



FILM 120

INTRODUCTION TO MEDIA THEORY

FILM 120, Introduction to Media Theory, Summer 2024, Session 2, July 29- August 30, 2024 Asynchronous Online

Meeting Time: Anytime, anywhere, all at once

Place: Canvas and Miro

Instructor: Marilia Kaisar, mkaisar@ucsc.edu

TA: Bradford Nordeen, bnordeen@ucsc.edu

Course Description:

How can we think about and with different forms of media and communication technologies? This introductory course in media theory is designed to offer you a foundation in media theory through the exploration of different media and their effects, both through theory and practice. The course is organized thematically, focusing on different media each week. Through readings, films, in-class exercises, and discussions with invited guests, like podcaster and film producer Lauren La Melle of ScaryCrit podcast and digital artist Patrick Stefaniak. Through lectures, films, discussions with artists, practice-based exercises, own. Let's swim together in a sea of media.

Learning outcomes

Through participation in this course you will be able to:

- Engage with foundational media theory texts and understand our mediated environment
- Analyze and think critically about film and digital media works using media theory
- Discuss how media and media theory engage with questions of race, gender, colonization, and injustice.
- Produce scholarly writing and research appropriate to the discipline of film and digital media
- Incorporate media theory in your own film and digital media creative projects and scholarly work
- Share and review research and creative work in a critical environment

Instructor Information

Marilia Kaisar, PhD Candidate of Film and Digital Media, UCSC, pronouns (she/her), prefers to be called Marilia. If you want to know what I am up to, please check my website mariliakaisar.com. You can find me by messaging me on Canvas or email at mkaisar@ucsc.edu.

Please remember to use **FILM 120** on the subject line of your email. I will reply to your emails on weekdays within 24 hours. During the summer, my physical body will be located in Tinos, Greece, which has a ten-hour difference from the U.S. My spectral body will be on Canvas, as per usual.

Instructor Office Hours

This class is online and asynchronous, but we do not need to be strangers. For this reason, I have set up two kinds of office hours: public and private. You can access them via Zoom on Canvas. Office hours are for you to use and participate in, and you are more than welcome to join in the fun and have a conversation with me in real-time.

- **Public office hours** are open, during which you can join me and your peers to meet, discuss, and explore media studies, the class, and the assignments in a semi-public casual setup. Imagine this as a space where you can pop in, find me, and chat about the class and beyond.
Time: Tuesday, 9-10 am
Where: <https://ucsc.zoom.us/j/98745163774?pwd=S3jby1cXSKu4EGqnU6fxtoUw7kb7rP.1>
Why: To get clarity about assignments, to ask questions about media theory and the world, to think together, to share what you love or hate about the class, and to seek a better learning experience for all of us. Rumor has it that summer instructors do not bite, especially over Zoom.
- **Private office hours** for 1-1 appointments with me
How: Book whatever time and day works for you on Canvas-Zoom-Meetings. If none of those times work for you, please reach out via email, and we can find a different time.
Time: Wednesday, 9-10 am and Tuesday, 10-11 am
Where: <https://ucsc.zoom.us/my/mkaisar?pwd=ZFo0MkswdSt4bU55alQwRjRwNWZiUTO9>
Why: To discuss something more personal alone with me, to discuss your individual learning goals, to set up a learning plan to catch up with course materials, and to get accommodations and extensions if you are facing some difficulty.

Teaching Approach:

When teaching and learning, I value creativity, play, independence, and freedom. Engaging with theory does not need to be passive. I hope you can all feel free to make mistakes, think, collaborate, and experiment with ideas and make them your own. There is no right or wrong answer or one way to read a text and complete an assignment. This is why it is important to provide a safe, inclusive, and engaging environment where we can all engage in reading, thinking, and learning together. Asynchronous teaching and learning can be lonely, which is why I incorporated weekly video responses so we can virtually get to know each other. I also invite you to join the public office hours and Miro board. All assessments, reflections, and assignments allow you to engage consistently with course materials in exciting ways and use different lenses to think with media theory and create your own entanglements with media

and texts. I expect that you will watch the lectures after you have read the materials, and you will be ready to engage in thought experiments with me and your peers. We can all be stimulated by media theory and learn how to incorporate it into our writing, making, and everyday practices.

