Media Studios
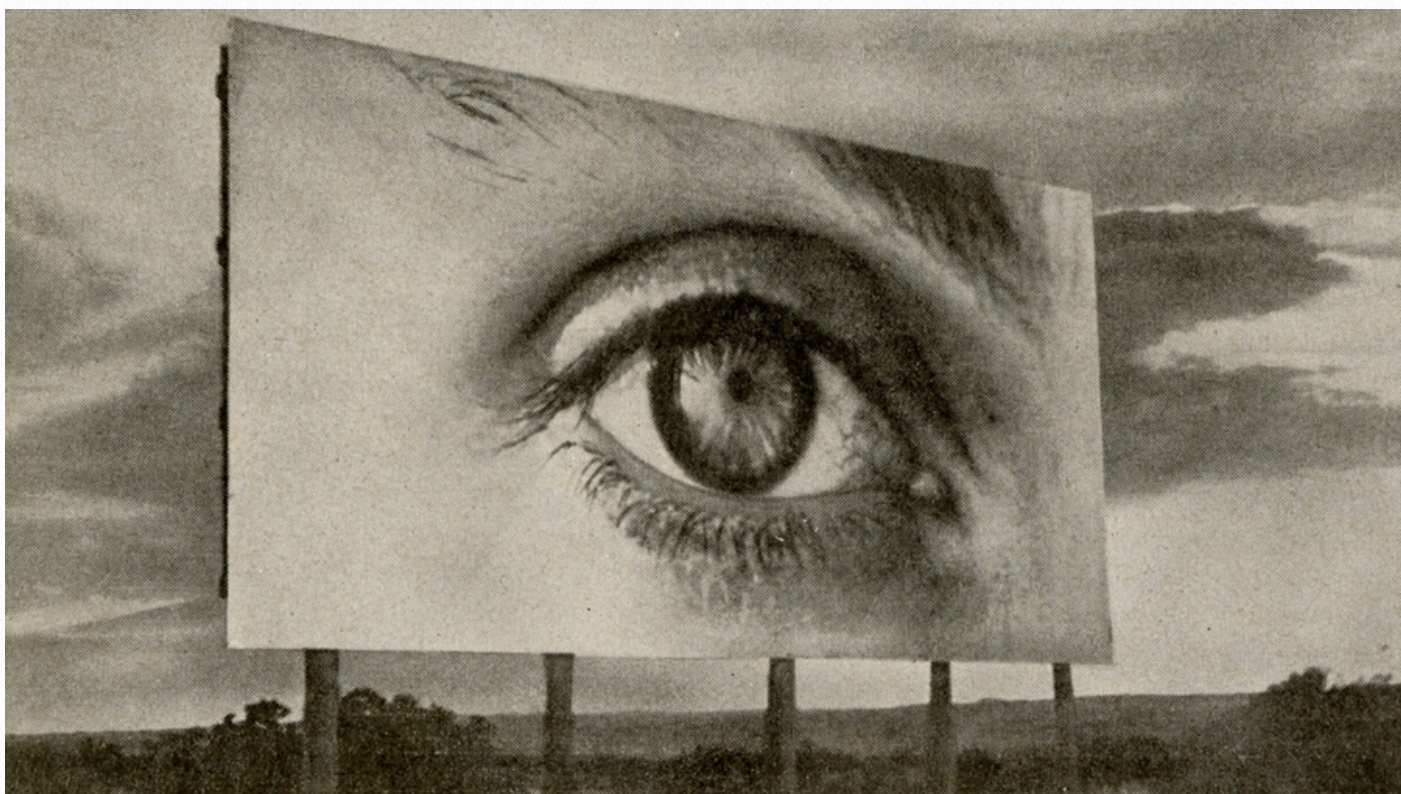## semester 2 2015

Character
Catherine Gough-Brady

Tues. 12.30-2.30 (Rm 9.3.9)
Thur. 9.30-12.30 (Rm 9.2.15)

Reggio & Fricke, Unnamed Billboard

What is the significance of character within/for narrative?

