Comparative Media Studies/Writing combines the study of contemporary media (film, television, games, social media, and digital interactive forms) with the study of creative and journalistic practices of producing these and other forms of modern fiction, poetry, film, and non-fiction prose. The section offers two undergraduate majors, one in Comparative Media Studies and another in Writing, as well as two graduate SM degrees in Comparative Media Studies and Science Writing. The curriculum seeks to encourage students to think across various forms of media and to learn about contemporary forms of media through the practices of creating and producing them.

The program in Comparative Media Studies/Writing is home to two centers that serve as key resources to the MIT community. The MIT Writing and Communication Center offers free individual consultation on communication on an appointment or drop-in basis to all members of the MIT community, as well as other services. For more information about the WCC and other academic resources for students (http://catalog.mit.edu/mit/resources), see Academic Resources.

The Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication (WRAP) staff helps provide the integration of instruction and feedback in writing and speaking in subjects in all undergraduate departments and programs. For information about all of WRAP’s services, visit the WRAP website (http://cmsw.mit.edu/education/writing-across-the-curriculum).

Undergraduate Study

Bachelor of Science in Comparative Media Studies (CMS)
The program leading to the Bachelor of Science in Comparative Media Studies (http://catalog.mit.edu/degree-charts/comparative-media-studies-cms) degree is designed to integrate the study of contemporary media (film, television, digital systems) with a broad historical understanding of older forms of human expression. The program embraces theoretical and interpretive principles drawn from the central humanistic disciplines of literary study, history, anthropology, art history, and film studies, but aims as well for a comparative synthesis that is responsive to the distinctive emerging media culture of the 21st century. Students explore the complexity of the media environment by learning to think across media, to see beyond the boundaries imposed by older medium-specific approaches to the study of audio-visual and literary forms. The undergraduate program serves as preparation for advanced study in a range of scholarly and professional disciplines and also for careers in media or industry.

The comparative and cross-disciplinary nature of both the undergraduate and graduate programs is reflected by the extensive participation of faculty drawn from Art and Architecture; Anthropology; Global Languages; History; Literature; Music and Theater Arts; Philosophy; Science, Technology, and Society; Media Arts and Sciences; Political Science; and Urban Studies and Planning.

The Bachelor of Science in Comparative Media Studies requires 10 subjects. Majors are required to take CMS.100 Introduction to Media Studies, a Media Practice and Production subject, CMS.701 Current Debates in Media (CI-M), a second CI-M subject, and six electives. A pre-thesis tutorial (CMS.THT) and thesis (CMS.THU) may be substituted for one elective.

Bachelor of Science in Writing (Course 21W)
The writing major offers students the opportunity to study the craft, forms, and traditions of contemporary writing, journalism, and digital media. Some students explore writing as a means of artistic expression. Some learn how to write for a variety of media or to communicate the results of their science and technical work to broad audiences and members of their professions. Others work collaboratively within the evolving framework of digital media to become skillful in interactive and nonlinear forms of communication. All subjects in the major emphasize the development of the foundational skills, creative initiative, and critical sensibility necessary to become a good writer.

Subjects in the program’s three areas of emphasis—creative writing, science writing, and nonfiction writing—are taught at both introductory and advanced levels. All subjects require extensive writing and revision. Student work is typically discussed in workshops and receives the written commentary of the instructor.

Joint Degree Programs in Comparative Media Studies
The joint undergraduate degree program in CMS (21E or 21S) requires eight CMS subjects, plus six subjects in an engineering or science major. Students are required to take CMS.100 Introduction to Media Studies, a Media Practice and Production subject, CMS.701 Current Debates in Media, and five CMS electives. A pre-thesis tutorial (CMS.THT) and thesis (CMS.THU) may be substituted for one CMS elective. Students must obtain approval for their CMS subject selection from their CMS faculty advisor, and approval for their engineering or science subjects from a faculty advisor in the relevant field. See joint degree programs (http://catalog.mit.edu/schools/humanities-arts-social-sciences/humanities/#undergraduatetext) under the Department of Humanities section.

Joint Degree Programs in Writing
The joint undergraduate degree program in 21W (21E or 21S) requires seven subjects in writing, a writing pre-thesis (21W.THT) and thesis (21W.THU), plus six subjects in an engineering or science major. Students must obtain approval for their writing subject selection from their writing faculty advisor, and approval for their engineering or science subjects from a faculty advisor in the relevant field. See joint degree programs (http://catalog.mit.edu/schools/humanities-arts-social-sciences/humanities/#undergraduatetext) under the Department of Humanities section.
**Minor in Comparative Media Studies**

The minor requires six subjects that reflect the comparative study of media. It is organized into three tiers, and each student designs his or her own plan of study in consultation with an advisor in the field.

