

Documentary Media Studies

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RATIONALE

It has become vital for the well-being of our global, national, and local communities that we develop the skills necessary to confront media critically as both consumers and producers in this media-saturated world. In this new age of digital media convergence, our ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create media is more pertinent now than ever before. Media scholar Henry Jenkins explains this “convergence” to be “the flow of content across multiple media platforms.” He utilizes the term “media convergence” to describe the “technological, industrial, cultural, and social changes” that we are now experiencing as old and new forms of media and associated technologies collide and create new, more accessible ways of interacting with media. One has only to look online at the myriad invitations for public commentary that coincides with the rise of social media; in other words, we are experiencing a blurring of boundaries between producer and consumer. ¹ Now, we as citizens have widespread access and freedom to consume and even create the media content rather than purely relying on news and entertainment industries to do this for us. However, these new freedoms and possibilities must be met with new types of tools and skill sets that help people effectively and critically utilize these technologies.

Education emphasizes various literacies: research, written, and technological. Similarly, we need to extend our understanding of literacy to the ways we communicate with, critically analyze, consume, and create media as it exists on the internet, our news, radio, television, movies, videogames, and all other types of media. National Association for Media Literacy Education defines “media literacy” on their website as the “ability to encode and decode the symbols transmitted via media and the ability to synthesize, analyze and produce mediated messages.” ² Without these media literacy tools to empower us as both consumers and makers

1. Jenkins, Henry. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press. 2006. pp. 2-4, 17-18, 258-260.
2. National Association for Media Literacy Education. “Resources: Media Literacy Defined” Namle.net. <https://namle.net/publications/media-literacy-definitions/>.

of media, we are ill-equipped to resist the deception and misinformation found in our current media landscape. The more our media professionals hold themselves responsible for helping all communities become informed consumers and creators, the more ownership we will have over the accuracy and quality of information disseminated to the public. **My goal is to study ways of achieving media literacy via multiple disciplines; applying these tools, I will create media content aimed at educating my local, national, and global community on how to become media literate. I plan to do this by developing and honing my skills as a documentary multimedia storyteller and educator.** My next step towards making this goal possible is to pursue a self-determined major in Documentary Media Studies at Skidmore College.

I am particularly interested, as an aspiring documentary storyteller and educator, in exploring many different aspects of media literacy that can serve social justice causes in the United States. In this new media age, there are endless opportunities to form powerful links between social justice movements, marginalized communities and effective media platforms that can provide a space for sharing information, community storytelling and advocacy for social change. One objective I am striving to accomplish in my self-determined major path is to examine and present how media literacy can be a useful tool that serves marginalized populations in our country.

One work which I draw inspiration from in pursuing this task, is the documentary film *Ethnic Notions* (1987) by filmmaker, educator, and activist Marlon Riggs. This documentary traces the history of anti-Black racism in the United States by examining different forms of mass media such as cartoons, feature films, popular songs, and household artifacts, which helped perpetuate racial stereotypes and influence the political and social mistreatment of the Black community. The film in itself is a form of media being used as an educational tool that, through its own media analysis of these racist images, helps us all develop a more critical approach towards our consumption of images found in our media and how racialized power dynamics can shape whose images do get represented fairly or not and if they are represented at all. Furthermore, the media literacy Riggs's work is promoting serves the Black community

in the way it brings to light a racist history told from the perspective of a marginalized community that so often is misrepresented and left without the power to tell and construct their own stories and media.

But, in order to build these links between marginalized communities and media literacy in successful and justice-minded ways, aspiring and current media professionals like myself must develop our own media literacy skills in conjunction with an acute awareness of the ethical implications and capacities of the media technology we are relying on. Included in the type of “media literacy education” I am hoping to gain for myself as a Documentary Media Studies student at Skidmore is an understanding of the ways social structures such as racism, classism, sexism and ableism impact myself and those around me, both on and off media platforms and technologies. The best way I know to be prepared to learn to critically analyze media and then create content about media literacy is by creating a major that draws from courses offered across a variety of different disciplines, paired with a minor in Intergroup Relations.