'Character is plot, plot is character'
Attributed to F. Scott Fitzgerald

description

The character is one of the most important tools in your box, whether you are creating fiction or creating documentary. Through character the viewer can find out about theme, plot, abstract ideas, human nature, time and place - basically everything.

Each week in this studio you will be expected to have read/watched/ listened to classic works. In class, we dissect the characters of the works and create short exercises to test out your ideas. You will be creating short works that explore or push the boundaries of theories on character.

Throughout the studio you will be keenly aware that creating media is about connecting with audience. So you will be thinking about the viewer as you create. Your fellow students will be your initial 'viewers' and will provide feedback, so you can see how certain devices work, or don't.

In the final weeks you will create your main work, which can be fiction or documentary, or a combination of them. In can be video or audio. This work will be included in the end of year exhibition.

Areas we will explore practically and theoretically in this studio include:

the hero's journey/ using first person / dialogue and speeches / ironic relationship to character / retelling and flashback / blending the real with fiction / verbatim / ensemble characters / the antagonist / non-human characters

aims

- to read/watch/listen to works, focusing on the characters
- to explore aspects of character within the narrative, in fiction and non-fiction
- to experiment, by creating characters

Pen, paper, a smart phone and a laptop will be vital. You will be creating and editing media, so I recommend that you have Adobe Premiere or Final Cut X on your laptop. On your smartphone I recommend you buy the apps Filmic Pro and iMovie, or equivalent.

Film 3: Contrasting Fiction & Non-Fiction Methodologies

Paul Ritchard (I)   or   Robin Plunkett (II)

Mon. 10.30-12.30 (Rm 9.3.11)
Fri. 8.30-11.30 (Rm 9.2.15)

Thur. 11.30-2.30 (Rm 9.2.16)
Fri. 11.30-1.30 (Rm 9.2.15)

The Color of Water (P. Brosens & J. Woodworth, 2006) + *Du côté de la côte* (A.Varda, 1958)

By exploring and critically analysing the methods that traditionally distinguish documentary from drama production we will develop innovative approaches to making film.

1895: Lumière refuses to sell his invention to Méliès, so Méliès proceeds to build his own.

description

Methods of film production are predetermined by the choice to make either documentary or drama. These methods have their own practicalities, logic and industrial efficiencies. Initiating a project invariably requires a commitment to a particular form and its methods of production.

What then if we approached the preparation and realisation of a drama as if it were a documentary? What if we applied the methodologies of drama production to the making of a documentary? What if we allowed the content and/or our deeper objectives to determine our course, without necessarily making a commitment to one form or the other?

In this studio we will explore the rationale behind traditional filmmaking protocols and techniques. Through a series of practical exercises and ongoing reflection, we will develop a competency in filmmaking skills and apply them to the production of a short film, while simultaneously working towards a more flexible, and potentially creative approach to the production of fiction and nonfiction.

aims

• To develop competency in production techniques and to think more expansively in relation to ongoing projects
• To explore the possibilities associated with applying techniques and practices not typically used in the creation of the form being pursued.
• To be able to critically analyse, as a consequence of practical work, established and broadly accepted project development and industrial production methods.

'It's Not Rocket Surgery': communicating complex ideas

Liam Ward

Mon. 3.30-6.30 (Rm 51.6.8)
Wed. 3.30-5.30 (Rm 9.2.15)

http://thenewsdoctors.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/mad-scientist.jpeg

What are the challenges and creative possibilities in communicating complex ideas, scientific processes or philosophical concepts to television/video audiences?

'**The accusations most often levelled at programme makers by scientists are that television simplifies and trivialises. Sometimes the accusation is valid, sometimes not. Even complex issues can be discussed on different levels without necessarily trivialising**'

R. Taylor, 'Science on Television' (1999).

description

As communication professionals and media producers, we often have the task of communicating incredibly complex ideas to general or non-specialist audiences. Sometimes we barely understand the ideas ourselves! From quantum physics to the offside rule, our world is full of complicated concepts.

In this studio, we'll be working with experts in other fields to produce short videos that convey these ideas in ways that take advantage of your own expertise in media production.

