

JOURNALISM AND SCREEN STUDIES (JASS)

Course Descriptions

JASS 240 Film and Society 3 Credit Hours

A survey of the major genres of film, chiefly in historical and political perspective, but also in light of important intellectual frameworks (e.g., feminism, psychoanalytical theory). The films selected, both Western and non-Western, will be examined both for their visual codes of meaning and for their wider role in developing a powerful social language in various cultural contexts. (OC).

JASS 248 Storytelling Across Media 4 Credit Hours

This course introduces students to the building blocks that make up great storytelling across multiple types of media and approaches, including online journalism, movies, podcasting, and more. Students will learn the foundations of narrative and apply that understanding to creating both fiction and nonfiction stories of their own for a variety of media, including websites, video, and audio. (YR)

JASS 301 Fundamentals of Journalism 4 Credit Hours

This is a course in the study and practice in reporting and news gathering, interview techniques, and basic news writing skills across media platforms. Students will also discuss libel law, ethics, and the use of the Freedom of Information Act. This course also teaches evaluation and critical thinking skills as applied to daily journalism. (F, W).

JASS 3015 Investigative Reporting Capstone 4 Credit Hours

A course in investigating a subject and writing a publishable story. Course covers the rudiments of investigative reporting: preliminary research, story selection, investigative strategies and resources, interviewing, and evaluation of material. Examines the history and current status of investigative reporting, including its ethics and politics. Students write and edit several articles and focus on two longer investigative pieces. (OC).

Prerequisite(s): COMM 2015 or JASS 2015 or JASS 248

JASS 302 Media Law and Ethics 4 Credit Hours

The basis of reportorial journalism is its foundation in the First Amendment. This course examines the legal restrictions and freedoms governing print media and explores the ethical responsibilities of print journalists. Specific topics covered include First Amendment law, copyright, the clear and present danger standard, defamation and libel, privacy, obscenity, free press/fair trial, access, shield laws, social media legislation, and journalism ethics. (W, YR).

JASS 305 Podcasting 4 Credit Hours

This course introduces the technical, social and legal issues involving podcasting. Students will develop an idea for a podcast, learn how to execute that idea in a hands-on environment, and develop a plan for marketing the work to the world. We will pay special attention to the growing and changing world of this genre of non-fiction storytelling. Although the emphasis will be on journalism, several weeks will be spent learning the technology and software necessary to complete assignments in this course. (F, W).

JASS 307 Copy Editing Across Media 4 Credit Hours

Course covers manuscript and electronic editing of news and feature stories across various platforms, editing for libel and taste, fact-checking, writing headlines and captions, and use of reference books. Includes a review of grammar and word usage, punctuation, spelling, and style. (F, YR).

JASS 309 Video for Social Media 4 Credit Hours

Social media apps such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok demand a different way of thinking about creating and communicating with video. With so much competition for attention online, creators must find innovative ways to capture audiences and create works that are highly shareable. Videos must be short, to the point, captivating, and understandable even when viewed on a small screen or without sound. This course introduces content creators to a variety of approaches to producing video for social media, including journalistic, marketing and public relations, and creative and cinematic uses. The course also addresses the legal, ethical, economic, and privacy-related issues to maintaining an active online presence. (AY).

JASS 310 Narrative Writing for Journalism and Media 4 Credit Hours

Students learn to identify, understand, and use the techniques of narrative storytelling to produce nonfiction writing. Assignments can include the writing and revising of articles based on research and interviews, personal essays, adaptations, and documentary scripts that draw from literary techniques. (YR).

JASS 312 Media Performance & Studio Production 4 Credit Hours

This course focuses on voice, diction, and movement for television studio-based production. The emphasis is on developing skills in announcing, news reading, on-camera stand ups, voice-overs, dramatic interpretation and performance. Students are exposed to a variety of projects and assignments both in front of and behind the camera, including directing and switching. Students are expected to submit a portfolio of their on-air and directing work at the end of the semester. (AY).

JASS 315 Media Production for Metropolitan Community 4 Credit Hours

This community-based course partners with a community organization to produce media projects that serve the needs of the organization. Students will build skills in intermediate aspects of media production including concept development, research, proposals and pitching, scriptwriting, producing, shooting, editing, and sound design, as well as professional and organizational communication skills. Students will also develop a broader understanding of community engagement, citizenship, and issues impacting the Detroit Metro community. Productions will include both studio experience and fieldwork. (OC).

JASS 330 Feature Writing 4 Credit Hours

An introduction to the writing of feature stories for newspapers, magazines and online platforms. Students study methods of gathering information and of preparing a manuscript for publication across media platforms. (YR).

