EMF 462
Experimental Film/Video

Course Description
This course will explore the theory, criticism, history, and aesthetics of experimental film/video. It will acquaint you with: the basic theory and purpose of experimental film and video as compared to narrative and documentary formats; critical methodologies to analyze and establish an aesthetic appreciation of experimental works; a history of experimental image-making from the 1920s to today; the interaction between experimental works, artists, audiences, economics, and ideology. By doing so, it will also provide you the familiarity with and understanding of the practice of experimental film/video necessary to engage with this discourse by creating multiple projects of your own. This course may not be repeated more than once without permission of the Academic Studies Committee.

Prerequisite: EMF 275 (Editing) and EMF 367 or EMF 373.

Class Policies
Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. Screenings and class discussions make up a large part of the experience of this class. Habitual lateness, early departures, and/or undocumented absences will lower your grade (two unexcused missed classes will lower your final grade 1 letter; three unexcused missed classes will lower your final grade 1.5 letters; four unexcused missed classes will lower your final grade 2 letters; and so on). Similar deductions will be applied for lateness and failure to stay the entire class.

Participation: This course will include readings each week and discussions of those readings, as well as discussions of the week’s screenings. As it is a seminar course, the quality of the class experience is largely based on students having read and being willing to discuss the material. Reading and participation, therefore, are absolutely required.
and will be weighed heavily in the student’s final grade.

Texting and excessive talking in class while instruction is going on will be considered negative participation. You may use laptops to take notes only if it does not prevent you from participating or distract others. You may not use laptops or cell phones during screenings.

Assignments: Students are expected to complete assigned exercises before class on the due dates listed in the syllabus or as announced in class. All assignments must be handed over at the beginning of the class and all tapes must be properly cued.

All written assignments must be grammatically correct. Written assignments must be typed.

Late Work: The grade for any late assignment will be lowered by 1/3 letter for each day after the due date. Considerably late (more than one week) cannot be made up for more than a C grade.

Required Equipment:

Hard Drive: All EMF majors (and pre-majors) must own their own LaCie or G-Drive FireWire drive. Refer to the Media Lab Bulletin board, contact Travis Holden (410 704-3433), or go to http://www.towson.edu/emf/medialabs.asp for a list of these drives.

Headphones: It is now the responsibility of the student to provide his/her own headphones for use with VAML equipment, and for use in the computer labs. It is recommended that the student do research and purchase headphones of high quality. Low quality headphones will not allow you to mix or record properly, as certain frequencies will be inaccurate causing your recordings to sound “bassy” or “tinny.” Full size stereo headphones that fit around or on your ear, and do not have emphasized bass or noise cancelling are strongly recommended. A list of possible headphones is listed in a B&H Wish List that includes headphones recommended by the audio EMF teachers.

http://www.bhphotovideo.com/wl/3A3D8032B3
EMF Google Group List Serve: All EMF students are required to join the EMF Google Group List Serve at http://groups.google.com/group/TowsonEMF. This will guarantee that you receive daily postings regarding digital media, video, film, and audio production topics including festivals, special screening, guest speakers, film/video crew needs, internships, and jobs.

Use this email address (TowsonEMF@googlegroups.com) to post your own messages to the group. The main page will also archive all posts.

Instructions:
1. Create a user account and password, and be sure to use the email to which you prefer receiving mail. (You only need to sign up once and you’ll continue to receive EMF Google group emails.)

2. Please select one of the three Email options for reading the group messages:
   (a) Abridged Email (No more than 1 email per day) -- Summary of new activity each day
   (b) Digest Email (Approximately 1 email per day) -- Up to 25 full new messages bundled into a single email
   (c) Email (Approximately 1 email per day) -- Best way not to miss important postings, as you get every message sent as it arrives

Civility: All EMF students, staff, and faculty are committed to collegial and academic citizenship demonstrating high standards of humane, ethical, professional, and civil behavior in all interactions.

We need to be aware of the relationship between our personal conduct and the quality of campus life. What we do and say always has an effect on others, whether we see it or not. Civility means more than respecting campus facilities and grounds. Civility means consistently treating people with consideration and respect. It means being courteous, polite, and fair. It means recognizing diversity and honoring differing points of view. When
our behavior is guided by concern for others in our community, we are being civil.

