



VM 444 - FALL 2020
4 CREDITS - THURSDAYS 6-7:40PM - CABARET

An artist and an activist are not so far apart.
Ava DuVernay

If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair.
Shirley Chisholm

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students develop their authorial voice through creating socially-conscious film, video, and/or audio projects. Students critically examine the work of female-identified media artists, discuss key intersectional feminist issues, and explore artistic interpretations of the female experience. Class discussion, screenings, and critical readings provide the necessary foundation for innovative and informed media projects. *The nature of this course requires the screening and discussion of potentially sensitive material during every class.*

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through production assignments, discussions, screenings, and critical readings, this course seeks to:

- Guide students as they create socially-conscious media works that explore their own relationship with feminism and the female experience, lived or observed
- Explore methods, modes, and techniques of exemplary feminist media production to assist students as they develop their own creative authorial voice
- Provide an overview of key contemporary feminist issues and examine the work of female-identified media makers across ethical, societal, social, domestic, and individual contexts

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Express personal experience and authorial voice through producing media works that challenge hegemonic gender norms and/or provide alternative narratives for women
- Link conceptual understanding of contemporary feminist issues to artistic expression and the effective communication of an artist's intended message
- Analyze media from a feminist perspective, considering personhood, representation, gender norms, interpersonal relationships, and self-exploration
- Examine the ways personal experience of gender informs the interpretation of media art
- Articulate key concepts in feminist criticism, including primary arguments and historical context

FEMINIST SPHERES

For the purposes of this course, various feminist issues have been organized into topical spheres:

- **Ethical:** female personhood, basic human rights, rape, abortion, etc.
- **Societal:** institutional representation, access to power, equal pay, etc.
- **Social:** beauty standards, gender expression/performance, trans identity, etc.
- **Domestic:** gender roles, division of domestic labor, motherhood, having children (or not), etc.
- **Individual:** interpersonal relationships (romantic/platonic/familial), internalized misogyny, etc.

PARTICIPATION / ATTENDANCE

This course requires informed and committed participation. Be ready to actively listen and discuss. Since Fall 2020 is a wild one, I am not including a formal attendance policy this semester. But if you are not engaged, be prepared to have a lesser experience.

COURSE READINGS

All required readings are available on Canvas. For the most part, you will be able to choose which readings to focus on within any given topical sphere (see *Assignments*). If you have a reading you've been meaning to do that fits a certain topical sphere, I am open to you running it by me as inspiration for your creative work. We can discuss how it could potentially be integrated.

EQUIPMENT ALLOCATION (EDC)

- Canon C-100 (interchangeable lenses)
- Canon XC-15 w/ on-board mic (fixed lens)
- Sony FS5
- Sony PCM-D10 recorder
- Shotgun mics, wireless lavalier mics
- Tripods, monopods, Easyrig Minimax stabilizer
- 3-point LED light kit
- Gel kit / Flexfill / sand bags
- Boom poles / XLR cables / stingers / Slates

GRADING

This course is a production workshop in creating feminist media (surprise!). You are expected to regularly produce creative work. This is based on the principle that the more you practice, the better you become. Use EVERY assignment to communicate what is important to you and **TAKE RISKS**.

Virtual Discussions	20%
Portfolio Website	20%
Sphere Responses	30%
Final Project	30%

ASSIGNMENTS

Further details on all assignments will be shared in class, and the Modules on Canvas are your best bet to keep yourself organized.

Virtual Discussions (20% of final grade)

Our in-person time is cut short (thanks, coronavirus!), so we will have some online interactions to ensure we still have our full experience together. There will be modules for each sphere featuring readings, online screenings, discussion prompts, classy videos starring yours truly, etc. All modules are asynchronous, so you can do them whenever as long as you have shared your initial discussion post by the stated deadline. We will then have time for online discussion until the topic closes (see dates below). I will update the Canvas discussion posts with prompts/directives at the beginning of each topical sphere. Each online discussion will be worth 5 points: three for your initial post, and two for responding to at *least* two of your comrades. But please engage as much as you like!

- Introduction initial post: September 9 (open until 9/17)
- Ethical initial post: September 16 (open until 10/1)
- Societal initial post: September 30 (open until 10/15)

- Social initial post: October 14 (open until 10/29)
- Domestic initial post: October 28 (open until 11/12)
- Individual initial post: November 11 (open until 12/3)

Portfolio Website (20% of final grade)

You will work throughout the semester on a portfolio website, i.e. your professional, public launch as a feminist media maker! Your website will house the work you do in this class, and anything else you have made that you wish to highlight. You will also polish your résumé, bio, and artist statement for inclusion on your website. If you already have a website, great! We'll make it better. If you make personal pieces for this class that you don't wish to share publicly, that's perfectly fine as long as we connect about it.

- Phase 1 (skeleton site, YouTube/Vimeo account, drafts of bio and artist statement): October 8
- Phase 2 (draft of résumé): November 5
- Phase 3 (final website and final versions of all assets): December 9

Sphere Video Responses (30% of final grade)

At the beginning of each topical sphere, you will receive related readings. Select the reading that most interests you and respond to it by creating a 2- to 3-minute video that reflects on the text. Be as straightforward or as creative as you like—the videos can include abstract ideas, monologues, dialogues, archival footage, etc. Unlike your final project, production value is not as important as progress toward cultivating your artistic voice. All work will be shown in class (or on Canvas) and you will be expected to discuss your work's relationship to the reading you selected. **Late submissions are not accepted.** If you miss the deadline, you forfeit the points allotted to that sphere.