**Introductory**
- CMS.100 Introduction to Media Studies
- CMS.335[J] Short Attention Span Documentary
- CMS.362 Civic Media Collaborative Design Studio
- CMS.400 Media Systems and Texts
- CMS.405 Visual Design
- CMS.590[J] Design and Development of Games for Learning
- CMS.609[J] The Word Made Digital
- CMS.614[J] Network Cultures
- CMS.627 Imagination, Computation, and Expression Studio
- CMS.628 Advanced Identity Representation
- CMS.633 Digital Humanities: Topics, Techniques, and Technologies
- CMS.634 Designing Interactions
- 21W.752 Making Documentary: Audio, Video, and More

**Intermediate**
Select one of the following:  
- CMS.335[J] Short Attention Span Documentary
- CMS.362 Civic Media Collaborative Design Studio
- CMS.400 Media Systems and Texts
- CMS.405 Visual Design
- CMS.590[J] Design and Development of Games for Learning
- CMS.609[J] The Word Made Digital
- CMS.614[J] Network Cultures
- CMS.627 Imagination, Computation, and Expression Studio
- CMS.628 Advanced Identity Representation
- CMS.633 Digital Humanities: Topics, Techniques, and Technologies
- CMS.634 Designing Interactions

**Advanced**
- CMS.701 Current Debates in Media

**Electives**
Select three elective subjects

| Total Units | 72 |

**Minor in Writing**

The minor consists of six subjects arranged in two tiers of study as follows.

**Tier I**
Select one of the following:  
- 21W.011 Writing and Rhetoric: Rhetoric and Contemporary Issues
- 21W.012 Writing and Rhetoric: Food for Thought
- 21W.013 Writing and Rhetoric: Introduction to Contemporary Rhetoric
- 21W.014 Writing and Rhetoric: Exploring Visual Media
- 21W.015 Writing and Rhetoric: Writing about Sports

| 21W.021 | Writing and Experience: MIT Inside, Live |
| 21W.022 | Writing and Experience: Reading and Writing Autobiography |
| 21W.031 | Science Writing and New Media: Explorations in Communicating about Science and Technology |
| 21W.034 | Science Writing and New Media: Perspectives on Medicine and Public Health |
| 21W.035 | Science Writing and New Media: Elements of Science Writing for the Public |
| 21W.036 | Science Writing and New Media: Writing and the Environment |
| 21W.041[J] | Writing About Literature |
| 21W.042[J] | Writing with Shakespeare |
| 21W.755 | Writing and Reading Short Stories |
| 21W.756 | Writing and Reading Poems |

**Tier II**
Select five subjects within Writing  

| Total Units | 60 |

1. See the department’s website (http://cmsw.mit.edu/education/subject-lists/writing) for information about available subjects.

**Graduate Study**

**Master of Science in Comparative Media Studies**

The graduate program is a two-year course of study leading to a Master of Science in Comparative Media Studies. Comparative Media Studies investigates and engages in the world’s complex media environment; researches multiple media forms and technologies, from books, pamphlets, and silent films to social media, virtual reality, and globally-networked games; and studies the emerging media practices of states, corporations, social movements, fan communities, and everyday people. Embracing MIT’s motto of *mens et manus*, CMS students design and create media through practice-based research labs. They also examine media within the contexts of varied cultures, societies and social structures, and critique and design media to empower communities. Above all, Comparative Media Studies is committed to an ethically and critically engaged approach to the study and production of media.

The graduate degree program in Comparative Media Studies places extensive emphasis on student participation in collaborative sponsored research of one or more of its research groups, including the Center for Civic Media; the Open Documentary Lab; the Education Arcade; the MIT Game Lab; the Imagination, Computation, and Expression Laboratory; the Trope Tank; the Teaching Systems Laboratory; and the Design Lab. Typically graduate students spend...
20 hours per week on funded group-project work during their two-year program, for which they receive funding that supports their graduate study at MIT. For further information on research, visit the CMS/W website (http://cmsw.mit.edu/research-groups).

CMS graduate students usually take three 12-unit subjects per term, plus a 3-unit colloquium. All students take three introductory seminars (Media Theories and Methods I and II, and Major Media Texts) during their first year, as well as Workshop, and another subject that offers hands-on experience in media. In their final year, they are required to take Media in Transition and a 24-unit subject devoted to completing the master’s thesis, plus the 3-unit Colloquium in Comparative Media.

Students may enter the program with a degree from a wide range of undergraduate majors, including the liberal arts, the social sciences, journalism, computer science, and management.

