Religions	3
	AR 264J 002	Video Art	4

Semester	ID	Title	Credits
	MP 281 021	Private Music Instruction Jazz Guitar	2
Spring 2018	WLL 376D 001	Narrative and Cinema: Japan	4
	DS 302D 001	From Story to Screen: Film Crew Production	4
	DS 315C 002	Creative Research, Multimedia Storytelling	3
	MP 281 021	Private Music Instruction Jazz Guitar	2
Summer 2018	EN 105	Writing Seminar II	4
Fall 2018	AR 229	Beginning Photography	4
	WLL 251	Contemporary German Cinema	4
	AR 136	Digital Foundations	4
	MP 281 021	Private Music Instruction Jazz Guitar	2
Spring 2019	WLL 244	Viewing China Cinema	4
	WLL 255	Introduction to Film Theory and Criticism (Independent Study)	4
	AR 209	Communication Design I	4
	DS 251D	Doc Film Production; Form/Content	4
	MP 281 021	Private Music Instruction Jazz Guitar	2

Semester	ID	Title	Credits
Summer 2019	GE 101	Earth Systems Science	4
Fall 2019	ID 315A	SDM Prep Seminar	1
	AR 307	Communication Design II	4
	DS 251 C	Documentary Storytelling	3
	AR 351G	Special Topics in Studio Art: Photography	2,4
	AR 356	Computer Imaging II	4
	MP 281 021	Private Music Instruction Jazz Guitar	2
Spring 2020	ID 371 or 372	Independent Study Final Project	3,4
	WLL 243	The World of Japanese Animation	3
	AR 358	Digital Media I: Motion, Graphics and Animation Art	4
	AR 330	Advanced Photography	4
	MP 281 021	Private Music Instruction Jazz Guitar	2

CORE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS AND RATIONALE

MF 220 001 INTRODUCTION TO MEDIA STUDIES (4 credits)

We live in a culture saturated by media. From the television shows and films that stream to us on our laptops and tablets to the images and updates we consume on our phones; media texts and technologies are so omnipresent within contemporary life that they seem almost invisible. Yet this seeming invisibility makes it all the more important that we look closely at the workings of media technology, and that we ask critical questions of the media that surround us. How do different media forms work to produce artistic and social meanings? What powers do media hold over us, and what powers might they give us as consumers and producers? How have media changed from the beginning of the modern period to our contemporary moment of digital convergence? In this course, we will ask these and other questions as we explore the broad and eclectic terrain of media and film studies. We will hone our skills in the critical analysis of a range of media forms, including film, television, radio and sound, and the Internet and new media. Studying key texts in these forms alongside a selection of critical writings, we will consider how media technologies create aesthetic effects and how they play crucial roles in shaping social questions of identity, power, community, and artistry. Our ultimate goal will be to become more critically aware as students, consumers, producers, artists, and citizens within contemporary media culture.

This course provides the historical background and context for the evolution of various types of media, particularly film and television.

AR 136 DIGITAL FOUNDATIONS (4 credits)

A survey of aesthetic and technological best practices in visual communication today. Students will study the basic functions and integral properties of Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, as well as After Effects or other video software while learning the principles of design. Vector and raster imaging techniques, scanning, printing, and font and file management are introduced through a series of demonstrations/projects that build upon each other. Through projects and critiques, students will work to make a visual voice that is distinctive and original.

This course provides the essential framework for digital-based visual design. Learning the basics of Adobe products (photoshop, premier, illustrator) is imperative for further digital-based visual design classes like communication design, motion graphics & animation.

AR 264J 002 VIDEO ART (4 credits)

Intensive, specialized study within one of the studio disciplines listed below. Specific topics will vary from year to year, providing students with unique opportunities to engage in methods and concepts not found in the Department's regular course offerings.

This course plays an important role in the methodology aspect of my SDM. Shooting and editing weekly projects provides much needed practice for future media production opportunities.

DS 302D 001 FROM STORY TO SCREEN: FILM CREW PRODUCTION (4 credits)

Crew based production. Take a film project from story to script to screen as you develop production skills, work across areas of study for an interdisciplinary experience, and create a film of the caliber to build a professional portfolio. Over a semester, you will collaborate in a small (3-4 person) crew to create a 5 to 7-minute film based in research. The film might be a narrative film based on a true story, a story that requires research, or a documentary film. You will be involved in pre-production, production and post-production in one of three areas:

script/direction, cinematography/editing or sound/soundtrack and producer. While writers prepare scripts, production crew will learn more advanced audio and video techniques. The crews will work together on production and post-production. Each student will contribute research relevant to their area of specialization (i.e. learning about historical or subject area, creating an appropriate lighting or sound effect, selecting from styles in existing media), present their findings in class, and participate in crew-based video production. Critical film analysis from the perspective of your role on the crew will hone your skills in and appreciation for the craft of filmmaking.

This course gives me bountiful practice with weekly camera exercises, as well as the opportunity of making a 10-minute short film in a crew. The camera and lighting equipment Skidmore have to offer allows for practice for professional or intern opportunities.