Documentary studies is interdisciplinary so, my course work should reflect the same interdisciplinarity. There is not one major or current double-major combination which allows for both the breadth and depth of a well-focused and developed documentary media studies education at Skidmore. While Skidmore’s Media and Film Studies Program and MDOCS do offer a substantial number of courses, which I have already benefited from and plan on continuing to enroll in, neither offer majors.

The proposed self-determined major enables me to take a number of valuable courses across various departments, each contributing to my focus on media analysis and production from a variety of disciplinary lenses. For instance, if I were fully steeped in the English or Sociology departments, I would no longer be able to fulfill the production skills requirement of my major which steer me into Studio Art courses such as Digital Foundations, Interactive Design as well as upper level MDOCS courses and independent studies that I have been working towards since fall semester of my freshman year. Likewise, if I were to become a Studio Art or Theater major, which offer a significant amount of Media and Film Studies courses, there would be no flexibility for the media literacy and theory as well as the ethics and business skills my major requires. In addition, without this accessibility, the community engagement

component of my academic goals here at Skidmore would be entirely neglected. However, when departments including, but not limited to Media and Film Studies, MDOCs, Studio Art, English, Sociology and Arts Administration come together in a self-determined major, my education will be informed and strengthened by its exposure to a diverse set of epistemologies, each deepening my understanding of the multi-faceted discipline that is documentary media studies.

Skidmore has opened incredible doors for me, serving as motivation for me to continue striving to pursue documentary media studies. This past summer, I was granted funding and support in taking on a seven-week documentary intensive through the Media Institute for Social Change in Portland, Oregon. With the Media Institute, I gained hands-on technical production experience as well as the opportunity to incorporate my passion for using media as a tool for social justice in audio and visual documentary work I independently produced. Here on campus, I worked as the student assistant to documentary filmmaker, Cecilia Aldarondo. This opportunity has given me insight into the pre- and post-production preparation and editing process in the independent documentary world. Currently, I assist the Academic Technologies department in strategizing ways to make their cutting-edge Virtual Reality technology engaging, ethical, and educational for the Skidmore's interdisciplinary academic community. In addition, I have already begun to use these media skills I have gained from my MDOCS production courses and my summer program to launch a social justice radio show on WSPN as co-founder and creative producer. This show, *Pass the Mic* serves as a creative space for people of color, international, immigrant, and Opportunity Program students, as well as other underrepresented groups on campus. They are free to share art, stories, and information on social issues to inspire discussion and spread awareness. These opportunities and experiences have already helped me grow as a media maker and social justice advocate. Creating this self-determined major will allow me to be fulfilled further as a student and as a creator for the duration of my time here at Skidmore.

OUTLINE OF CURRICULUM

This major would pull from various departments including, but not limited to Media and Film Studies, The John B. Moore Documentary Studies Collaborative, Sociology, Studio Art, Arts Administration and English. The first goal of the major is to hone practical skills in the planning, executing, and post-production stages of visual and audio documentary work including exposure to DSLR videography and photography, various video, audio, and photo editing software, and communication web-design skills.

The second goal is to develop my media literacy and critical thinking skills, enabling me to be diligent at decoding and coherently relaying messages between the media I create and the individuals I am making this media for. These skills are essential for me to gain considering my long-term professional goals of helping others develop these media literacy skills of their own. In my undergraduate college career, my further development of these skills would involve learning how to utilize methodologies present in sociology such as video ethnography and concepts included in interactive design to help inform my documentary media studies throughout my academic and professional career.

Another goal for this major is to gain practical business, marketing, finance and entertainment law knowledge to prepare me for my future freelance media work. It is vital that aspiring artistic entrepreneurs understand the financial worth of our own work in the creative marketplace as well as have a comprehensive background in navigating intellectual property and copyright laws.