TA Information and Office Hours

Bradford Nordeen, PhD Student of Film and Digital Media, bnordeen@ucsc.edu
Office hours Weds 12-1 PM (by appointment)

Important Summer Dates:

Add/Swap - Thursday, August 1

Drop - Monday, August 5 (tuition reversed)

Request "W" Grade - Sunday, August 18 (no tuition reversal)

Change Grade Option - Sunday, August 25

Grades Due - Thursday, September 5

Required texts/films/technologies:

You will receive PDFs for the reading and links for the films. You can find the readings on Canvas in the modules. No additional books are required. But you will also need some of those essentials below:

- An internet connection
- A laptop/computer/smartphone
- A smartphone camera
- Some editing software to play with on your phone or computer (the freer, the better)

If you are missing any of those, let me know, and we will try to find a solution or alternative together to make this work for you.

A Note on Summer Session

In the summer session, courses move twice as fast as during the academic year. This course (like all of the other summer classes you are taking) covers the material of an entire quarter within 5 weeks. If you fall behind, it can be difficult to catch up. On top of being a shorter course, this course is also asynchronous and online. This means that you are responsible for your progress and learning, and you are the driver of how much you do and when. You should expect to spend 15 hours per week on this course, including time spent on lectures, reading, viewing films, participating in discussions, and completing assignments.

Assessment plan

Our assessment plan for this course is divided into different assignments and is designed to offer flexibility, variety and an interesting way to engage with the materials from week to week, from theme to theme as we move throughout the course.

- After every lecture: **Virtual Participation** on Miro Board (twice a week)
- Every Wednesday, you will be asked to complete a **Writing Response** to the readings and media you engaged with
- Every Saturday, you must complete a 90-second **Video Response** after viewing the lectures.
- Every Saturday, you must complete a creative or writing **Weekly Assignment**

- Twice during the course, you will be asked to provide **Peer Feedback** and review the work of two of your peers, following specific guidelines on producing constructive critiques.
- **Final Revised (Choose your Own Adventure) Weekly Assignment:**
Your final project or paper for this course (you get to choose what you will do) is designed to be built out of either your Remix Media Project or your Scholarly Essay, incorporating the feedback you were provided from the instructor and your peers. You choose whether you want to polish and expand the media project or the scholarly essay, use the feedback you received to improve your final project, and re-submit it.

Assessment plan layout for a total of 100 points:

Assignment	Percentage	Type	Complete it by:
Participation	20%	Participate on Miro (2xweek) and add your 90-second Video response (1xweek)	After you watch the lecture/ final deadline by Saturday night.
Weekly Assignments	40%	W1: Media Journal and Reflection W2: Scholarly Essay (1500 words) W3: Remix Media Project W5: Final Revised (Choose your Own Adventure)	By Saturday night By Wednesday, Aug 28
Writing Responses	20%	Write a 300-word response on the discussion board (5 times) and respond to a peer	By Wednesday night
Guest Interview Questions	10%	Research our guest lecturers and provide interview questions for our guests (2 times) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patrick Stefaniak • Lauren La Melle 	By Saturday night
Peer Reviews	10%	Peer reviews for two or your peers (2 times): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the small file project • For the scholarly essay 	By Saturday night

Extra Credit:

You can receive extra credit (up to 2%) by adding your Final revised project to the course's Virtual Showcase on Miro and interacting with your classmates' works by leaving comments.