Practicing civility requires thoughtful behavior and checking our assumptions and perceptions of others’ race, gender, culture, and belief systems.

**Civility Code**

EMF places a priority on learning. We value the inherent worth and dignity of every person, thereby fostering a community of mutual respect. Students have the right to a learning environment free of disruptive behaviors. Faculty have the right to define appropriate behavioral expectations in the classroom and expect students to abide by them. Faculty have the responsibility to manage and address classroom disruption.

Staff have the right and responsibility to define appropriate behaviors necessary to conduct any university activity free of disruption or obstruction.

We believe that in order to achieve these ideals, all EMF students, staff, and faculty are expected to exhibit and practice civil behaviors that exemplify: (1) respecting faculty, staff, fellow students, guests, and all university property, policies, rules and regulations; (2) taking responsibility for one’s choices and actions; (3) delivering correspondence – whether verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic – with respectful language and in complete sentences; and (4) accepting consequences of one’s inappropriate choices and actions.

The use of offensive, threatening or abusive language, writing, or behavior will not be tolerated and can lead to academic dismissal. Further information about civility can be found in Appendix F of the university catalog.

Examples demonstrating civility in the classroom as a student include:

Being respectful of the professor and other students.

Not texting or using cellular phones and other electronic devices.

Not using your laptop for activities other than class work.

Not eating or drinking in class.
Not reading newspapers or listening to music during the class.

Not sleeping in class.

Examples demonstrating civility in the classroom as a faculty member include:

Being respectful of the students.

Attempting to understand individual student needs and learning styles.

Discussing civil behavioral expectations during the first class.

Taking time to talk with students whose behaviors negatively affect the classroom.

Encouraging students to follow your civil behavior.

**EMF ID Cards:** EMF IDs may be obtained in the equipment cage (MC 007) on or after the first day of the term by presenting a valid Towson photo ID (your OneCard), passing a written policy test, and presenting proof of production class enrollment. Validation of production class enrollment is obtained via production instructor signatures on the bottom of Equipment Use and Loan Agreements (which will be distributed by your instructor).

Students must present their valid EMF ID Card each time they check out equipment or use EMF facilities. No other ID will be accepted. NO EXCEPTIONS!

The ID card is good for the duration of the student’s time at Towson University but will need to be validated each semester. by repeating the written test and producing proof of production class enrollment. A semester sticker will be applied to the ID to show the student’s validation.

Should violations of policy occur, students are required to surrender their EMF ID upon request by ML Supervisor, ML Assistant Supervisor, or ML staff.

Please see “Media Labs Handbook” on www.towson.edu/emf for complete details.

Ownership and Use: Please be aware that the professor may keep copies of ANY and ALL student work for future teaching purposes only. If anyone has issues with this policy regarding a student project, it is up to the individual or group to notify the instructor.
Student Agreement: Once this document is issued to, reviewed and read by every student, the act of attending the second-class means you’ve agreed to all the requirements of the course outlined in this document.

Grading Policy

The grade of A is awarded for excellence, the very best work in the class. An A student turns in all work on time with consistently very high standards of quality, creativity, and original thinking. This person produces outstanding products and performs exceptionally in presentations and critiques. This grade is for Excellent work in the class.

The grade of B is awarded to students who have turned in all work on time, and consistently completed work in a high quality manner. The work shows creative thinking, extra effort, and care in presentation. This person has demonstrated knowledge that surpasses the basic material and skills of the course. This grade is for Very Good work in the class.

The grade of C is earned when all class work is turned in and the student has mastered the basic material and skills of the course. This person participated in class and demonstrated knowledge of the basic material and skills. This grade is for average work in the class.

The grade of D or F is given for work that is incomplete, late, and/or does not demonstrate mastery of the basic material and skills of the course. This grade below average work in the class.