We'll start by trialling different approaches for communicating scientific concepts, then broaden out to concepts that might be even more nebulous - philosophical, political, economic, or something else entirely.

When exploring the communication of scientific data, we will be drawing on theories from the field of human centric visualisation, which in turn draws on visual communication, graphic design, cognitive science, and more. We'll analyse infographics, and consider the role of experimentation, humour and even haikus. Our motto is to push the boundaries while striving for clarity.

aims

- to make high quality content
- to collaborate with experts in other fields, in a dynamic situation where your own media production skills are an integral element
- to explore and reflect on the political, ethical, and philosophical implications of these types of communication
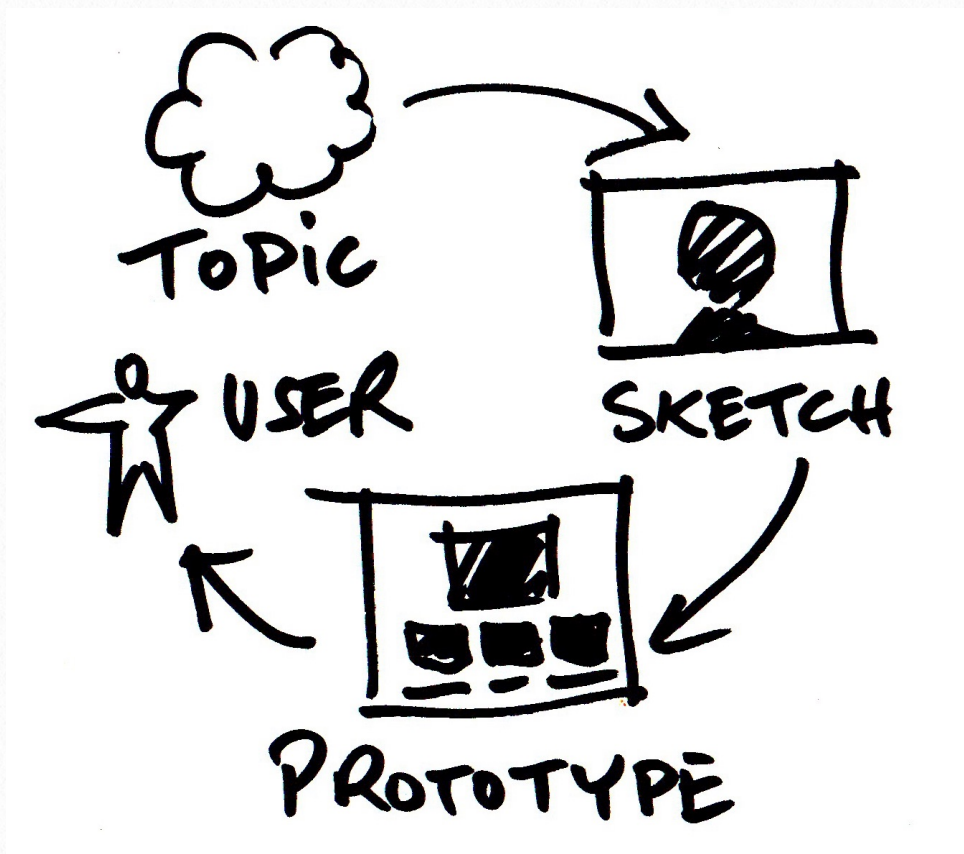
You will need access to Photoshop and Premiere or Final Cut

New Documentary: i-doc design & production
Seth Keen

Mon. 2.30-4.30 (Rm 9.2.15)
Thur. 11.30-2.30 (Rm 9.3.11)

How can design
methodologies be
used to produce an
interactive online
documentary?

'[N]otions of interactivity have changed over the past decade…[due to], a shift away from a binaristic "choose your own adventure" orientation towards plot as an either/or structure and narrative causality to an exploration of experiential interface design'

Siobhan O'Flynn, 'Documentary's Metamorphic Form' (2012).

description

This studio aims to prepare you for working with new media practices and platforms in the real world with a focus on interactive documentary on the Internet.