Feedback and Grading Policy:

I designed this course thinking of feedback as a gift that we can offer to each other so we can get better at what we do. This is why learning how to offer and receive feedback is an important component of this class. I have offered space for you to incorporate the feedback that you receive from me and your peers to revise and build your final project and essay gradually through the course's duration. You can access feedback for your work directly on Canvas. I hope that you will

carefully read the feedback and incorporate it into your work as you progress with your assignments. As I or your TA will review your work, we will assign you a grade following a specific rubric, which will be visible to you before you begin the assignment. If you follow the guidelines and the rubric provided, you will receive a really good grade. Final course grades for the class will be calculated in accordance with the following schema:

A+: 99% +	A: 93.5-98.99%	A-: 90-93.49%	
B+: 87.5-89.99%	B: 83.5-87.49%	B-: 80-83.49%	
C+: 77.5-79.99%	C: 73.5-77.49%	C-: 70-73.49%	
D+: 67.5-69.99%	D: 63.5-67.49%	D-: 60-63.49%	F: 0-59.99%

Participation/ Non-Graded components

This course is asynchronous, but your virtual participation is very important, which is reflected in how you will experience lectures. During our lectures, you will be asked to pose questions and add things to our course Miro board. After the end of the week, you will be prompted to create a short 1-2 min video response to a prompt provided, using your notes from the readings, films, and lectures. Participation will not be evaluated; you can get the points by thoughtfully engaging with course content and thinking. Similarly to participation, peer reviews and interview questions for our guest speakers will not be evaluated, but you are expected to engage thoughtfully and respectfully.

Late Policy

Five weeks is very short, and we balance several commitments and responsibilities during the summer session. I have designed this course using the assignments as building blocks so **you must turn things in on time so you can receive feedback and move onwards**. In reality, well things happen. Since you are all the drivers of your own learning, I am providing everyone with **3 free "late passes"** for the course. Late passes are not free for all: you have to use them in case of an emergency when you would usually email me or your TA to ask for an extension. **Using the late pass**, you can turn in any assignment up to 48 hours late without penalty. This applies to all assignments during the quarter. Assignments later than 48 hours cannot be submitted with a late pass – they're subject to the standard late submission penalties. For all late assignments submitted either less than 48 hours late without a late pass or more than 48 hours past the due date, Canvas will mark down 10 percent of your score per day. No assignments will be accepted over 5 days (120 hours) late.

How to use a late pass

Well, you are the one who decides when and how you will use your late passes. I do not need or want to know that you are planning to use one or why you want to use one, so please do not email me when you want to use one. For a regular assignment submission, write a note in the assignment's submission comments box (NOT in the body of your assignment) when you turn the assignment in. The note can say something simple like, "Please apply late pass #3." If you do not include this note, your late pass will not be applied. You are responsible for counting how many of the late passes you have used. Your late passes cannot be applied later -- they must be communicated and used at the time you are submitting the assignment. (Note: to post a submission comment on a discussion post, you must post your contributions first). Then, go to your grade book, click on the discussion name, and enter the late pass into the submission comments

box.) Late passes can only be used individually for a single assignment that is up to (but no more than) 48 hours late. Once you reach the 48-hour mark, a late assignment is subject to the standard hourly late assignment penalty unless I have granted you an extension based on extenuating circumstances. **Late passes do not apply to the final revised assignment.**

Extenuating Circumstances

If you realize that you will not be able to finish on time and are seriously falling behind due to a serious emergency, please email your TA or me to figure out a solution that makes sense. Together, we will figure out if I can accommodate you or if it makes more sense for you to take the class at another time.

Community Guidelines:

UCSC is suggesting some principles of community: to be diverse, open, purposeful, caring, just, disciplined, and celebrative. But in this class, we will be forming our own little community for 5 weeks. In our first class we will spend some time to discuss and determine what community guidelines might mean for us as a group and how we can create an inclusive, accessible and enjoyable learning environment during our remote learning experience.

