

VIDEO 1

Fall 2010: Thursdays, 2-6 pm

Professor: Mariam Ghani

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Course Description:

Video I is an introduction to video production, postproduction, history and criticism. Students will be introduced to basic camera operations, sound recording, lighting, basic editing using Apple's Final Cut Pro software, and basic DVD production using Apple's DVD Studio Pro. Students must deploy these skills to produce three projects during the semester, including a final project determined individually by each student, as well as a series of short technical exercises. Critiques of these assignments are crucial to the course; students will be expected to speak at length about the formal, technical, critical and historical dimensions of their own works. Readings, which may be drawn from philosophy, critical theory, artist statements or literature, will also be assigned periodically, along with a brief written response. Students will rotate responsibility for leading in-class discussions of required readings. The course will also include weekly screenings and discussions of films and videos, which serve to introduce students to the history of video art and to develop a critical vocabulary with which to confront the nature, possibilities and limits of the medium. *3 credits; 1 semester; no repeats.*

Objectives:

During this course, students will:

- develop both a theoretical and practical knowledge of video. This includes a thorough grounding in production and postproduction techniques and understanding of their formal and conceptual uses, as demonstrated in projects, writing and critiques.
- acquire an understanding of and facility with Final Cut Pro's non-linear editing capabilities, and the technical skills to take a project through a complete production and post workflow, including editing, export, compression, and authoring.
- learn to recognize and control video's formal parameters of image, sound, shot, transition and sequence, and to understand how concepts and compositions can be developed in time as well as space.
- become more critical observers of media and develop the medium-specific vocabulary needed to critique time-based work.

Course Structure:

2 assigned projects (15% each, 30% total)

1 final project (20%)

4 short exercises, 3 graded (5% each, 15% total)

writing (5%)

attendance/punctuality (10%)*

participation (20%) in screenings, discussions, critique, and technical workshops

Cooper Union's policy on attendance mandates that more than two unexcused absences will have a serious impact on your grade. If you are absent more than three times you may be asked to withdraw from the course. The course policy considers two unexcused late arrivals or early departures to be equivalent to one absence.

Course Policies:

You are expected to attend all lectures, screenings and workshops; complete all reading and writing assignments by the specified due date and arrive prepared to discuss readings in class; complete all video assignments by the specified due date and arrive prepared for

critique (which includes having your tapes cued, media files exported, or DVDs properly authored so that we can watch your work immediately). You are expected to be present for and participate actively in critiques and discussions of your own and others' work. Please remember that participation in critique is primarily how I evaluate your participation grade for the course. **If you do not have your work prepared for critique, I would prefer that you show up without your work to participate in crits, rather than spending the first half of class in the lab finishing your project.** Missing class will hurt your grade more than turning in your work late. Each of you will be expected to lead the in-class discussion of one of the readings, based on your notes and written responses. Written responses should be typed and are due on the same day as the reading. **Please note that responses should not be summaries of the reading, but rather critical reflections on what you read.** You will be expected to submit a written treatment for your final project, in a format that we will discuss in class. You are also expected to read the news regularly and keep a file of articles, editorials and images that you encountered and found provocative. You should bring one item from this ongoing file into class every week and be prepared to analyze its meaning and context. You are also expected to supplement our in-class screenings by taking advantage of the video art collections in Cooper's library and in NYU's Bobst Library. In particular, it is strongly recommended that you view the series *Surveying the First Decade: Video Art & Alternative Media in the US* (Bobst VCA 8015) and the 2003 series *Point of View: An Anthology of the Moving Image* (Bobst DVD 8988).

Very important: At the end of the semester, you are required to submit ALL of your videos (projects AND exercises), along with clean copies of ALL your writing assignments, in a final portfolio, which must be handed to the instructor at the beginning of class on the last class day. So please **DO NOT DELETE any of your projects before the end of the semester, and keep copies of everything you hand in.** During our first technical workshop, you will learn the protocol for saving work on media drives in the video lab. If you do not plan to purchase your own media drive, please pay very close attention to these procedures, as you may lose your work if you do not follow the protocol.