A key objective of this studio is to provide you with the skills and knowledge required to work with the ongoing changes occurring in new media technologies and practices. One solution for dealing with constant change is to integrate design and media practices. In reference to the success of social media, 'design' is seen as a process that responds to problems that arise through change, and this is why design has become a key feature of many of the practices associated with the fast–paced development of the Internet.

In this hands-on studio the focus is on making content and learning through a practice-led investigation. The aim is to learn practical skills in a real world context, in this case a project that engages with communities externally and is distributed online. Practical skills will be supported with theory, in regards to the integration of design methodologies into professional media practice and developing an understanding of interactive documentary as an expanding mode of new media practice.

Studio participants will work collectively on the design and production of an interactive online documentary that is potentially put forward for screenings and exhibition. The outcomes for you in regards to portfolio materials will be a series of individually produced linear video works and a co-authored interactive online documentary.

aims

- How to design and produce an interactive online documentary.
- How to work with the affordances of video, computers and the network.
- How design methodologies can be utilised to adapt to changing media practices.

The Korsakow interactive documentary software (OS X or PC) will have to be purchased by you for a cost of US$25.

On the Frame
Daniel Binns

Tues. 2.30-4.30 (Rm 9.3.11)
Thur. 2.30-5.30 (Rm 94.4.21A)

Drive (Nicolas Winding Refn, 2011)

How can the affordances of the cinematic frame — meaning both a singular fragment of time, and the composing of elements before the lens — expand our thinking around what film is and what it can achieve?

'Framing is a position of thinking'

Daniel Frampton, *Filmosophy* (2006).

description

Digital cinema has caused chaos in film theory. The language of cinema, based in part on the medium's technical characteristics, now seems outdated. One aspect of cinema that has been problematised is the notion of the frame. When '24' is not the golden number it once was, what do these new advancements mean for the building block of the moving image? This studio explores the technical characteristics of the frame in cinema: aspect ratio, camera angle, camera movement, and so on — but also pushes through the frame to consider broader philosophical and theoretical concepts.

The studio explores film theories old and new to unlock the capacity of camera, lens, and philosophical and cinematic thinking. You will work through multiple sketches to create your own cinematic frames, and reflect on the process of production in order to situate your practice within the theory and philosophy of cinema. It is expected that you will engage with existing theory through critical writing, practical experimentation, and reflective journaling. The studio will be comprised of lecture-style delivery of content, open discussion and debate around contentious or controversial areas of philosophy and film theory, film screenings and guided/individual exploration of interactive materials, and out-of-the-classroom experiences and excursions.

aims

- to directly engage with theories of cinema old and new
- to activate theory by developing a series of practices and artefacts
- to develop individual attitudes towards cinematic representation by exploring the affordances of the frame
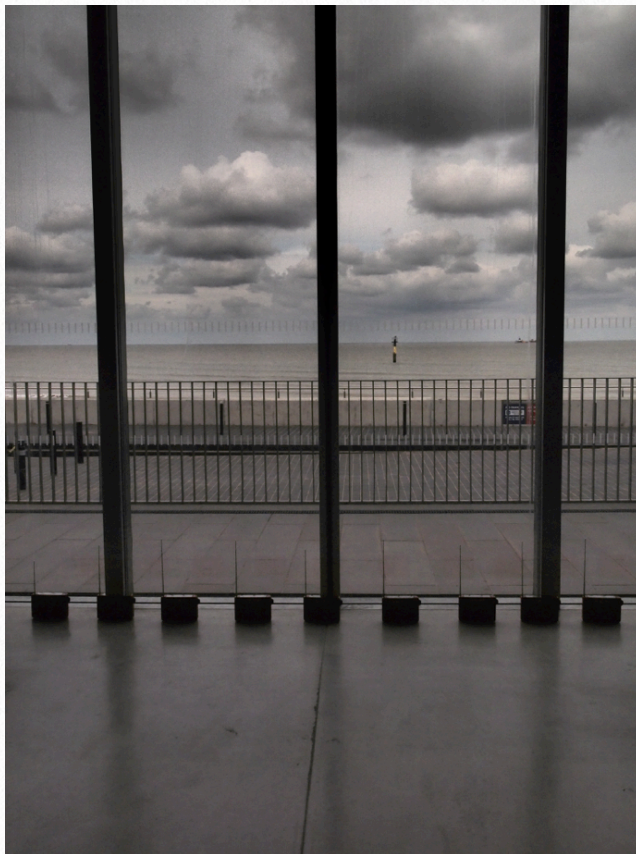
You must own a laptop with at least intermediate editing software (Final Cut or Premiere preferred, not iMovie)