Finally, as will be shown through my final project, my independent documentary studies as well as my summer break and study abroad opportunities, my major would enable me to gain meaningful experience in using media storytelling and analysis as a tool for community engagement, conflict resolution, and social activism. I plan to strengthen these communication skills on our own campus by taking Intergroup Relations courses and pursuing a minor in the IGR program. Pairing this minor with my Documentary Media Studies major will allow me to become well-versed in how social and political structures impact our personal lives and how I can become a powerful communicator across and for various racial/ethnic and socioeconomic populations.

CORE CURRICULUM

Foundations

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Type	Level
AR 136	Digital Foundations +	4	Production	Foundations
AA 201	Foundations of Arts Administration +	4	Arts & Business/ Ethics	Foundations
MF 220	Intro to Media Studies +	4	Theory/ Literacy	Foundations

Methods

SO 227	Social Research Methods	3	Methods	Intermediate
AA 351	The Entrepreneurial Artist	3	Methods	Intermediate
DS 251	Documentary Storytelling	3	Methods	Intermediate
AR 262J	Digital Media and Interactive Design	4	Methods	Advanced
AAMB 321	Entertainment Law & Business	4	Methods	Advanced
SO 351	Video Ethnography	3	Methods	Advanced

Theory

EN 228	Documentary Film +	3	Theory/ Literacy	Intermediate
EN 364	Appropriation & Authorship- Literature & Media **	3	Theory/ Literacy	Advanced

Capstone

ID 351 + 372	SDM Prep + Senior Project	4-5 credits	Capstone	Advanced
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+ Already taken ***See Appendix for more study abroad info

** See pages 14-16 for information about professor approval + pre-reqs already taken

BREADTH REQUIREMENTS

Arts Administration

AA 201 **Foundations of Arts Administration** (3 credits) +
AA 351 **The Entrepreneurial Artist** (3 credits)
AAMB 321 **Entertainment Law and Business** (4 credits)

Art

AR 136 **Digital Foundations** (4 credits) +
AR 262 **Digital Media and Interactive Design** (3-4 credits)

Media and Film Studies

MF 220 **Intro to Media Studies** (4 credits) +
EN 228 **Documentary Film** (3 credits) +
EN 364 **Remixes, Mashups & Memes Appropriation & Authorship-Literature & Media** (3 credits)

*Documentary Studies (MDOCS)**

DS 110 **Storytelling: Video** (2 credits) +
DS 113 **Storytelling: Interviewing** (1 credit) +
DS 251 **Documentary Storytelling** (3 credits) +
DS 251 **Community & Radio** (1 credit) +
DS 302A **Storytellers' Institute Prep** (3 credits) +

Sociology

SO 227R **Social Research Methods** (4 credits)
SO 351 **Video Ethnography** (3 credits)

+ Already taken

***The breadth of my proposed major includes the electives I have already completed in Documentary Studies which are listed here as well as on page 10**

COURSE SEQUENCES

Sequence one:

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Sequence
AR 136	Digital Foundations +	4	Foundations
DS 251	Documentary Storytelling	3	Intermediate
AR 262J	Digital Media and Interactive Design	4	Advanced
ID 351 + 372	SDM Prep + Senior Project	4-5 credits	Advanced

Sequence two:

AA 201	Foundations of Arts Administration +	4	Foundations
AA 351	The Entrepreneurial Artist	3	Intermediate
AAMB 321	Entertainment Law & Business	4	Advanced

Sequence three:

MF 220	Intro to Media Studies +	4	Foundations
EN 228	Documentary Film +	3	Intermediate
EN 364	Appropriation & Authorship- Literature & Media	3	Advanced

Sequence four:

SO 227	Social Research Methods	3	Intermediate
SO 351	Video Ethnography	3	Advanced

ELECTIVE COURSES

Media & Film Electives (counting towards Documentary Media Studies major)

DS 113 **Storytelling: Interviewing** (1 credit) +

DS 110 **Storytelling: Video** (2 credits) +

DS 210 **Audio Documentary** (3 credits)

DS 251 **Community & Radio** (1 credit) +

AM 265 **Post Apocalyptic Film and Literature** (4 credits)