JASS 331 Multimedia Journalism 4 Credit Hours

Course introduces the technical, social, legal and ethical practice of online research, focusing specifically on reporting (i.e. research and interview) skills required by journalists and others. Students use new media technology to generate ideas, to research subjects, and to develop general-audience writing projects in their areas of interest. Course covers the use of Web search engines, databases; finding sources and interviewing people online; evaluating the credibility of online sources and information; accessing archives and public records; and using spreadsheet and database programs. (F, W).

JASS 345 Audio Production 4 Credit Hours

JASS 345 introduces students to the fundamentals of sound and basic to intermediate audio production. The course includes a theoretical exploration of sound and listening, a foundation in recording technique and technology, audio editing and mixing using digital audio workstations, audio documentary and narrative construction, and sound design for visual media. (F).

JASS 350 Introduction to Media Production 4 Credit Hours

Intro to Media Production is a practical, applied course that instructs students in professional media production skills in the context of the history, aesthetics, and technology of film and video production. Students will produce several projects during the semester which will emphasize camera operation and image design, audio recording and sound design, editing, and concept development. (F, YR).

JASS 357 National Cinemas 4 Credit Hours

This course will introduce students to the national cinema of a select country. In contrasting the evolution of global cinema with the dominant genres and conventions of Hollywood, the course will enable students to critically examine non-Hollywood narratives; the interaction of various nationalist movements within the institution of cinema; and the ways in which world cinema has been inflected by various indigenous performance practices and other visual representations. (S, OC).

JASS 378 History of Broadcasting and Journalism 4 Credit Hours

A survey of the history of media in the United States, from the development of newspapers in the 18th century, to radio and television in the 20th century, to the development of web and social media in the 21st century. The course focuses on the business, political and demographic factors guiding the various broadcast industries; the development and shifts of programming genres over time; and a wide look at the social impact of broadcasting in the country. (F).

JASS 385 Black Cinema 4 Credit Hours

The course will examine selected films from African American and African film traditions in order to analyze how their cultural production is responsive to the conditions of social oppression, economic underdevelopment, and neo-colonialism. How film traditions define "Black aesthetics" will also be discussed. (AY)

JASS 387 Gender, Sexuality, and Power in American Film 4 Credit Hours

This course examines representations of gender and sexuality and their intersections with race, class, and ability across the history of American film. The course will engage with a range of debates in film theory and women's and gender studies, and enable students to apply concepts and theories to specific media texts. The course integrates basic elements of media production to explore means of argumentation and analysis outside the traditional essay format. (AY).

Prerequisite(s): HUM 240 or JASS 240 or ENGL 248 or HUM 248 or JASS 248 or FILM 240 or FILM 248 or WGST 275 or WGST 303 or ANTH 275 or ANTH 303 or PSYC 275 or PSYC 303 or SOC 275 or SOC 303 or WST 275 or HUM 275 or HUM 303 or JASS 350 or JASS 315 or JASS 312 or JASS 403

JASS 390 Topics in JASS 4 Credit Hours

Examination of problems, issues, technology and critical issues in advanced subject areas in journalism and screen studies. Title as listed in schedule of classes changes according to content. Course may be repeated for credit when specific topics differ. (OC).

Restriction(s):

Can enroll if Class is Junior or Senior

JASS 395 Video Post-production 4 Credit Hours

This course explores postproduction as the stage where storytelling takes its final shape, with editing at its core. Students examine how rhythm, pacing, and structure transform raw footage into narrative, emotion, and theme, studying how editorial choices guide meaning, build tension, and reveal character. At the same time, the course situates editing within a broader intellectual and historical context – tracing its evolution from the dialectical montage of early Soviet filmmakers to the seamless continuity of classical Hollywood, and from the intensified continuity of modern cinema to the fractured, post-continuity aesthetics of the digital era. (F, OC).

Prerequisite(s): JASS 248

JASS 398 Independent Study 1 to 4 Credit Hours

A student wishing to substantially explore a topic not otherwise offered in the program may design a course of study to be carried out under the supervision of a faculty member from the major. An independent study may consist of critical readings, writing, or a work of media production. Students wishing to pursue this option must develop their own syllabus, course schedule, and assessment strategy, and the proposal must be approved by the corresponding faculty member.

Restriction(s):

Can enroll if Class is Junior or Senior

Can enroll if College is Arts, Sciences, and Letters

JASS 403 Making Film History 4 Credit Hours

Learn film history by making film history. This course introduces students to the major developments in the history of cinema from early animation toys through the Hollywood Studio System up to the transition to streaming services and video apps. Students will also learn about the key theories of cinematic language that have emerged and evolved over time. Along the way, students will apply their understanding of historical movements and theories by making small creative projects that reflect their learning - you'll be making film history. (W, YR).