Required Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMS.790</td>
<td>Media Theories and Methods I</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS.791</td>
<td>Media Theories and Methods II</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS.796</td>
<td>Major Media Texts</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS.801</td>
<td>Media in Transition</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS.950</td>
<td>Workshop I</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS.990</td>
<td>Colloquium in Comparative Media</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

Select one of the following: 9-18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMS.864</td>
<td>Game Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS.863[J]</td>
<td>Design and Development of Games for Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS.862</td>
<td>Civic Media Collaborative Design Studio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS.834[J]</td>
<td>Designing Interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS.828</td>
<td>Advanced Identity Representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21W.890</td>
<td>Short Attention Span Documentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21W.824</td>
<td>Making Documentary: Audio, Video, and More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAS.532</td>
<td>Mathematical Methods in Imaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAS.863[J]</td>
<td>How to Make (Almost) Anything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.369</td>
<td>Studio Seminar in Art and the Public Sphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.353</td>
<td>Advanced Video and Related Media</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Master of Science in Science Writing

The one-year graduate program in Science Writing leads to a Master of Science in Science Writing, and it is aimed at students who wish to write about science and technology for general readers, in ordinary newsstand magazines and newspapers, in popular and semi-popular books, on the walls of museums, or on television or radio programs. Students may be graduates of undergraduate science, engineering, journalism, or writing programs; experienced journalists and freelance writers; working scientists or engineers; historians of science and technology; or other scholars, including those already holding advanced degrees.

The program is built around an intensive year-long advanced science writing seminar. In addition, students choose one elective each semester, write a substantial thesis, observe in a lab, and complete an internship. Complete information is available on the program’s website (http://sciwrite.mit.edu). The graduate program maintains links to MIT’s Program in Science, Technology, and Society; and to the Knight Science Journalism Program. For more information, see the descriptions of the Science, Technology, and Society Program (http://catalog.mit.edu/schools/humanities-arts-social-sciences/science-technology-society) and Research and Study (http://catalog.mit.edu/mit/research) for more information about the Knight Science Journalism Program.

Inquiries

Further information on subjects and programs may be obtained from the Comparative Media Studies/Writing office (cmsw@mit.edu), Room 14N-338, 617-253-3599.

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Cynthia Griffin Wolff, PhD
Class of 1922 Professor Emerita of Literature

Undergraduate Subjects

CMS.100 Introduction to Media Studies
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

Offers an overview of the social, cultural, political, and economic impact of mediated communication on modern culture. Combines critical discussions with experiments working with different media. Media covered include radio, television, film, the printed word, and digital technologies. Topics include the nature and function of media, core media institutions, and media in transition. Enrollment limited.

Staff

CMS.150[J] Black Matters: Introduction to Black Studies (New)
Same subject as 24.912[J], 21H.106[J], 21L.008[J], 21W.741[J], WGS.190[J]
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A, HASS-H; CI-H

See description under subject 24.912[J].

M. Degraff & D. Fox Harrell

CMS.300 Introduction to Videogame Theory
Subject meets with CMS.841
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-3-6 units. HASS-H

Introduction to the interdisciplinary study of videogames as texts through an examination of their cultural, educational, and social functions in contemporary settings. Students play and analyze videogames while reading current research and theory from a variety of sources in the sciences, social sciences, humanities, and industry. Assignments focus on game analysis in the context of the theories discussed in class. Includes regular reading, writing, and presentation exercises. No prior programming experience required. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 20.

M.Jakobsson

CMS.301 Introduction to Game Design Methods
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
5-0-7 units. HASS-A

Provides an introduction to the process of designing games and playful experiences. Familiarizes students with concepts, methods, techniques and tools used in the design of a wide variety of games. Focuses on aspects of the process such as rapid prototyping, playtesting, and design iteration using a player-centered approach. Students work in project groups where they engage with a series of confined exercises, practice communicating design ideas, and discuss their own and others work in a constructive manner. No prior programming experience required. Limited to 15.

M. Jakobsson, S. Verrilli

CMS.306 Making Comics and Sequential Art
Subject meets with CMS.806
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

Applied introduction to comics and sequential art production. Builds skills in how to develop storylines; develop and draw characters, panels, and backgrounds; prepare for print production; and comprehend the basics of sequential language, composition, and layout. Students engage with crucial personal and political issues at stake across a range of comics genres: superhero, biographical, and countercultural. Addresses not just how we create comics, but why we create comics. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 16.