<https://www.ucsc.edu/about/principles-community.html>

Academic Integrity and AI policy :

Plagiarism is using someone else's ideas and works without properly crediting where we got that information from. During this class, we will engage with other people's ideas in different ways and be able to incorporate them into our thought and creative processes. One of the many things that I hope we will learn in this class is how to create a citational practice that allows us to engage creatively with the ideas and works of others to produce our own meaning. The only solution to plagiarism is citing and learning to differentiate what someone else said from what we said. To avoid plagiarism, you must cite or give credit whenever you use

- another person's idea, opinion, or theory;
- any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings—any pieces of information—that are not common knowledge;
- quotations of another person's actual written words and/or spoken words; or
- paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words
- images/videos/artworks that were made by someone else

As a TA and instructor, I have had the opportunity to read a lot of AI-generated homework. When you ask a text generator to complete your written assignment, the result reads like a word soup cooked by the Internet that makes no sense and includes no citations or personal perspective. If I suspect that your work was done by someone (or something!) else other than yourself, I will ask you to meet with me. If I understand you did not complete your work, I will refer you to your college provost for further intervention. The only exception to this AI/plagiarism is if you are specifically invited to use and experiment with AI as a part of an assignment.

Inclusion and Accessibility:

I am committed to making this class an inclusive and accessible online environment that respects everyone's diversity. Is English your second or third language (this is the case for me as well)? Do you need accommodations to access learning materials? Are you in a different time zone that makes you sleepy? Are you better at making than writing? Are you taking care of a baby or family

members? If at any time your learning in this class is affected by personal circumstances, reach out to me, and I will try my best to ensure your success.

A NOTE ON DIFFICULT MATERIAL

In Film and Digital Media courses, we often view material that contains difficult ideas, uncomfortable language, violence, or sex. I have done my best to provide trigger warnings using the fire emoji 🔥 when there is explicit sex or violence. Please treat what we explore in class critically, to think about what the maker is trying to express and the social impact of the work. I am always happy to discuss with you what we viewed in class during office hours.

An ideal weekly course schedule

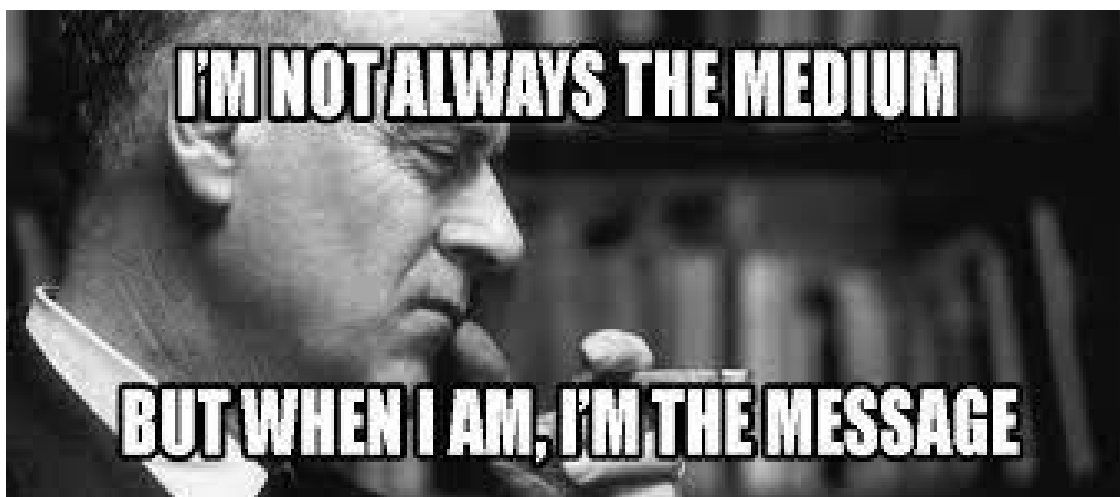
I have designed this class using the idea of a flipped classroom. This means that before you view the lectures, you will complete the readings and view the film. This is for two main reasons: first: to avoid spoilers, and second, to make sure we are all embarking on this learning journey from the same standpoint. This is, of course, only a recommendation, and you are invited to adjust your schedule as you please. Here is how I recommend you use your time during the week:

Monday-Wednesday:

- Complete readings and view the film in the module A(3-5 hours)
- View lecture (30 min)
- Post your response on Miro as prompted (15 min)
- Complete your writing response on Canvas and comment on one of your peer's posts, due Wednesday night (1 hour)

Wednesday-Saturday:

- Complete readings and view the film in the module B (3-5 hours)
- View lecture (30 min)
- Post your responses on Miro
- Add your video response (15 min)
- Complete your Weekly Assignment by Saturday (due Saturday night) (6 hours)



COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 July 29th- August 4th, 2024

TAPE A: What media, whose media?

Read:

- 'The Medium Is the Message', pp 7-21. In McLuhan, Marshall, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1994. Pages 7-21
<https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/understanding-media>
- "Homo Cellular" pp 239-256, In Colomina, Beatriz. *Are We Human?: Notes on an Archaeology of Design*. Zürich, Switzerland: Lars Muller Publishers, 2016.

Watch:

- Riley, Boots. *Sorry to Bother You*, 2018
- Lecture 1

Do:

- Participate on Miro
- Writing Response. Due on Wednesday, July 31, end of day
- Complete entry questionnaire
- Edit Community Guidelines

TAPE B: Eyes and Gazes

READ:

- Vertov, Dziga. 'We: Variant of A Manifesto', pp. 51-55. In *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures : A Critical Anthology*, by Scott MacKenzie, 51-55. Berkeley, US: University of California Press, 2014.
- hooks, bell. 'The Oppositional Gaze'. In *Black Looks : Race and Representation*, pp 115-31. London, UK: Taylor & Francis Group, 2014.

Watch:

- *Get Out*, 2017 🔥 (horror/blood)
- *SIS*, 2023 🔥 (sex/nudity)
- Lecture 2

Listen and Research:

- Scary Crit Podcast

Do:

- Participate on Miro
- Post your Video Response for TAPE B
- Weekend Assignment 1: Media consumption journal and reflection. Due on Sunday, Aug 4,
- Research and Draft Interview Questions for our guest speaker Lauren La Melle

WEEK 2 August 5-11, 2024

TAPE A: Visual Pleasures and Virtual Windows

READ:

- Mulvey, Laura. 'Visual Pleasure and the Narrative Cinema'. In *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures : A Critical Anthology*. Berkeley, US: University of California Press, 2014.
- Friedberg, Anne. *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft*. Illustrated edition. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2009, pp 1-7 AND 15-18

VIEW:

- Hitchcock, Alfred, *Rear Window*, 1954
- Lecture 3
- Interview with Lauren La Melle

Do:

- Participate on Miro
- Writing Response. Due on Wednesday, Aug 7, end of day

TAPE B: Works of Art and Reproduction

READ(before class):

Benjamin, Walter. 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'. In *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken Books, 2007.

VIEW:

- Andersen, Thom, *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, 2003.
- Lecture 4

TO DO:

- Participate on Miro
- Post your Video Response for TAPE B
- Weekend Assignment 2: Scholarly essay. Due on Saturday, August 10.

Week 3 August 12-18, 2024

TAPE A: Art and Media, After the Internet

READ(before class):

- Steyerl, Hito. 'In Defense of the Poor Image'. E-Flux, no. 10 (November 2009). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/10/61362/in-defense-of-the-poor-image/>
- Kholeif, Omar. Goodbye, World!: Looking at Art in the Digital Age. Berlin, Germany: Sternberg Press, 2018. Pages 89-119

VIEW:

- Akomfrah, John, The Last Angel of History, 1996
- Kevin B. Lee, Transformers: The Premake (a desktop documentary), 2015, <https://vimeo.com/365141641>

DO:

- Participate on Miro
- Writing Response. Due on Wednesday, Aug 14, end of day
- Peer Review 1: Scholarly Essay. Due on Saturday, Aug 17

TAPE B: Making with Glitch and Remix

READ(before class):

- Russell, Legacy, *Glitch Feminism*, Introduction, and Glitch is Remix, pp 3-14 and 133-141
- Laura U. Marks, "Video haptics and erotics," *Screen* 39:4 (Winter 1998): 331-348.