DS 302A **Storytellers' Institute Prep** (3 credits) +

DS 302 **Advanced Documentary Studies Workshop** (1-4 credits)

DS 399 **Professional Internship in Documentary Studies** (3-4 credits)

US/AH 340 **Visual Culture and the Urban Landscape** (3 credits)***

FS 317 **Transnational Cinema: Germany & U.S** (3 credits)***

+ *Already taken*

****See Appendix for more study abroad info*

MINOR & LIBERAL ARTS REQUIREMENTS

Intergroup Relations Minor

SO 219C **Race and Power** (4 credits) +

IG 201A **Intergroup Relations Dialogue** (2 credits) +

IG 361 **Racial Identities: Theory & Praxis** (4 credits)

IG 364/365 **Practicum/ Dialogue Facilitation** (5 credits)

SW 212 **Social Work Values and Populations-At-Risk** (3 credits)

All-College Liberal Arts Requirements

SPP 100 **Human Dilemmas** (4 credits) +

WLS 103 **Alternative Second Semester Spanish** (3 credits) +

EN 228 **Documentary Film** (3 credits) +

PL 101 **Intro to American Politics** (3 credits) +

SOC 219C **Race and Power** (3 credits) +

PY 109 **Sound & Music w/ Lab** (4 credits) +

EN 105 **Tribe** (4 credits) +

MP 218 **Harp** (2 credits) +

+ *Already taken*

SEMESTER OUTLINE

Completed Coursework

OP Summer 2016

MA 100 **Quantitative Reasoning** (3 credits)
HE HPC **Language Skills** (0 credits)
HE HPD **Science Literacy** (0 credits)
HE HPG **Critical Reading** (0 credits)

First-Year Fall 2016

SSP 100 **Human Dilemmas** (4 credits)
IA 101 **Intro to International Affairs** (4 credits)
MF 220 **Intro to Media Studies** (4 credits)
DS 113 **Storytelling: Interviewing** (1 credit)
HE HPF **Academic Transformations** (0 credits)

First-Year Spring 2017

WLS 103 **Alternative Second Semester Spanish** (3 credits)
AA 201 **Foundations of Arts Administration** (3 credits)
EN 228 **Documentary Film** (3 credits)
DS 251A **Community & Radio** (1 credit)
DS 110B **Storytelling: Video** (2 credits)
MP 281 **Harp** (2 credits)

Summer 2017...Media Institute for Social Change: Summer Documentary Program July-August '17

Sophomore Fall 2017

SO 219 **Race and Power** (4 credits)
DS 251C **Documentary Storytelling** (3 credits)
EN 105 **Tribe** (4 credits)
PL 101 **Intro to American Politics** (3 credits)
MP 297 **Klezmer Band** (1 credit)
MP 281 **Harp** (2 credits)

Sophomore Spring 2018

AR 136 **Digital Foundations** (4 credits)
PY 109 **Sound & Music w Lab** (4 credits)
DS 351A **Storytellers' Institute Prep** (3 credits)
IG 201A **Intergroup Relations Dialogue** (2 credits)

Total Credits to Date: 60 Credits

Anticipated Coursework

Summer 2018- Session I: MDOCS Storytellers' Institute
Session II: Documentary Internship with 9-Man Productions

Junior Fall 2018

AA 351 The Entrepreneurial Artist (3 credits)
SO 227R Social Research Methods (4 credits)
AM 265 Post Apocalyptic Film and Literature (4 credits)
DS 210 Audio Documentary (3 credits)

Junior Spring 2019- IES Berlin: Metropolitan Studies (15 credits)

FS 317 Transnational Cinema: Germany and the U.S. (3 credits)
US/AH 340 Visual Culture and the Urban Landscape (3 credits)
SO/CU 330 Sex, Drugs, & Rock 'n' Roll: The Impact of Pop Culture on the Modern Metropolis (3 credits)
SO/HS/GS 335 The Politics of Gender: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow (3 credits)
GR 101 German Language in Context: Novice Abroad I (3 credits)

