

# HISTORY OF MEDIA ARTS II

Spring 2018 - VM 101-08 - 4 credits  
Tues/Thurs 8-9:45a - Ansin 605

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is the second of a two-semester course that explores the historical development of the media arts, focusing on the continuing development of the film, broadcasting, and sound recording industries after 1965, as well as the development of video and digital technologies. Investigates the relationships between economics, industrial history, and social and political systems, and the styles and techniques of specific films and videos, broadcast programs, and digital media products.

*On a personal note: This class is truly the briefest of introductions to a tiny sliver of media history. Even with a full semester together, we'll BARELY scratch the surface of media history since 1965. And while we'll discuss a smattering of international works, there is a TON of stuff created outside the U.S. that we won't be able to discuss. Not to mention lesser known works within the U.S.! Therefore, I encourage you to take upper-level media studies courses and explore other aspects of media history by reading, watching, and listening to additional material outside the classroom. Happy to help you find stuff you love—in this course and beyond!*

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course seeks to:

- Provide students with an overview of media history, including alternative modes of production, distribution, and exhibition, from approximately 1965 to the present
- Examine the dynamic between media texts and the larger cultural, political, economic, aesthetic, and/or technological contexts in which they are produced, distributed, and exhibited
- Assess the role of media in identity formation
- Introduce students to material and concepts covered in greater depth later in the VMA curriculum

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a basic understanding of the history, theory, and practice of media arts
- Conduct and generate media studies research
- Recognize causal mechanisms in media history through critical thinking, discussion, research, and writing
- Make critical and thoughtful choices when consuming and creating media

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Students are expected to complete reading assignments before class.

- Kristin Thompson & David Bordwell. *Film History: An Introduction, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* (2010)
- All other assigned readings are available on Canvas.

No laptops. No cell phones. No breakfast.  
Given our start time, liquid caffeine is 100% acceptable.

## ASSIGNMENTS

Participation	15%
Personal History Project / Research Paper	20%
Exam #1	20%
Exam #2	20%
Final Research Paper	25%

### **Participation: Attendance, Discussion, and Clip Fests** (15% of final grade):

Your participation grade is based on three factors: attendance, discussion, and submitting to “Clip Fests.” Attendance is mandatory—more than three absences will result in the lowering of your final grade. Since we are a fairly large class, I’ll be using a randomizer to check attendance (info forthcoming). We’ll discuss all sorts of stuff throughout the semester, and I expect you to be engaged enough in the material to have an opinion about it. On Tuesday, 1/23, I will assign dates for each of you to be a “Discussion Starter.” On your assigned date, you will be required to spark class discussion by making a comment or posing a question drawn from the reading, screening, or lecture. If talking isn’t your thing, you may submit a clip that relates to our topic. You are also expected to participate in both Clip Fests. Details to follow—they’re fun!

- Discussion Starter: individual dates TBD
- CLIP FEST I: Tuesday, 2/27
- CLIP FEST II: Tuesday, 5/1

### **Personal History Project / Research Paper** (20% of final grade):

This assignment has two parts. For part one, you will interview an older friend or family member who was consuming media in the 1960s and/or 1970s. You will talk with them about ONE film, TV show, or musician/album they felt was personally formative and/or shaped the culture in which they lived. Part two will be a short research paper (3-4 pages) on the film, TV show, or musician/album your interview subject discussed. This part of the assignment is designed to familiarize you with the process of researching and writing media history and criticism. The feedback you receive will prepare and guide you as you write your final research paper. Details of the assignment will be shared on Tuesday, 1/30. Late submissions will be penalized 10 points for every day your assignment is late.

- Due: Tuesday, 2/13

### **Exam #1** (20% of final grade):

Exam #1 will cover material from the start of class through Thursday, 2/22. The exam consists of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions and is designed to measure your retention and understanding of the material presented. The exam will be taken in class without notes, and you will have the entire course period to complete it. No make-up exams will be given.

- Exam #1: Thursday, 3/1

### **Exam #2** (20% of final grade):

Exam #2 will cover material from Tuesday, 3/13 through Tuesday, 4/17. The exam consists of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions and is designed to measure your retention and understanding of the material presented. The exam will be taken in class without notes, and you will have the entire course period to complete it. No make-up exams will be given.

- Exam #2: Thursday, 4/19

### **Final Research Paper** (25% of final grade):

You will write a final research paper (6-7 pages) on one of the topics provided. You’ll be graded on how convincingly you make your argument and the quality and clarity of your research and analysis. Details of the assignment will be shared on Tuesday, 3/27. Late submissions will be penalized 10 points for every day your assignment is late.

- Proposal due: Tuesday, 4/3
- Paper due: Tuesday, 5/1

## ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE

If we need to change things up, we will do that together.

### WEEK ONE

Tuesday, 1/16

- Class Introductions
- Detailed Syllabus Review
- Why study media history?