Restriction(s):

Cannot enroll if Class is Graduate

JASS 404 Video Game Studies & Criticism 3 Credit Hours

This course will explore some of the current social, cultural, legal, and aesthetic issues associated with video games as an immensely popular new media technology that has sparked a dynamic user culture. Examples of areas to be explored include ludology and narratology, narrative architecture and game spaces, ethical questions and controversies, and player experience and communities. (YR)

JASS 405 Storytelling, Experiments, and Play 4 Credit Hours

The concept of play involves engaging in an activity for enjoyment and discovery rather than to achieve a specific goal. The course builds on that approach by creating a space where students can safely take creative and technological risks as they develop their voices and styles as storytellers. It introduces students to alternative approaches to storytelling and provides a sandbox for students to experiment with new and innovative ways to express themselves creatively. Students will have the opportunity to use a variety of media tools, from audio and video to the written word to apps, and will work both independently and collaboratively to develop their portfolios of creative work. (OC).

JASS 406 Documentary & Photojournalism 4 Credit Hours

This course surveys the history of documentary film and photography and explores its ethical, legal and economic issues. Students study the changing theoretical approaches to non-fiction storytelling and the range of documentary purposes (journalistic, educational, propagandistic, entertainment). The course also provides a historical and theoretical background for those students interested in careers in news photography or documentary production.

Restriction(s):

Can enroll if Class is Sophomore or Junior or Senior

JASS 408 Reviewing Movies, Games, and Television 4 Credit Hours

The film, or TV, or video game critic has played a longstanding role in these fields in defining what counts as "good" or "high quality." This course invites students to take on that role by developing skills for reviewing multiple types of media, including movies, TV shows, video games, music, and more. Students will learn how to incorporate aesthetic judgments, historical context, and technical knowledge to produce reviews of media works of their choice. In addition, students will produce reviews for a variety of platforms, including print and websites, podcasts, and videos. (YR).

JASS 410 Directing & Editing Capstone 4 Credit Hours

This course covers advanced concepts in media production and provides a pre-professional opportunity to direct and edit. Working together in practice-based teams, students focus on research, reporting, scripting, producing, direction, cinematography and post-production techniques. Emphasis is placed on practice-based learning in both field and studio settings, leading to the creation of a professional program or film targeted at a public audience. (W).

Prerequisite(s): JASS 350 or COMM 350 or JASS 405 or JASS 406 or JASS 345

JASS 415 Film Festival Programming 4 Credit Hours

How do cultural works find audiences? How does, say, a film made on a shoestring budget make its way onto the front page of the New York Times online, or onto Netflix where it will be viewed by thousands? Although there is no single path for any cultural work to reach an audience, festivals have increasingly become an important first step on that path. This course provides a practical perspective on strategies for programming film in a festival context. You will engage in cataloguing, evaluating, and contextualizing films that you solicit and that which practitioners submit for consideration. The course culminates in the curation of a film festival that will be showcased on campus. (W).

JASS 440 Genres and Directors 4 Credit Hours

This rotating topics course offers a deep dive into a selected film genre or director - and sometimes both at the same time. Studies of genre will include a historical and theoretical examination of genre conventions, the evolution of the genre over time, and hybrid or subgenres that have emerged. Studies of directors will similarly investigate their relationship to specific genres, their historical contribution to cinematic themes, styles, representations, and technical innovations, and an evaluation of auteur theory. (W).

JASS 467 Script-Writing Workshop 4 Credit Hours

This writing intensive course will train students to compose media scripts, focusing on the substance, structure, and style of both non-fiction documentary scripts and narrative screenplays. The course is conducted as a workshop in which students study classic scripts, then model scenes and sequences on the principles of these texts. Finally, students write their own complete script in accordance with the appropriate narrative structure. (YR).

Prerequisite(s): JASS 310 or COMM 310 or COMP 310 or ENGL 310 or JASS 248 or HUM 248

JASS 497 Thesis 4 Credit Hours

A thesis project that is the culmination of studies in the major. Students choose the project area and write a thesis (40-50 pages) or produce a work of media under the direction of a discipline faculty member. The thesis option is available only to students with substantial practical experience in the field of journalism or media production, and requires the approval of the faculty. This course is available only to Junior/Senior students majoring in the program. (F, W).

Prerequisite(s): JASS 248 and JASS 310

Restriction(s):

Can enroll if Class is Junior or Senior

*An asterisk denotes that a course may be taken concurrently.

Frequency of Offering

The following abbreviations are used to denote the frequency of offering: (F) fall term; (W) winter term; (S) summer term; (F, W) fall and winter terms; (YR) once a year; (AY) alternating years; (OC) offered occasionally