Radio's 'New Wave' (hello, not goodbye)
Kyla Brettle

Wed. 3.30-5.30 (Rm 9.3.10)
Fri. 1.30-4.30 (Rm 9.2.15)

Magz Hall (2013) 'Radio Arts Turner Contemporary'

What is your practice-based contribution to radio's 'New Wave', a term encompassing a broad range of approaches to the "use of sound to tell true stories artfully?"

'Over the last couple of decades, a growing corps of radio makers has transformed nonfiction audio storytelling into a strikingly vibrant form of creative expression.'

John Biewan, 'Introduction' to *Reality Radio* (2010).

description

This is a studio for creatively driven students, interested in developing their nonfiction practice and up for exploring, analysing, experimenting and generally pushing the boundaries of audio feature making.

In this studio we will investigate the global palette of styles and approaches to audio documentary that is loosely referred to as radio's 'New Wave'. We'll examine the rich radiophonic traditions of Australia and Europe as well as the hugely popular US-style storytelling, exemplified by programs such as Serial and RadioLab. We'll be delving into the 'hidden history' and burgeoning theoretical discourse of this dynamic, emergent form.

Issues of creative representation, textual semantics and developing your individual 'voice', however, will be the lynchpin of this studio. You will create an audio folio exploring different production approaches and textures - from using sound to construct space, to exploring power and perspective through voice - to the use of non-verbal cues to create meaning. In the second half of semester you will build on your folio through the production of an extended sound-rich feature. Production work will also act as a prompt for reflecting on notions of practice, creativity, authorship, voice – and what you're doing 'here'.

You will do a lot of deep listening, rapid making, consistent reflecting, constructive critiquing and honest sharing. While we'll foster structured support networks and collaborative research groups, key practical and reflective work will be conducted individually. A primary outcome is that you emerge with a more developed sense of your creative non-fiction practice.

You must own a laptop with at least intermediate audio editing software (e.g. Adobe Audition, Wavelab, Reaper or Pro Tools preferred - not Garageband).

aims

- expand your knowledge and experience of a range of audio feature and storytelling forms, approaches, modes and techniques
- explore key questions and issues relevant to all forms of creative non-fiction
- develop your individual creative practice

Specific To Site: media responses to (non-)places
Robbie Rowlands

Wed. 8.30-11.30 (Rm 13.1.2)
Thur. 1.30-3.30 (Rm 9.3.12)

Denis Beaubois - Still from 'In the event of Amnesia the city will recall', 1997
David Claerbout - Still from 'The Algiers' Sections of a Happy Moment', 2008

How might we use media to investigate the everyday meanings, identity and functions of urban (non-)places?

'Place and non-place are rather like opposed polarities: the first is never completely erased, the second never totally completed; they are like palimpsests on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewritten'

Marc Augé, *Non-Places* (1995).

description

The main objective of this studio is for you to experience diverse urban sites close to hand and to explore their qualities as places and non-places through your own media-making practice. Using an experiential research practice approach you will investigate the histories and functions of these sites. Working site-specifically, you will utilise sound, film and still photography technology, both low-fi (Smartphones) and professional, to gather material from the sites.

This material will form the bases of experimental media projects created through the semester and can be considered as multiple projects culminating in a final body or iterative developments to lead to the creation of one final work.