Thursday, 1/18

- 1960s Music and American Cinema
- Reading: *Film History*, pages 470-493

### WEEK TWO

Tuesday, 1/23

- **Receive Discussion Starter assignment**
- 1960s American Cinema, continued

Thursday, 1/25

- 1960s International Cinema: Black African Cinema
- Reading: *Film History*, pages 507-509

### WEEK THREE

Tuesday, 1/30

- **Receive Personal History Project / Research Paper assignment**
- 1960s Television and the Rise of Public Broadcasting
- Reading: Aniko Bodroghkozy, "*The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* and the Youth Rebellion"

Thursday, 2/1

- 1960s Television, continued
- Reading: Lynn Spigel, "From Domestic Space to Outer Space: The 1960s Fantastic Family Sitcom"

### WEEK FOUR

Tuesday, 2/6

- 1970s Music and American Cinema
- Reading: David Cook, "Auteur Cinema and the 'Film Generation' in 1970s Hollywood" (Canvas)

Thursday, 2/8

- 1970s International Cinema: European Art Cinema
- Reading: Julia Knight, "A Divided History"

## WEEK FIVE

Tuesday, 2/13

- **Personal History Project / Research Paper due**
- NO CLASS

Thursday, 2/15

- Subversive Horror: The New Ministry of Fear (Horror Cinema in the 60s, 70s, and 80s)
- *Guest Lecturer: James Delaney*

## WEEK SIX

Tuesday, 2/20

- NO CLASS (Monday schedule observed)

Thursday, 2/22

- 1970s Television: Sitcoms and TV Relevancy
- Reading: Todd Gitlin, "The Turn Toward 'Relevance'"
- Reading: *Time Magazine* (September 1972), "Cover Story: The Team Behind Archie Bunker & Co."

## WEEK SEVEN

Tuesday, 2/27

- CLIP FEST I: 1960s and 1970s Fan Favorites

Thursday, 3/1

- **Exam #1**

## WEEK EIGHT

Spring Break!

Tuesday, 3/6

- NO CLASS

Thursday 3/8

- NO CLASS

## WEEK NINE

Tuesday, 3/13

- Documentary and Experimental Film
- Reading: *Film History*, Chapter 24

Thursday, 3/15

- Blockbuster Cinema
- Reading: Marco Cucco, "The Promise is Great: The Blockbuster and the Hollywood Economy" (Canvas)

## WEEK TEN

Tuesday, 3/20

- 1980s: In-home Entertainment and the Cable Era
- Reading: Michele Hilmes, Excerpt from *Only Connect: A Cultural History of Broadcasting in the U.S.*

Thursday, 3/22

- "Quality" Television and *The Cosby Show*
- Reading: Todd Gitlin, "*Hill Street Blues: Make It Look Messy*"
- Bambi Haggins, "*Losing Cosby*"

## WEEK ELEVEN

Tuesday, 3/27

- **Receive Final Research Paper assignment**
- Postmodernism
- Reading: Val Hill, "Postmodernism and Cinema"

Thursday, 3/29

- Postmodernism, continued
- Reading: Tony Purvis, "Postmodernism and Television"
- Reading: Jim Collins, "Television and Postmodernism"

## WEEK TWELVE

Tuesday, 4/3

- **Final Research Paper Proposal due**
- 1980s and 1990s International Cinema: Chinese Cinema
- Reading: *Film History*, pages 643-658

Thursday, 4/5

- New American Independent Cinema
- Brenda Cooper: "Relevancy of Race and Racism in Spectators' Experiences of Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing*"

## WEEK THIRTEEN

Tuesday, 4/10

- New American Independent Cinema, continued

Thursday, 4/12

- Contemporary Industry and Media Conglomeration
- Reading: *Film History*, pages 661-693

#### **WEEK FOURTEEN**

Tuesday, 4/17

- 1990s Music and Television
- Reading: Chad Raphael, "The Political Economic Origins of Reali-TV"

Thursday, 4/19

- **Exam #2**

#### **WEEK FIFTEEN**

Tuesday, 4/24

- Video Games, the Internet, and Participatory Culture
- Reading: Amanda Lotz, "Television Outside the Box"
- Reading: Simon Egenfeldt-Nielsen, "History" from *Understanding Video Games*
- Reading: Henry Jenkins, "Digital Cinema, Media Convergence, and Participatory Culture"

Thursday, 4/26

- NO CLASS (Work on your papers!)

#### **WEEK SIXTEEN**

Tuesday, 5/1

- **Final Research Paper due**
- CLIP FEST II: 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s Fan Favorites

#### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Emerson is committed to providing equal access and support to all students who qualify through the provision of reasonable accommodations, so that each student may fully participate in the Emerson experience. If you have a disability that may require accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Services at SAS@emerson.edu or 617-824- 8592 to make an appointment with an SAS staff member. Students are encouraged to contact SAS early in the semester. Please be aware that accommodations are not applied retroactively.

#### **Diversity Statement**

Every student in this class will be honored and respected as an individual with distinct experiences, talents, and backgrounds. Students will be treated fairly regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, socio-economic status, or national identity. Issues of diversity may be a part of class discussion, assigned material, and projects. The instructor will make every effort to ensure that an inclusive environment exists for all students. If you have any concerns or suggestions for improving the classroom climate, please do not hesitate to speak with the course instructor or to contact the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at 617-824-8528 or by email at diversity\_inclusion@emerson.edu.

**Violence Prevention and Response Statement**

Emerson College provides confidential assistance for any students who have been impacted by sexual assault, stalking, and abusive relationships. Violence Prevention and Response (VPR) supports all students no matter when or where they experienced harm, whether they had a personal experience or are concerned about a friend. VPR is here to listen and offers information about options and rights, assists with requesting academic and workplace accommodations, helps with no-contact orders, goes with to medical/legal/on-campus appointments, and connects students with on and off-campus resources. All conversations are private and confidential. Further information about VPR and other on/off-campus resources is available at [www.emerson.edu/vpr](http://www.emerson.edu/vpr).

**Plagiarism Statement**

It is the responsibility of all Emerson students to know and adhere to the College's policy on plagiarism, which can be found at: <http://www.emerson.edu/policy/plagiarism>. If you have any questions concerning the Emerson plagiarism policy or about documentation of sources in work you produce in this course, speak to your instructor.