Grading Scale

A = 93-100% B+ = 87-89% C+ = 77-79% D+ = 67-69% F = 0-59%

A- = 90-92% B = 83-86% C = 70-76% D = 60-66%

B- = 80-82%

Grade Breakdown:

Participation: 10%
Project 1: 10%

Project 2: 30%

Project 3: 30%

Final: 20%

Project 1 (individual) – Due 2/17:
The goal of this project is to get you experimenting immediately. From the start of class, you have two weeks to create a 1-2 minute experimental video work. The constraints are:
There can be no “story” (i.e. it is not a narrative or documentary)
There can be no “song” (i.e. it is not a music video)
You cannot use a camera
Despite these constraints, your job will be to create a meaningful and interesting video.
Experiment!
(10%)

Project 2 (individual) – Due 3/17:
For this project, you will create a 3-5 minute video that situates itself in the tradition of the work we’ve looked at during the first half of the semester (surreal, psychodrama, lyrical, abstract, graphic, minimalist or some combination). In addition, a support paper (2-3 typed pages) explaining and labeling film/video and theoretically defining/discussing its category will be included (must include a minimum of three full citations from assigned readings). (Project 25%, Paper 5%)

Project 3 (in pairs) – Due the last day of class:
In teams of two, create a 6-8 minutes video that responds to the work we’ve discussed during the second half of the semester (performative, image processing, glitch, found footage, media critique, neo-psychedelic, identity, etc.). In addition, a support paper (2-3 typed pages) explaining and labeling film/video and theoretically defining/discussing its
category will be included (must include a minimum of three full citations from assigned readings). (Project 25%, Paper 5%)

For all projects, I request that you don’t turn in music videos, pure duration pieces, or pure found footage appropriation pieces unless you are prepared to vigorously defend their academic rigor, artistic merit, and contemporary relevance in your supporting papers and critiques.

**Schedule** (subject to change)

Week 1 – 2/3
Introduction, Early Avant Garde and Today

James Sibley Watson, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, 1928, 12 min

Harry Smith, *Early Abstractions*, 1946-57 (except)

Ralph Steiner, *H20*, 1929, 12 min

Paper Rad, *How to Escape From Stress Boxes*, 2006, 4 min

Week 2 – 2/10

Viewing Experimental Media

Matthew Barney, *The Order* (excerpt from *Cremaster 3*), 2002, 30 min

Bruce Nauman, *Stamping in the Studio* (excerpt), 1968, 5 min

Owen Land (George Landow), *Film in Which There Appear...*, 1966, 3 min
tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE, *Ledger of St. Dermain*, 2004, 7 min

Stan Brakhage, *Window Water Baby Moving*, 1959, 12 min

Joan Jonas, *Vertical Roll* 1972, 20 min

Other selected works TBA

Week 3 – 2/17

**Project 1 Due**

Screening projects

Surrealism and Trance/Psychodrama
Kenneth Anger, *Fireworks*, 1947, 12 min

*Invocation of My Demon Brother*

Maya Deren, *At Land*, 1944, 17 min

Maya Deren, *Meshes of the Afternoon*, 1943, 18 min

Tony Oursler, selections (TBA)

**Week 4 – 2/24**

Lyrical films

Stan Brakhage, *Cat’s Cradle*, 1959, 6 min

Stan Brakhage, *Dog Star Man*, 1961-1964

Stan Brakhage, *Reflections on Black*, 1955, 12 min

Stan Brakhage, *Thigh Line Lyre Triangular*, 1961, 5 min

Carolee Schneeman, *Fuses*, 1965, 22 min

Other selected works TBA

**Week 5 – 3/3**

Abstract/Graphic films

Charles Wright, *Sorted Details*, 1979, 13 min

Norman McLaren, *Begone Dull Care*, 1949, 10 min

Osker Fischinger, *Komposition in Blau*, 1935, 6 min

Shirley Clarke, *Bridges-Go-Round*, 1959, 5 min

James Whitney, *Samadhi*, 1967, 6 min

James Whitney, *Lapis*, 1966, 5 min

Jordan Belson, *Light*, 1973, 6 min

Jordan Belson, *Allures*, 1961, 9 min

Stan Brakhage, *Glaze of Cathexis*, 1990, 3 min

Stan Brakhage, *Night Music*, 1986, 1 min

Stan Brakhage, *Rage Net*, 1988, 1 min
Week 6 – 3/10

Minimal/Structural Films

Time, Duration, and Metric

Michael Snow, Wavelength, 1967, 45 min
Ernie Gehr, Serene Velocity, 1970, 20 min
Pasadena Freeway Stills, 1974, 6 min
Stan Brakhage, Mothlight, 1963, 3 min
Peter Kubela, Arnulf Rainer, 1960, 6 min
Andy Warhol, Blowjob, 1963, 6 min (excerpt)