VIEW:

- Lecture 6

RESEARCH AND VIEW EXAMPLES:

- Small File Media Festival <https://smallfile.ca/>

DO:

- Participate on Miro
- Post your Video Response for TAPE B
- Weekend Assignment 3: Remix Media Project. Due on Saturday, Aug 17

Week 4, August 19-25, 2024

TAPE A: Cyborgs

READ:

Excerpt from Haraway, Donna J. 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century'

VIEW:

- Rivera, Alex, Sleep Dealer, 2008 🔥 (violence)
- Funari, Vicky, Maquilapolis, 2006
- Lecture 7

DO:

- Participate on Miro
- Writing Response. Due on Wednesday, Aug 21, at the end of day.
- Peer Review 2: Remix Media Project. Due on Saturday, Aug 24

TAPE B: Video Games

READ:

Keogh, Brendan. "Introduction" In A Play of Bodies: How We Perceive Videogames, 2018, pp 1-18

VIEW:

- Cronenberg, David, *eXistenZ*, 1999. 🔥
- Lecture 7

RESEARCH:

- Patrick Stefaniak blog
- Patrick Stefaniak video games

DO:

- Participate on Miro
- Post your Video Response for Tape B
- Research and Draft Interview Questions for our guest speaker, Patrick Stefaniak
- Final Project: Pick between revising and finalizing your Scholarly Essay or Media Project, due on Wednesday, August 28th.

Week 5, August 26-30, 2024

TAPE A: Photography and Agency

READ(before class):

- Flusser, Vilém, "The Apparatus," *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*. Reaktion Books, 2000.
- Azoulay, Ariella Aïsha. 'What Is Photography'. In *Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography*, Reprint edition., 35–69. London: Verso, 2015.

VIEW:

- Varda, Agnes, *The Gleaners and I*, 2000,
- T. Minh-ha, Trinh, *Reassemblage*, 1982, 🔥 (nudity)
- Lecture 9
- Interview with Patrick Stefaniak

DO:

- Participate on Miro
- Writing Response. Due on Wednesday, August 28, at the end of the day.
- Final Project: Pick between revising and finalizing your Scholarly Essay or Media Project, due on Wednesday, August 28th.

Module 10: Social Media

READ(before viewing lecture):

- Selections from: Debord, Guy. *Society Of The Spectacle*. Detroit, Mich: Black & Red, 2002.
- Beller, Jonathan *Paying Attention*, 2006.
<https://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/24/beller.php>

VIEW:

- Spicer, Matt, *Ingrid Goes West*, 2017
- Lecture 10

DO:

- Participate on Miro
- Post your Video Response
- Participate in the Virtual Showcase for extra credit
- Complete exit questionnaire

CONGRATULATIONS, WE HAVE MADE IT THROUGH THIS CLASS IN ONE PIECE.

CAMPUS SUPPORT RESOURCES

DRC Remote Accommodations:

UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me privately during my office hours or by appointment, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. At this time, I would also like us to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact the DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu.

Title IX:

The [Title IX Office](#) is committed to fostering a campus climate in which members of our community are protected from all forms of sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, sexual violence, and gender-based harassment and discrimination. Title IX is a neutral office committed to safety, fairness, trauma-informed practices, and due process.

The Title IX Office is working remotely and is conducting meetings and interviews via zoom and phone. If you want to make a report or request a consult, you can expect the fastest response by using their [online reporting link](#). For questions about making a report, your reporting responsibilities, and/or questions about the [UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment](#) call 831-459-2462.