The conceptual starting point for the studio is the work of anthropologist Marc Augé (1995) who argues that contemporary urban environments are characterised by the co-existence of places and non-places. For him, places are organic, familiar, localized, knowable and occupied spaces, whereas non-places refer to the increasingly common range of 'supermodern' spaces that in a sense detach the individual from their local environment. Non-places include familiar everyday spaces such as the station tunnel, escalators, elevators, shopping centres and airport terminals – sites that are often densely or intensely mediatized (e.g. through surveillance technologies). The interrelations, the goings on, or the seemingly 'empty' quality of these non-places in particular is the literal ground for this studio.

aims

• To investigate the notion of place and non-place and its relation to media.
• To engage directly within the city/inner urban environment, considering the socio-political layered histories, architecture and the natural environment.
• To create diverse media outcomes that explores film, photography, sound and performance.

The Video Micro-Essay
Nick Moore

Tue. 11.30-1.30 (Rm 9.2.17)
Fri.   8.30-11.30 (Rm 9.3.11)

Feral – as found in selected moving image media made in Melbourne (Nick Moore, 2014)

How might the academic study of film be reinvigorated through the adaptation of popular practices such as the remix and the supercut?

'We need to move towards the essay video which seeks to combine the referential character of the academic tradition and exploits the traits of the audiovisual mode of presentation'
Thomas van den Berg*, Reliable Unreliability versus Unreliable Reliability, or Perceptual Subversions of the Continuity Editing System* (2013).

description

Recently there has been an exciting proliferation of video 'micro-essays' on the moving image. Many of these works make use of key characteristics of contemporary audiovisual modes and practices which have emerged from broader popular practices of digital culture including mashups, remixes, supercuts, overdubs, desktop docos, motion infographics, YouTube Poop, vidding, and re-appropriations of all kinds. These micro-essays have largely been made outside of the academy by an emerging group of specialist video essay practitioners. They present a lively challenge to the established genre, trajectory and form of 'the essay' and 'the essay film' as it has been understood in cinema practice and scholarship.

In this studio you will make three key video micro-essays: these will be based on a set question, a non-media topic and original research in the field of moving image studies. A core activity of this studio will be video editing exercises building technical and creative skills.

A key imperative of this studio is to move beyond producing superfluous supercuts of celebrated auteurs and the chaotic trope-explosion of the YouTube meme-machine so that we might find our way to a new short video essay form; a form that helps reinvent cinema scholarship using emerging populist forms like the video micro-essay. Why can't we make short films, made from films, about films, that are simultaneously scholarly and filmic?

aims

- To investigate contemporary trends in both populist micro-video making and scholarly video essay content with a view to defining a new space for the academic micro-essay
- To investigate and utilise the aptitudes and media orientations of studio participants in designing valid areas of investigation
- To integrate critical scholarship and practice through the production of successful academic micro-essays and other editing video work.

The technical focus here is post-production and editing. You must have a laptop with prosumer video editing software (Adobe Premiere, Final Cut or Avid Media Composer preferred).

Writing for Film, Filming for Writing
Jasmine Roth and Paul Ritchard

Mon. 12.30-2.30 (Rm 9.2.15)
Thur. 9.30-12.30 (Rm 9.3.10)

Annotated Script - *Motel* Films (Fryatt, Kemp, Rogers & Ritchard, 2009)
Sony Camera and Book (Ritchard, 2015)

What is lost and found if we disassemble the conventional relationship between screenwriting and filmmaking?

'[S]criptwriting, like all art forms, is always changing and reinventing itself'

Linda Aronson, *The 21st Century Screenplay* (2010).

description

Industry production methods usually see the film script written before the shoot. In this studio we investigate what happens when the writing is woven in to *all three stages of production.*

This studio will investigate ways of writing for film as well as filming being part of the writing process. We will do this in collaboration with the Screenwriting students from the School's BA Creative Writing program. Neither the screenwriter nor the filmmaker will be considered 'guns for hire'.

You will explore models of industry practice and then turn those practices on their heads.

In the studio you will conduct a range of film production experiments which include, but are not limited to: improvising action with pre-written dialogue; improvising dialogue with pre-written action; shooting from prose; or, the Creative Writers shooting a scene written by you (the Media students). All the work you do will be investigated theoretically, practically and with reflection, resulting in a portfolio of written and film work.

aims

- To develop skills in the traditional process of writing and drafting a script and to prototype different ways of writing for film
- To allow the process of making to inform the scriptwriting and vice versa
- To produce a portfolio of written and film work