Summer 2019 - SO 351 Video Ethnography (3 credits)

Senior Fall 2019

AR 262 Digital Media and Interactive Design (3-4 credits)
AAMB 321 Entertainment Law and Business (4 credits)
IGR 361 Racial Identities: Theory & Praxis (4 credits)
ID 351 SDM Prep (1 credit)

Senior Spring 2020

EN 364 Remixes, Mashups & Memes Appropriation & Authorship-Literature & Media (3 credits)
IG 364/365 Dialogue/ Practicum in Facilitation (5 credits)
IG 300-level Intergroup Relations Elective (3-4 credits)
ID 372 Senior Project (3-4 credits)

CATALOG DESCRIPTIONS

AR 136 Digital Foundations - 4 credits

A survey of technological and aesthetic best practices and theory in visual communication. Students will study the basic functions and integral properties of Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, and other presentation and video editing software. Vector and raster imaging techniques, scanning, printing, and using digital images and typography are introduced through a series of demonstration/projects that build upon one another. Projects focus on design principles and basic skills needed to communicate a visual message with a specific intent.

I have completed this course Spring 2018. It has equipped me with practical and necessary visual media technology and software skills. Also, this serves as preparation me for future Communication Design and Interactive Design courses as well as my final project.

DS 251 Documentary Storytelling - 3 credits

In many ways, documentary stories aren't so much written as discovered. Our world is already full of stories waiting to be told, but what makes a story worth telling and how one should tell it, are two of the most crucial questions any documentarian must answer. From initial concept through to the final edit, this course asks students to grapple with this process of documentary discovery to develop a robust set of practices from which to tell the stories of the world around us. Major topics include-- How to develop, nurture and test a story idea: when to know it has 'legs'; The value of Loglines, Treatments and Pitches for conceptualizing story; Form and Methodology: is this story best told as a short? Podcast? Feature? Interactive project? Does it require archival research? Interviews?; How to ethically obtain access to a story; Finding the story in the footage—the importance of the editing room. Students will work with an archive of previously shot footage to craft a short documentary film, learning basic editing techniques with Adobe Premiere.

The editing, writing, and technological skills I gained by this course were proven to be essential for anyone pursuing documentary or any media-based storytelling work. The readings, documentary filmmaker guests, required project viewings, and hands-on editing work has helped me for my current and future production work.

AR 262J Digital Media and Interactive Design - 3-4 credits

This course covers historical, political, theoretical, and practical issues in art and image making in relation to interactive arts. Through studio work, you will be introduced to moving image in creative practice, that will evolve into interactive works. Contextualizing new media practice with art historical agendas will be examined in order to dissect the mediums influence on meaning, and create work that directly participates with the potentials of the interface.

This course will build upon the key skills and concepts introduced in AR 136 and focus on making interactive work. This will be important for my future as a media artist dealing with interactive documentary and web-based visual work. Taking this course will also prepare me for advanced courses in this field and open up the possibilities to explore this medium for my final project.

SO 227 Social Research Methods - 3 credits

Examination of methods employed in the investigation of sociological problems. This course analyzes the research process as an integral whole including political and ethical issues in conducting research. Topics include conceptualization, measurement approaches, design of surveys, and methods of interviewing and observation. Students design studies using various methodological techniques.

This course will further fulfill the methodology requirement of this major by helping me build qualitative and quantitative research skills for any academic and professional documentary work I will be pursuing.

MF 220 Introduction to Media Studies - 4 credits

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? 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.

I took this course during the Fall of my freshman year. It provides this major with the foundations necessary to encoding and decoding media messages as well as creating and writing analytically about film, television, and radio.

EN 228 Documentary Film - 3 Credits

In a 2010 article, New York Times film critic A. O. Scott described the field of contemporary documentary film as 'heterogeneous to the point of anarchy.' This course takes this heterogeneity to heart; while it by nature cannot provide you with an encyclopedic knowledge of an innately woolly film genre, it will acquaint you with a wide array of approaches and key debates in documentary film. From cinéma vérité to ethnography, from postmodern self reflexivity to activist agit-prop, and from archival explorations to personal essays, you will come to appreciate why and how documentaries consistently seek to explore, reveal, and transform our worlds.

