

CIN368 EXPERIMENTAL FILMMAKING (4 credits)

Oakland University, College of Arts and Sciences, Cinema Studies

Fall 2016 T 8:30 – 11:47 am; 228 VAR
Professor Andrea Eis
Email eis@oakland.edu
Office 528 O'Dowd Hall
Office hours Tuesdays, noon – 1 pm and by appointment

CIN368 EXPERIMENTAL FILMMAKING

Introduction to a range of experimental filmmaking techniques, with a focus on aesthetic practices that fall outside of mainstream commercial filmmaking.

OVERVIEW

In this course, students will view and analyze experimental films from early film through contemporary examples, and create their own micro and short-form films that exemplify a range of experimental aesthetic and conceptual practices. Experimental films are often created as much in the editing and other post-production processes as in the planning and shooting. Remaining open to change in the process – to experimentation – is essential for the filmmaking done in this class. Your mind must be as engaged as your technical knowledge and aesthetic skills to imagine the possibilities of experimental filmmaking. Also note that, while the micro films early in the class will be much shorter than the later short-form films, they will still take extensive work. Sometimes it is just as complex to make a quality micro film.

Students will:

- analyze and critically evaluate experimental films that fall outside of mainstream commercial practice
- develop proficiency in a range of the digital processes that allow contemporary filmmakers such a wide range of experimental visions
- gain an understanding of technology as a tool for the aesthetic research that results in film art, rather than an end in itself
- create micro and short-form films in a variety of aesthetic and conceptual experimental modes

Required Reading: There is no textbook for this class. Journal articles are required, as noted on the syllabus. PDFs of the readings will be available on Moodle.

Equipment and Lab: Students enrolled in this class will have access to Cinema Studies digital film equipment and editing lab. Equipment available includes digital camcorders, fluid head tripods, microphones and boom kits, and lighting kits. The student under whose name equipment is signed out is responsible for the timely return of the equipment and its condition upon return.

We use the Adobe suite for editing, effects and illustration work. Students who have their own laptops with appropriate software may use them instead; use of different editing software must be cleared with the instructor before use. Many class sessions include in-class studio work, so students who want to do coursework on their own laptops will be required to bring the laptops to class for all in-class studio days.

Grade distribution:

Projects:	3 micro films (1-2 min)	30%
	2 short-form films (4-6 min)	40%
Reading/screenings responses		20%
	Response papers on readings and the screenings.	
Participation		10%
	Attentiveness to, engagement with, and participation in discussions and the course in general, along with consistent attendance (see below) and timely submission of assignments.	
TOTAL		100%

Attendance – including on all studio and critique days – is considered part of participation, as you cannot participate if you are not in the classroom. You will be allowed 2 absences. Each absence in excess of 2 will lower your participation grade by 10% (for example, from 90% to 80%). You will receive a participation grade of 0% if you miss more than 3 class meetings beyond your 2 allowed absences.

University excused absences applies to participation as an athlete, manager or student trainer in NCAA intercollegiate competitions, or participation as a representative of Oakland University at academic events and artistic performances approved by the Provost or designee. For the excused absence policy, see <http://www.oakland.edu/?id=6850&sid=175>.

Grade Conversion Scale:

98-100	4.0	A+	79	2.9	C+	69	1.9	D+
96-97	3.9	A	78	2.8	C+	68	1.8	D+
94-95	3.8	A	77	2.7	C+	67	1.7	D+
92-93	3.7	A	76	2.6	C	66	1.6	D
90-91	3.6	A-	75	2.5	C	65	1.5	D
88-89	3.5	B+	74	2.4	C	64	1.4	D
87	3.4	B+	73	2.3	C	63	1.3	D
85-86	3.3	B	72	2.2	C-	62	1.2	D-
83-84	3.2	B	71	2.1	C-	61	1.1	D-
82	3.1	B-	70	2.0	C-	60	1.0	D-
80-81	3.0	B-				59-below	0.0	E

Classroom behavior: Respect and courtesy for your fellow classmates and professor is expected. This includes constructive criticism and respectful feedback in critiques.

Deletion /Destruction of Student Work: The deletion or destruction of digital files, another student's creative work, or college property is considered a serious offense. All students must refrain from altering work that does not belong to them, regardless of the date the piece was created. Students who violate this policy face serious disciplinary consequences.

Scholastic Honesty: Turning in work that is not your own, or any other form of scholastic dishonesty, constitutes academic misconduct. The University's regulations that relate to academic misconduct will be fully enforced. Any student suspected of cheating and/or plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Students and, thereafter, to the Academic Conduct Committee for adjudication. Anyone found guilty of academic misconduct in this course may receive a course grade of 0.0, in addition to any penalty assigned by the Academic Conduct Committee. Students found guilty of academic misconduct by the Academic Conduct Committee may face suspension or permanent dismissal. The full policy on academic misconduct can be found in the General Information section of the Undergraduate Catalog.

I strongly encourage you to speak with me if you are having trouble with an assignment. I also recommend the services offered by the Oakland Writing Center (212 Kresge Library, 370-3120). The consultants there are trained to help you resolve your own problems so that all of your writing reflects your ideas and what you have learned.