Evaluation:

Your participation in all areas of the course will be evaluated for the following criteria: quality of ideas, quality of work executed and ability to articulate and explain your thought processes; understanding of the historical and theoretical material presented, and ability to relate that material to an overall understanding of the medium and other aspects of your own practice; willingness to explore and take genuine risks in your work as an artist; and the amount of time, effort, and thought given to coursework.

Your final portfolio of projects and exercises will be evaluated along three axes: concept/content, form, and technique. A project that displays excellence in all three areas should meet the following criteria:

- 1) The project has an original, clearly communicated concept or an innovative, effective approach to an assigned or appropriated idea.
- 2) The project has the form most suited to its concept and content and vice versa.
- 3) The project has a well-defined structure and unified formal strategies.
- 4) The artist demonstrates an understanding of the medium and mastery of the techniques and tools employed.

Written responses to reading are evaluated for comprehension and criticality, with extra points for style. Project treatments are evaluated for completeness and effective communication of your project concept and form.

SCHEDULE of Workshops/Critiques/Exercises/Project Due Dates

Class One, September 9th

Introduction / Expectations

Discussion of Class

Screening: Gary Hill, early works

Class Two, September 16th

Reading & response due: Hill

Recommended: Campeanu

Discussion: Camera and its multiple positions; composition and structure within the shot

Screening: Bureau of Inverse Technology's *Suicide Box*, excerpts from Brian Springer's *Spin* and Harun Farocki and Andrei Ujica's *Videograms of a Revolution*

Workshop #1: Introduction to Camera Operations (70 m)

Class Three, September 23rd

EXERCISE #1 DUE

Reading due: Acconci

Discussion: modes of address, duration and repetition

Screening: Martha Rosler's *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, John Baldessari, Vito Acconci, Hannah Wilke

Workshop #2: HD/V + Introduction to FCP [HDV + AVCHD cameras; capture, name and save clips, import clips, timeline, in and out points] (120 m)

Class Four, September 30th

Reading & response due: Dmytryk, Eisenstein

Recommended: Rosler

structure from shot to shot, formal systems, editing syntax

Screening: James Benning, Alix Pearlstein

Class Five, October 7th

Exercise #2 PRESENTATION

Discussion: image/sound relationships, sound within formal systems

Screening: Peter Greenaway's *Windows*, Ken Feingold's *Un Chien Delicieux*, John Smith's *The Girl Chewing Gum*, Walid Raad

Workshops 3/4: Lights & Sound (120 m)

Class Six, October 14th

Exercise #3 PRESENTATION

Reading & response due: Lethem

Discussion: appropriation vs. adaptation

Screening: Dara Birnbaum, Johan Grimontprez, Eve Sussman (see show at Haunch of Venison)

Workshop #5: FCP FX+
[filters, transitions, motion effects] (120 m)

Class Seven, October 21st

Exercise #4 PRESENTATION

Reading due: Krauss

Discussion: medium-specificity + technological transformations; video/television/performance; aesthetics of narcissism and feedback

Screening: Nam June Paik, Steina & Woody Vasulka, Peter Campus, Nancy Holt & Richard Serra's *Boomerang*, Lynda Benglis, Joan Jonas, Sadie Benning

Class Eight, October 28th

Reading & response due: Jakobson

Discussion: video language, syntaxes and structuralism

Screening: Su Friedrich's *Sink or Swim*, Ken Feingold, Hollis Frampton

Class Nine, November 4th

Project #1: Critique

Class Ten, November 11th

Reading & response due: Peirce, Viola

Discussion: phenomenology/symbology, allusion/adaptation

Screenings: Bill Viola; Cecilia Condit

Review of project treatment format

Workshop #6: DVD Studio Pro (70 m)

Class Eleven, November 18th

Project #2: Critique

NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING

Class Twelve, December 2nd

Final project treatment due

Reading due: Benjamin, Debord/SI

Discussion: flâneur, dérive

Screenings: Ken Kobland, *Moscow X*; Chris Marker, *Sans Soleil*; Jem Cohen, *Lost Book Found*