I took this course during the Spring of my freshman year. In this course, each week we watched, analyzed, and discussed different genres of documentaries. We learned how to develop and execute arguments about documentary film in addition, to becoming more critical consumers of films and documentary projects.

EN 364 Remixes, Mashups & Memes Appropriation and Authorship in Contemporary Literature and Media - 3 credits

Most studies of literature and culture privilege originality: the work of a usually singular author bringing something new into the world. In this course, we'll pursue an alternate approach to understanding cultural production by considering the artistic and social value of creations that are made of pre-existing material. These deliberately derivative works raise far-reaching questions about authorship and artistry: how do practices like copying, collage, sampling, and remixing alter our conception of what it means to create literature and art? How do different forms and technologies—print, film, recorded sound, digital media—make possible different modes of appropriation and reuse? What new aesthetic, cultural, and political possibilities emerge through these approaches?

This course would inform and provide breadth into the media theory and media literacy component of my major. Also, this course would better inform me about ethics and social awareness as a documentary media-maker. I would be prepared for this 300-level media literacy course after having taken MF 220 and EN 228.

SO 351 Video Ethnography - 3 credits

Visual phenomena are central to everyday contemporary life, both their interpretation and their creation. We will discuss key theoretical and empirical works in visual sociology/visual studies and will familiarize ourselves with ethnographic data gathering and analysis. A major research project will have students producing a sociologically-informed work of video ethnography from start to finish, along the way becoming conversant in methodological and filmmaking best practices.

This course will better prepare me for visual methods necessary to satisfy my capstone and overall self-determined major.

AA 201 Foundations of Arts Administration - 3 credits

An introduction to the foundations of arts administration combining artistic sensibility with business acumen. By following current news and trends in the arts, students apply classroom learning to real-time experience. This course offers students insight into a variety of arts organizations as well as experimental, presenting, and non-traditional forms of organizations. Topics include organizational structure and board dynamics, marketing and audience development, philanthropy and fundraising, labor relations, and legal issues. The focus is primarily on nonprofit arts organizations.

I completed this course during the Spring of my Freshman year. It serves as the foundation for my ethics and business component of my major as the class material, group projects, and speakers helped inform how an independent filmmaker and artist like myself should navigate both the museum art economy and non-profit world.

AA 351A The Entrepreneurial Artist - 3 credits

Today's business climate presents many challenges to visual artists. Artists find themselves needing to combine their creative abilities with strong business practices. Whether you are an artist interested in financially sustaining your art making or have a vision to launch an arts-based business, this course is designed to introduce students to the basic principles needed. Through active participation and an interactive classroom format, students will merge practical business knowledge with insight from local experts in the field, to fuel students' entrepreneurial spirit. Topics to be explored include business planning, legal requirements, budgeting, marketing, branding, and networking.

This course would allow me to acquire the necessary business, marketing, and other practical skills I will need as an aspiring entrepreneurial freelancer in the media world. I will be prepared to take on this course given my background in AA 201 and AR 136.

AAMB 321 Entertainment Law & Business - 4 credits

An interdisciplinary study of the connections and conflicts between the business, artistic, and legal or ethical issues that arise in the arts and entertainment arena (theatre, music, film, television, literary, and visual arts). Students will explore, from both financial and creative perspectives, the complex and often fractious relationships among stakeholders in these industries while developing a practical understanding of the particular considerations that emerge with each kind of collaboration. Topics may include: the impact of new technologies and distribution methods, social media and marketing, copyright and piracy, privacy, free speech, defamation, and celebrity publicity rights and endorsements. This course covers the following dimensions for studying management and business in context: I, II, III, IV, VI.

This course will expand upon the topics explored and business methodology AA 201 and AA 351 provided me with. Gaining this entertainment business law perspective is essential to navigating the legal and ethical situations I will encounter in my documentary work as a student and future professional.