- Ethical: September 24
- Societal: October 8 (Phase 1 of website; no video response)
- Social: October 22
- Domestic: November 5
- Individual: November 19

Final Project (30% of final grade)

Create a 7- to 10-minute project of your own conception and execution. Less than 7 minutes is fine if production is particularly intense (i.e. animation), but 10 minutes is a firm time limit. Your piece can be of any narrative structure, but should speak to reflections and ideas you have had throughout your participation in this course. The parameters for the final project are purposefully open so that you can further develop your own personal style and artistic voice. You will present your proposal to the class for feedback, and you are also required to schedule an individual rough-cut meeting with me. Projects will be evaluated for the successful execution of your idea, originality of concept, and production value. **Late submissions are not accepted.** We will have a virtual screening using Metastream, which requires your projects to be on YouTube (can be unlisted). Details forthcoming.

- Proposal: November 12
- Meeting: Schedule between November 19 and December 2
- Project: December 3

DRAFT SCHEDULE

Syllabus is subject to change if things get wild, but you will always be informed. See Modules on Canvas for more details.

<p>Week 1: September 3</p>	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EDC contracts (online) - Class introductions: Two Truths and a Lie - Detailed syllabus review - Start readings for Introduction virtual discussion (see Canvas)
<p>Week 2: September 10</p>	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director of Production and Safety visit (Zoom at 6:05p) - Discuss introductory readings

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crash course in feminist history - How to critique - Start readings for Ethical sphere virtual discussion (see Canvas)
Week 3: September 17	<p>Ethical Sphere</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ethical sphere screenings and discussion - Filmmaker visit: Nicole Rose Kaveny (via Zoom; pending filmmaker availability)
Week 4: September 24	<p>Ethical Sphere</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NO IN-PERSON CLASS (details forthcoming) - Ethical sphere video response due - Start readings for Societal sphere virtual discussion (see Canvas)
Week 5: October 1	<p>Societal Sphere</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Societal sphere screenings and discussion - Discuss portfolio websites
Week 6: October 8	<p>Societal Sphere</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phase 1 of portfolio website due - Camera overview: Canon C100, Canon XC15, and Sony FS5; audio workshop - Start readings for Social sphere virtual discussion (see Canvas) <p>Note: Thursday classes are scheduled on Saturday, October 10 is for Thursday classes. That course time will be covered by final project production meetings.</p>
Week 7: October 15	<p>Social Sphere</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social sphere screenings and discussion
Week 8: October 22	<p>Social Sphere</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social sphere video response due (screened in class) - Start readings for Domestic sphere virtual discussion (see Canvas)
Week 9: October 29	<p>Domestic Sphere</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Domestic sphere screenings and discussion
Week 10: November 5	<p>Domestic Sphere</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Domestic sphere video response due (screened in class) - Final project assigned; proposal due next week! - Start readings for Individual sphere virtual discussion (see Canvas)
Week 11: November 12	<p>Individual Sphere</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final project proposal due - Phase 2 of portfolio website due - Final project proposal presentations / discussion

<p>Week 12: November 19</p>	<p>Individual Sphere</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LAST IN-PERSON CLASS - Individual sphere video response due (screened in class) - Schedule rough-cut meeting with Colleen (meet by EOD 12/2) - Cry about how much we will miss each other
<p>Week 13: December 3</p>	<p>Final Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virtual screening on Metastream (details forthcoming) - This class will likely run long, so clear your schedules! - Phase 3 of portfolio website due 12/9

Diversity Statement Every student in this class will be honored and respected as an individual with distinct experiences, talents, and backgrounds. Issues of diversity may be a part of class discussion, assigned material, and projects. The instructor will make every effort to ensure that an inclusive environment exists for all students. If you have any concerns or suggestions for improving the classroom climate, please do not hesitate to speak with the course instructor or to contact the Social Justice Center at 617-824-8528 or by email at sjc@emerson.edu.

Title IX Statement I am a responsible employee at Emerson College which means I am not a confidential resource. I am required to report disclosures that may violate Emerson’s Sexual Misconduct Policy. If you would like to speak with someone confidentially, please contact the Healing and Advocacy Collective, Counseling and Psychological Services, and/or the Center for Health and Wellness. If you would like to report an incident involving a possible violation of Emerson’s Sexual Misconduct Policy, please contact our Title IX Coordinator at titleix@emerson.edu or 617-824-8999. You can also report online: www.emerson.edu/reportaconcern

Accessibility Statement Emerson College is committed to providing equal access and support to all students who qualify through the provision of reasonable accommodations so that each student may fully participate in the Emerson experience. If you have a disability that may require accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Services at SAS@emerson.edu or 617-824-8592 to make an appointment with an SAS staff member. Students are encouraged to contact SAS early in the semester. Please be aware that accommodations are not applied retroactively.

Plagiarism Statement It is the responsibility of all Emerson students to know and adhere to the College's policy on plagiarism, which can be found at: www.emerson.edu/policy/plagiarism. If you have any questions concerning the Emerson plagiarism policy or about documentation of sources in work you produce in this course, speak to your instructor.

VMA Production Safety Statement Safety is a major concern on any film or video set; safety training is also a requirement for employment in the production industry. Emerson supports safety measures and requires safety training through seminars and the VMA Student Production Safety Manual. Students participating in any Emerson film or video production must meet all requirements as set forth by the VMA Student Production Safety Manual and Lenny Manzo, the Director of Production and Safety (DPS). Students with questions or concerns should contact Lenny Manzo (DPS) at 617-824-8126 or leonard_manzo@emerson.edu. In case of emergency, the PRODUCTION SAFETY HOTLINE can be reached 24/7 at 617-939-1311. If you choose to work with minors in your production(s), familiarize yourself with the College's policies on minors (available on the College website). At no time is a student to be one-on-one with a minor without a guardian present.