Meetings to discuss treatments

Class Thirteen, December 9th

Work in progress, Project #3

Reading & response due: Sherman

Screening: Pierre Huyghe, Lev Manovich & Andreas Kratsky's *Soft Cinema*

Discussion: installation, nonlinear, and online video

Class Fourteen, December 16th

Rough cut critique, Project #3

**Class Fifteen, December 21st
(TUESDAY)**

PROJECT #3 FINAL SCREENING

Final portfolio due

REQUIRED / RECOMMENDED READINGS in syllabus order

Readings will be handed out in class unless noted otherwise. If you do not attend class, it is your responsibility to obtain a copy of the reading from one of your classmates.

Hill: "A Discussion with Gary Hill," interview with Stephen Sarrazin in *Gary Hill: Surfing the Medium* (Edition CCVM, 1992), pp 67-84.

Campeanu: Pavel Campeanu, "Romanian Television: From Image to History," in *National Identity in Europe: The Television Revolution* (ed. Drummond, Patterson, Willis, BFI), pp 110-116.

Acconci: Vito Acconci, "Television, Furniture and Sculpture: The Room with the American View" in *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, ed. Doug Hall & Sally Jo Fifer (Aperture, 1992), pp 125-134.

Dmytryk: Dmytryk's Rules of Film Editing, condensed from Edward Dmytryk, *On Film Editing* (Focal Press, 1984). Online at:
http://everything2.com/index.pl?node_id=1410635 (short version)
http://www.chicagomediaworks.com/2instructworks/3editing_doc/3editing_docdmytryk.html (long version)

Eisenstein: Sergei Eisenstein, excerpt from "Word and Image," in *The Film Sense* (trans. Jay Leyda, HBJ, 1945), pp 3-36. Download at:

http://www.kabul-reconstructions.net/mariam/teaching/Eisenstein_1.pdf

Lethem: Johnathan Lethem, "The ecstasy of influence: a plagiarism" in *Harper's*, February 2007, pp. 59-71. Online at <http://harpers.org/archive/2007/02/0081387>

Rosler: Martha Rosler, "Video: Shedding the Utopian Moment" in *Illuminating Video*, pp 31-50.

Krauss: Rosalind Krauss, "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism" in *October*, Vol.1 (Spring, 1976), pp. 50-64.

Jakobson: "The Time Factor in Language and in Literature" (pp 56-78) and "Time in the Framework of Signs" (pp 91-92) in Roman Jakobson and Krystyna Pomorska, *Dialogues* (trans. Christian Hubert, MIT Press, 1983).

Peirce: Charles Sanders Peirce, "What is a Sign?" (1894)

Online at <http://marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/us/peirce1.htm>

Viola: Bill Viola, "Video Black – The Mortality of the Image" (1990) in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, ed. Krisine Stiles and Peter Selz (UC Press, 1996). *Available on Google Books.

Benjamin: Walter Benjamin, "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century" in *Reflections* (trans. Edmund Jephcott, ed. Peter Demetz, HBJ, 1978) pp 146-162. Download at:

http://www.kabul-reconstructions.net/mariam/teaching/benjamin_r001.pdf

Debord/SI: Situationist International, "Definitions" (1958) and Guy Debord, "Report" (1957) in Stiles and Selz, pp. 702-704. Download at:

<http://www.kabul-reconstructions.net/mariam/teaching/SI+Debord.pdf>

Sherman: Tom Sherman, "The Nine Lives of Video Art," lecture during the conference *Video Vortex – Responses to YouTube* (Amsterdam, 2008). Download at:

http://www.gama-gateway.eu/uploads/media/Nine_lives_of_video_art.pdf

Also recommended:

John Belton, "Looking through Video: The Psychology of Video and Film" in *Resolutions: Contemporary Video Practices*, ed Michael Renov & Erika Suderburg (UMN, 1996) pp 61-72. *Available on Google Books.

Jacques Derrida, "Videor," in *Resolutions*, pp 73-77.

David Clark, "The Ghost of an Exquisite Corpse" in *LUX: A Decade of Artists' Films and Videos*, ed. Steve Reinke & Tom Taylor (Toronto: YYZ Books, 2000).