GOALS/ FINAL PROJECT

It is my goal to leave Skidmore with a well-rounded and cross-disciplinary education which will fuel my career as a professional media-maker who creates socially conscious work. I hope to graduate with a portfolio that showcases the skills and experiences I have gained from all of my courses. It is important to me that this portfolio consists of work from a multitude of documentary media (audio, video, web-based, etc.). Specifically for my final project, I aim to create a 20-minute documentary paired with a scholarly essay that explores media literacy and media justice as they relate to race, power, and accessibility.

My experiences taking MDOCS and Studio Art courses as well as attending the Media Institute for Social Change, MDOCS Storyteller's Institute, working as an intern under documentary filmmakers Cecilia Aldarondo and Ursula Liang and my study abroad studies, together will further enhance my media arts skills and abilities, to be used towards my SDM final project. In addition, from my social research methods course to my Interactive Design studies along with my Intergroup Relations minor, I will be well-prepared for creating content which can clearly deliver a message through art and media that would be accessible to as many individuals as possible.

In order to have satisfied this self-determined major in Documentary Media Studies, I need to create a senior project which utilizes the digital media and filmmaking skills I have acquired during my time here. However, it is also important to me that this project has a community engagement component, allowing my campus community to truly interact with and seek their own meanings in my work. My hope is to host screenings across campus followed by dialogues I would personally facilitate. By doing so, I would hope to use my research and mediamaking as a launching pad on my own campus for my peers to reflect, discuss, and critically examine the ways they consume and participate in our media culture.

APPENDIX

Introduction:

I have included more information for my intended study abroad program here. Below you will find the IES Berlin: Metropolitan Studies (a Skidmore approved program) program overview as well as further information about the courses I would be studying.

While, I plan to take five courses for college credit abroad, only FS 317 - **Transnational Cinema: Germany and the U.S.** and US/AH 340 - **Visual Culture and the Urban Landscape** (see page 8) will be taken as part of my major's electives.

In the case of not getting accepted in my proposed program, I have listed in "APPENDIX B" below the courses I would take on Skidmore's campus as an alternative.

A. IES Berlin: Metropolitan Studies

a. Program Overview

- i. Using Berlin as a case study, this English-taught program examines issues relevant to major cities today. **Through comparative and interdisciplinary courses, you study topics such as architecture, cultural identity, gender and sexual politics, multiculturalism, popular culture, and urban studies to better understand the development of the city and its culture.** Berlin will also be your classroom. Imagine touring Berlin's neighborhoods and exploring the city's architecture as you learn about **metropolitan development and urban planning**. Or attending and then discussing a local theater event as part of your pop culture class. Wherever possible, our courses take advantage of the city's many historical, artistic, and cultural sites, and several courses include a hands-on, practical component.
- ii. In addition, your learning is enhanced by extended course-related trips to Poland or St. Petersburg, Russia, that provide a comparative context for your studies. In these cities, you tour neighborhoods, visit museums, attend lectures, and meet with local university professors to discuss the topics you're learning.
- iii. Students will take 15-18 credits per semester. All courses are taught in English, excluding language courses, and are 3 credits. You will create your own academic experience by selecting from the following program components:

b. Selected Courses

i. FS 317 - Transnational Cinema: Germany and the U.S. (ELECTIVE)

ii.

1. Syllabus [here](#)

2. Description: What is national cinema in the light of the international dimension of the production and reception of movies? This question is the starting point of the seminar. We will use the example of German filmmaking in its relation to US cinema to explore the ways in which cinema cultures coexist within the broader context of globalization. With the concept of the transnational, we can look at film production and reception in a way that takes both national and global concerns into focus. (continues in syllabus above)