Week 7 – 3/17

Project 2 Due

Screening/Critique

Week 8 – 3/24

No class

Spring Break

Week 9 – 3/31

Performance/confessional/Artist, Camera, and Audience

Vito Acconci, Undertone (excerpt), 1972
Claim (excerpt), 1971
Marina Abromovic, selections (TBA)
Bruce Nauman, selections (TBA)
Pipilotti Rist, selections (TBA)
Miranda July, selections (TBA)
Peter Rose, The Pressures of the Text, 1983, 17 min
Peter Campus, Three Transitions, 1973, 5 min
Dan Graham, *Performer, Audience, Mirror*, 1975, 23 min

William Wegman, Selected Works

Week 10 – 4/7

Imaging Processing/Glitch

Dan Sandin, *5 Minute Romp Through the IP*, 5 min

Steina and Woody Vasulka, *Calligrams*, 1970, 4 min

*Switch! Monitor! Drift!*, (1976), 4 min

Forcefield, selections (TBA)

Takeshi Murata, *Silver*, 2006, 11 min

Cory Arcangel, selections (TBA)

Nam June Paik, *Global Groove*, 1973, 29 min

Other selected works TBA

Week 11 – 4/14

Found footage

Media Critique


Bruce Conner, selections (TBA)

Jesse McLean, *The Eternal Quarter Inch*, 2008, 9 min

Ant Farm, *Media Burn or The Eternal Frame*

Dan Reeves, selections (TBA)

Cory Arcangel, selections (TBA)

Martin Arnold, *Passage A’Lacte*, 1993, 12 min

Paul Chan, *RE: The Operation*, 2002, 28 min

Eric Fensler, *GI Joe PSAs* (selected works)

Richard Serra, *Television Delivers People*, 1973, 7 min

Craig Baldwin, selections (TBA)
Week 12 – 4/21
Experimental/Cult Feature
Alejandro Jodorowsky, The Holy Mountain, 1973, 114min

Week 13 – 4/28
Identity/Race
Sexuality/Gender
Transgression
Peggy Ahwesh, Martina’s Playground
Sadie Benning, selections (TBA)
Kathy Cook, The Match That Started My Fire, 1992, 15 min
Kristen D’Andren, A Cultural Object: The Tampon, 1997, 9 min
Nick Zedd and Richard Kern, Thrust in Me, 1985, 8 min
Jerry Tartaglia, selections (TBA)
Martha Rosler, The Semiotics of the Kitchen
X-Pres, No Sell Out, 1995, 6 min
Adrian Piper, selections (TBA)

Week 14 – 5/5
Neo-Psychedelic/Cultural Detritus
Paper Rad, selections (TBA)
Forcefield, selections (TBA)
Shana Moulton, Whispering Pines 6,7,8, 2006, 18 min
The Mountain Where Everything is Upside-Down, 2008, 5 min
Ryan Trecartin, selections (TBA)
Deer Raindrop, selections (TBA)
Takeshi Murata, Monster Movie, 2005, 5min
Ben Russell, selections from the Black & White Trypps series
Week 15 – 5/12

**Final Exam**

Week 16 – TBA (finals schedule)

**Project 3 due**

Screening/Critique

**Useful Websites**

- www.undergroundfilm.org -- contemporary experimental video
- www.ubu.com -- classic experimental film/video
- www.canyoncinema.com -- Canyon Cinema
- www.eai.org -- Electronic Arts Intermix
- www.vdb.org -- Video Data Bank
- www.film-makerscoop.com -- Film-Makers Cooperative
- www.MINDistortion.net -- political cartoons
- www.vtape.org -- V Tape
- www.eatpes.com -- stop-motion animation
- www.post-videoart.com -- Post Video Art
- www.subMedia.tv/index.html -- culture jamming mash-ups
- www.microcinema.com -- MicroCinema
- www.TheKitchen.org -- The Kitchen Cooperative
- www.rhizome.org -- New Media Art
- www.negativeland.com -- Video Art and related materials
- www.mfj-online.org -- Millennium Film Journal
- www.Koms.ru -- Russian Flash art
- www.BottomUnion.com -- video assemblage
- www.pistolwimp.com -- college humor and experimental media
- www.vimeo.com -- assorted media