Online at http://www.chemicalpictures.net/?page_id=122

EXERCISE AND PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS w/ deadlines

EXERCISE #1:

IN-CAMERA EDITS ONLY, no longer than 5 minutes.

***Bring to class on a mini-DV tape.**

Choose one single subject (either a person, place or thing) and analyze him/her/it with the camera.

Be sure to include the following kinds of shots:

Long Shot, Medium Shot, Close-up.

Be sure to execute the following actions:

Pan left and right, Tilt up and down, Zoom in and out.

Shoot a three-shot sequence from the subject's point of view

Shoot a three-shot sequence that shows the subject moving from frame to frame (easy if the subject is a person; be creative if it is a place or a thing.)

This exercise will not be graded– but it will serve as the raw material for your second, graded exercise.

Due September 23rd

EXERCISE #2:

Take your footage from exercise #1 and cut that five-minute clip into a one-minute piece.

Output to tape and then recut the same footage into a different one-minute sequence.

Output that one too.

***Bring both sequences to class on a mini-DV tape.** Make sure to include 30 seconds of bars/tones and 30 seconds of black at the beginning of your tape and 15 seconds of black after each video. HOWEVER, you can cue your tape for critique AFTER the bars/tones.

Due September 30th

EXERCISE #3:

Produce a **1-4 minute** video where either the use of lights or the use of sound (recorded via microphone) is crucial to the development of your idea / story / formal structure. You can use in-camera edits, a single take or FCP edits, as you see fit.

***Bring to class on a mini-DV tape.**

Due October 14th

EXERCISE #4:

Edit together a **3-5 minute** sequence using only appropriated footage. The footage must be in the public domain or available under an appropriate Creative Commons license; otherwise you must be able to argue for your use of the clips under the fair use doctrine (fairuse.stanford.edu).

***Bring to class on a mini-DV tape.**

Due October 21st

PROJECT #1 (3-10 minutes): LONG TAKE

Make a video that is composed of only one single take, with no edits, no extra image or sound tracks, and only one in point and one out point.

***Bring to class on a mini-DV tape.** Make sure to include 60 seconds of black before and after your video on the tape.

Due for critique November 4th

PROJECT #2 (5-10 minutes): ADAPTATION

Select an existing text to act as a stepping-off point for a video. You can interpret “text” fairly broadly – from a single line from a poem, song, play or film, to a paragraph or page or chapter of prose, to an instantly recognizable painting or photograph. The original text **MUST NOT APPEAR** in any form in the final video, but we should be able to identify the reference or allusion.

***Bring to class on a DVD.** The DVD does not need to have a menu, but should be authored to play in a standard DVD player. Your video should include title (or slate) and credits, and the end credits should include the original text if possible, as a reference point for critique.

Due for critique November 18th

PROJECT #3: OPEN

This is your project for you to shape and determine as you see fit.

The only restriction is that the final video should not be longer than 25 minutes.

***A written treatment for this project, in a format to be discussed in class, will be due on April 15th.**

Rough cut due December 9th or 16th

Final cut due TUESDAY December 21st

Rough cuts may be screened from mini-DV. The final cut should be handed in on the last day of class as part of your final portfolio. If you are working with multiple channels, please remember to reserve and test the appropriate presentation equipment in advance.

FINAL PORTFOLIO:

Please place the following in a single large envelope, labeled with your name and the course section.

- 1) Your end-of-class DVD, including all your projects and exercises, accessible through a main menu. I will keep this copy, so please make another one. The DVD must be in a sleeve and both the DVD and sleeve should be labeled with your name and course section, in permanent marker (do not place any sticky labels on the DVD itself).
- 2) A backup mini-DV tape with all of your projects and exercises on it. The tape should begin with 30s bars/tones and have 30s black in between each video and at the end of the tape. The tape must be in a case and both the case and tape should be labeled with your name and course section.
- 3) Clean copies of the three response papers and one treatment written during the semester.
- 4) A typed, one-page statement delineating the personal, technical, critical, historical and formal concerns of your final work.

Due December 21st at the beginning of class