3. Objectives:

- a. Understand the histories of US and German film and how they interconnect
- b. Apply the concept of transnationality to understanding global film production
- c. Combine theoretical insights with practical film analysis
- d. Reflect on Berlin as a city of transnational films and filmmaking
- e. Reflect on filmic representation and socio-political contexts
- f. Structure and express observations and thoughts on films and texts
- g. Understand the histories of US and German film and how they interconnect
- h. Apply the concept of transnationality to understanding global film production
- i. Combine theoretical insights with practical film analysis
- j. Reflect on Berlin as a city of transnational films and filmmaking
- k. Reflect on filmic representation and socio-political contexts
- l. Structure and express observations and thoughts on films and texts

iii. US/AH 340 - Visual Culture and the Urban Landscape (ELECTIVE)

1. Syllabus [here](#)

2. Description: This interdisciplinary course analyzes Berlin as a model case for the relations between urban planning, architecture, visual arts, politics and life style. The city that attracts people and ideas from the East and from the West has many faces – most notably perceptible in art and architecture. The program will be focused on interdependencies between ideologies, aesthetical expression and the city as a living space, integrating historical and contemporary aspects. An excursion to Paris, including a course-related trip through Belleville will provide a comparative perspective both on the question how these two cities have been defined by their cultural and built environments as a metropolis

under specific conditions of a centralized planning and appropriation by natives and immigrants. (continues in syllabus above)

3. **SO/CU 330 - Sex, Drugs, & Rock 'n' Roll: The Impact of Pop Culture on the Modern Metropolis**

a. **Syllabus here**

b. **Description:** This course will provide a selective overview of metropolitan popular culture from the early 20th century until the present, comparing the cities of Berlin, Paris and St. Petersburg. Especially in US- influenced Western Europe, popular culture developed towards a true mass culture disseminated by the continuously expanding branches of the mass media. The course deals with many facets that make up contemporary popular culture, but in particular will concentrate on the development of youth culture and lifestyles in relation to popular music such as rock, punk, rap, techno and industrial. The course also touches the development of spectator sports and advertising. The course will examine post-war popular culture in France, the Soviet Union and both parts of Germany, and the situation after German unification. Differences and commonalities between German, French and Russian popular cultures with a special focus on Berlin, Paris and St. Petersburg will be discussed. Among other things, the course will explore the specific role of popular music for shaping national identities as well as countercultures.

(see in full in syllabus above)

4. **SO/HS/GS 335 - The Politics of Gender: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow**

a. **Syllabus here**

b. **Description:** This course examines key concepts, theories, and developments of the 'politics of gender' as played out in the history of Berlin from the 19th to the 21st centuries. We will explore how gender and sexuality influence various facets of life and therefore are important analytical categories in many academic disciplines. Every session will focus on a different subject area or medium, such as science, sociability, travel or film, and how it intersects with the field of gender studies. The course is structured along a historic axis, and looks at the politics of gender as it presented itself in Berlin's history during successive periods – Prussia, the German Empire, the Weimar Republic, WW II, the post-WW II period with West Germany and the GDR, unified Germany/contemporary Berlin. Three main topics that we will be looking at diachronically are women's liberation, the history of sexualities and queer politics. (continues in syllabus above)

5. GR 101 - **German Language in Context: Novice Abroad I**
 - a. **Syllabus [here](#)**
 - b. **Description:** This course is designed for students with little or no prior knowledge of the language. By the end of the course, the student will have developed a basic foundation in the five skills: intercultural communication, reading, writing, listening and speaking to accomplish a variety of basic everyday needs in the host culture as described in the learning outcomes below.

B. Backup Semester Course Load on Skidmore's campus:

- a. **Junior Spring 2019- 15-16 credits**
 - i. SO 351 **Video Ethnography** (3 credits)
 1. I would take this in the Spring as opposed to the summer session.
 - ii. EN 229 **Transnational Cinema** (3 credits)
 - iii. SW 212 **Social Work Values and Populations-At-Risk** (3 credits)
 1. IGR elective requirement
 - iv. DS 200 or 300-level **Independent Study** in Interactive Documentary (3-4 credits)
 - v. IGR 361 **Racial Identities: Theory & Praxis** (4 credits)
 1. I would take this in the Spring as opposed to my Fall of senior year