Add/Drop: The university policy will be explicitly followed. It is the responsibility of each student to be aware of the deadline dates for dropping courses.

Special Accommodations: A student with a documented learning or physical disability must contact the Office of Disability and Support Services, 121 North Foundation Hall, (248) 370-3266, and inform the professor of special needs during first week of classes. For more information, visit <http://www.oakland.edu/dss>.

CIN368 WEEKLY SCHEDULE

The syllabus may change at the discretion of the professor. Any changes will be discussed in class and posted on Moodle. This is a studio course, so you are expected to be in class and working on your projects each class session. Critiques are an essential part of studio work, and projects must be uploaded to the server and ready for presentation on critique days.

Week One: September 8

Introduction to Experimental Film

Screening: Excerpt from *Rose Hobart* (1936) Joseph Cornell; *A Movie* (1958), Bruce Conner; excerpt from *Angels Chant Like Witches* (2006) *The Body Beseiged* (2009), Kelly Sears; *Telephones* (1995) and excerpt from *The Clock* (2011), Christian Marclay

Reading/response for next week: Laura Kissel and Carolyn Faber, "Lost Found and Remade: An Interview with Archivist and Filmmaker Carolyn Faber," *Film History*, Vol. 15, No. 2, Small-Gauge and Amateur Film (2003), pp. 208-213.

Week Two: September 15

Studio work: Appropriation Micro Film (archive.org)

Reading/response for next week: Martine Beugnet, "Firing at the Clocks: Cinema, Sampling, and the Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Artwork," *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, Vol. 54, No. 2, Fall 2013, pp. 192-207.

Week Three: September 22

Screening: Excerpts from *Symphonie Diagonale* (1924); Viking Eggeling, *Ballet Mecanique* (1924), Fernand Leger; *Allures* (1961), Jordan Belson; and *Scratch Pad* (1960), Hy Hirsch

Studio work: Appropriation Micro Film (archive.org)

Week Four: September 29

CRITIQUE: Appropriation Micro Film

Studio work: Abstract Micro Film

Reading/response for next week: "Roundtable on Digital Experimental Filmmaking" (Flo Jacobs, Ken Jacobs, Malcolm Turvey, Federico Windhausen), *October 137*, Summer 2011, pp. 51-68.

Week Five: October 6

Screening: Excerpts from *Wavelength* (1967) and *WVLNT (Wavelength for Those Who Don't Have the Time)* (2003), Michael Snow; *Serene Velocity* (1970), Ernie Gehr; and *Nostalgia* (1971), Hollis Frampton;

Studio work: Abstract Micro Film

Week Six: October 13

CRITIQUE: Abstract Micro Film

Studio Work: Structural Micro Film

Reading/response for next week: Mike Hoolbloom, "Three Scripts," *Journal of Film Video*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (Fall 1997), pp. 38-47.

Week Seven: October 20

Studio Work: Structural Micro Film

Screening: Excerpts from *La Souriante Madame Beudet* (1923), Germaine Dulac; *Entr'acte* (1924), René Clair; *L'Etoile de Mer* (1928), Man Ray; *Thanatopsis* (1962), Ed Edmshwiller; *Pas de deux* (1968), Norman McLaren; *Cattle Call* (2007), Matt Rankin and Mike Maryniuk; *Untitled* (2014), Julia Yezbick

Week Eight: October 27

CRITIQUE: Structural Micro Film

Studio work: Short-form Film 1: Special Effects/Animation/Surrealist

Week Nine: November 2

Studio work: Short-form: Film 1 Special Effects/Animation/Surrealist

Reading/response for next week: Hannah Durkin, "Cinematic 'Pas de Deux': The Dialogue between Maya Deren's Experimental Filmmaking and Talley Beatty's Black Ballet Dancer in *A Study in Choreography for the Camera* (1945)," *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 47, Issue 2, May 2013, pp. 385-403.

Week Ten: November 3

Studio work: Short-form Film 1 Special Effects/Animation/Surrealist

Screening: Excerpts from *A Study in Choreography for the Camera* (1945), *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (1946), Maya Deren; *Fireworks* (1949), Kenneth Anger; *Cat's Cradle* (1959), *Mothlight* (1963), Stan Brakhage; *Unsere Afrikareise* (1966), Peter Kubelka

Week Eleven: November 10

CRITIQUE: Short-form Film 1: Special Effects/Animation/Surrealist

Screening: Excerpts, Ann Arbor Film Festival and National Film Board of Canada films

Reading/response for next week: Willie Varela, "We Will Not Go Quietly: Some Thoughts on the Avant-Garde, Then and Now," *Journal of Film and Video*, Vol. 57, No. ½ (Spring/Summer 2005), pp. 3-8.

Week Twelve: November 17

Studio work: Short-form Film 2: Film Poem/Poetic Essay

Week Thirteen: November 24

Studio work: Short-form Film 2: Film Poem/Poetic Essay

Week Fourteen: December 1

Studio work: Short-form Film 2: Film Poem/Poetic Essay

Final: December 15

CRITIQUE: Short-form Film 2: Film Poem/Poetic Essay