DS 315C 002 CREATIVE RESEARCH, MULTIMEDIA STORYTELLING (3 credits)

In this project-based advanced seminar, we will explore the shared fabric and interdisciplinary connections between research and hands-on creative making. We will begin by interrogating disciplinary norms around how knowledge is produced, authenticated, and communicated--what are the claims that artistic, humanistic, and scientific disciplines make on truth and representation, and why/how might we disrupt these. Each student will then identify a major project of content full inquiry that they will undertake over the course of the term. This might mean doing documentary fieldwork (especially for students who have already taken MDOCS courses in audio or video), but for students from across the disciplines, this could instead mean dealing with found-footage, going into an archive, conducting an ethnography, or continuing to probe some research topic investigated in some other past or concurrent course. Then, working from the results of their personal inquiry, students will employ a range of expressive media

(presumably working largely with whatever media they are already most comfortable) to produce 3 creative projects, in 3 distinct modalities: an object (e.g. a poster, broadsheet, pamphlet, zine, assemblage, or display cabinet), a spatial work (e.g. a gallery installation, a virtual reality space, a site-specific intervention, or an augmented reality mobile experience), and a time-based work (e.g. a film, podcast, or performance).

This class served as a special component for the theory aspect of my field of study. I specifically studied how motion-based media and film affects the audience that watches it on a psychological and physiological level. Additionally, I researched how non-traditional content affects the audience, and how those two different kinds of content interact. Although not traditionally a film theory course or field of film study, I used my research time to gain a better understanding of the theory of watching and engaging with motion-based media.

WLL 251 CONTEMPORARY GERMAN CINEMA (4 credits)

A study of German cinema from the turn of the millennium until today as a vehicle to understand recent developments in the German culture. Students will examine how films engage with significant issues in contemporary German culture and society while viewing motion pictures as both daydreams of society and instruments of social change. Topics in this course will include the pleasures and pitfalls of urban life in the Berlin Republic, the complications of modern love and sexuality, the violence of Germany's past (Third Reich, GDR, leftwing terrorism), the desire for utopian solutions to social and economic inequities, and the problems of a multicultural, multiethnic society.

This class provides an in depth look of film at a certain time and place in history. Both Narrative and Cinema: Japan and Contemporary German Cinema give an insight into different cultures and how those cultures use film as a form of expression.

FUTURE COURSES

WLL 255 INTRODUCTION TO FILM THEORY AND CRITICISM (4 credits)

A survey of major developments in film theory and methods of analyzing film from the invention of cinema to today. Working with the notion that cinema is an art form, a commodity, and a form of communication, we examine how historical, commercial, and aesthetic contexts influence film production and reception. Students read key texts in classical and contemporary film theory and criticism to develop an understanding of a film's narrative, visual structure, and place within established theoretical traditions. Subjects to be considered include formalism, realism, auteur theory, feminism, spectatorship, genre and star analysis, narratology, queer theory, cultural studies, post-colonialism, and critical race theory.

This course is critical for my understanding of film theory. The eclectic group of subjects to be studied provide a broad theoretical understanding of film, essential for creating films of my own or analyzing others.

AR 330 ADVANCED PHOTOGRAPHY (4 credits)

A continuation of problems of visual expression and techniques encountered in beginning photography. Students explore advanced digital image manipulation; investigate digital portfolio presentations; as well as refine traditional print aesthetics.

An extension of beginning photography, Advanced Photography grants me the opportunity to further understand the importance of composition and working within a frame.

AR 358 MOTION GRAPHICS AND ANIMATION ART

An investigation of the relationship of text and image through time using motion graphics and image-editing tools. Students will develop short films and animations using visual material from

photographs, prints, drawings, paintings, illustrations, and three-dimensional work. Projects will explore the visual vocabulary of motion, principles of animation, typography, storytelling, and two and three-dimensional space. Through critiques, readings, discussions, and writing assignments, students will build a historical and critical context for their work.

This course builds on the structure based in Digital Foundations. In both classes I will learn the digital tools to edit and create images in a variety of mediums, preparing me for creating and understanding motion-based media.

COURSE TAKEN AT INSTITUTION OUTSIDE OF SKIDMORE

COURSE at New York University

CINE-UT 206 / c#5486 (4 credits)

The films of Stanley Kubrick constitute one of the most innovative bodies of work in the commercial cinema. This course investigates Kubrick's films in detail with emphasis on their narrative conceptions and structures. The course will explore the uses of irony and voiceover, the representation of the relationship between humans and technology, the centrality of the topic of war, and the relationship of his films to issues of genre.

This course went head first into an analysis of Kubrick's full repertoire. It is important to analyze the significance of films that push boundaries yet stay within a normative narrative framework, as Kubrick did throughout his career.

FINAL PROJECT: BRIEF DESCRIPTION

For my final project I plan to create a 20-30-minute film. Pulling influence from the theory-based classes I have taken, in tandem with the technical skills I have learned in production-based

classes, I will put my skills to use by creating a short film. Using Skidmore's resources, I aim to make this film with standards high enough for submission to film festivals.