M. Cordero
CMS.307 Critical Worldbuilding
Subject meets with CMS.807
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-3-6 units. HASS-A

Studies the design and analysis of invented (or constructed) worlds for narrative media, such as television, films, comics, and literary texts. Provides the practical, historical and critical tools with which to understand the function and structure of imagined worlds. Examines world-building strategies in the various media and genres in order to develop a critical and creative repertoire. Participants create their own invented worlds. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 13.
J. Diaz

CMS.308 The Visual Story: Graphic Novel, Type to Tablet
Subject meets with CMS.808
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered
Acad Year 2021-2022: U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

Focuses on the interactions between graphic stories and media technologies from the rotary press of the late 19th century to contemporary touch screens, exploring the changing relations among narrative expression, reader experience and media form. Working with examples from Pulitzer’s Yellow Kid and McKay’s Little Nemo, through the classic comics (from DC superheroes to EC horror) and graphic novels, to interactive and non-linear texts (Cognitos Operation Ajax), examines such elements as graphic design, interface, and form as well as the circulation and economies of these various media-based texts. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.
J. Paradis

CMS.309[J] Transmedia Storytelling: Modern Science Fiction
Same subject as 21W.763[J]
Subject meets with CMS.809
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered
Acad Year 2021-2022: U (Fall)
3-2-7 units. HASS-A

See description under subject 21W.763[J].
H. Hendershot

CMS.311[J] Media in Weimar and Nazi Germany
Same subject as 21G.055[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered
Acad Year 2021-2022: U (Spring)
2-2-8 units. HASS-H; CI-H

See description under subject 21G.055[J]. Enrollment limited.
W. Uricchio

CMS.313 Silent Film
Subject meets with CMS.813
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-3-6 units. HASS-H

Examines how the key elements of today’s films - composition, continuity editing, lighting, narrative structure - were originally created. Studies the history of cinema, from its origins in the late 19th century to the transition to sound in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Students view a range of films (both mainstream and experimental) from all over the world, with a particular focus on US productions. Emphasis on how color, sound, and other developments paved the way for today’s technological innovations. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.
H. Hendershot

CMS.314[J] Phantasmal Media: Computer-Based Art Theory and Practice
Same subject as 21W.753[J]
Subject meets with CMS.814
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

Engages students in theory and practice of using computational techniques for developing expressive digital media works. Surveys approaches to understanding human imaginative processes, such as constructing concepts, metaphors, and narratives, and applies them to producing and understanding socially, culturally, and critically meaningful works in digital media. Readings engage a variety of theoretical perspectives from cognitive linguistics, literary and cultural theory, semiotics, digital media arts, and computer science. Students produce interactive narratives, games, and related forms of software art. Some programming and/or interactive web scripting experience (e.g., Flash, Javascript) is desirable. Students taking the graduate version complete a project requiring more in-depth theoretical engagement.
D. F. Harrell
**CMS.333(J) Production of Educational Videos: Skills for Communicating Academic and Professional Content**
Same subject as ES.333[J]
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-1-8 units. HASS-E; CI-H

See description under subject ES.333[J]. Limited to 12; preference to students in ESG.
_D. Custer_

**CMS.334(J) South Asian America: Transnational Media, Culture, and History**
Same subject as 21W.788[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: U (Spring)
Acad Year 2021-2022: Not offered
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

See description under subject 21W.788[J]. Limited to 18.
_V. Bald_

**CMS.335(J) Short Attention Span Documentary**
Same subject as 21W.790[J]
Subject meets with 21W.890
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered
Acad Year 2021-2022: U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

See description under subject 21W.790[J]. Limited to 16.
_V. Bald_

**CMS.336(J) Social Justice and The Documentary Film**
Same subject as 21W.786[J]
Subject meets with CMS.836
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered
Acad Year 2021-2022: U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

See description under subject 21W.786[J]. Limited to 18.
_V. Bald_

**CMS.338 Innovation in Documentary: Technologies and Techniques**
Subject meets with CMS.838
Prereq: CMS.100 or permission of instructor
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

Discusses emerging technologies and techniques available to media-makers (e.g., location-based technologies, transmedia storytelling, crowdsourcing, and interactivity) and their implications on the film and television documentary. Studies the development of these tools and considers the many new directions in which they may take the genre. Includes screenings, meetings with documentary makers, and an experimental component in which students can explore new approaches to documentary production. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.
_W. Uricchio_

**CMS.339 Virtual Reality and Immersive Media Production**
Subject meets with CMS.839
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

Provides an overview of historical developments and current innovations in virtual reality (e.g., gear, software, and storytelling techniques) and looks into new trends in augmented, mixed and holographic reality. Includes practical instruction and a step-by-step exploration of the fundamentals of virtual reality creation - from new visual languages and grammars, to storyboarding, scripting, sound design and editing, to new and innovative ways to capture, scan and reproduce 360-degree images. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 18.
_S. Rodriguez_

**CMS.350(J) Topics and Methods in 21st-Century Journalism**
Same subject as 21W.737[J]
Subject meets with CMS.850
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Gives a broad understanding of what it means to produce journalism today. Evaluates the limitations and strengths of specific types of media, ranging from New York Times stories to Twitter feeds. Provides students with tools to effectively communicate their own work and research to non-specialist audiences. Students submit assignments via an online portal, which mimics the style and substance of an online news source. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 18.
_S. Mnookin_
CMS.356[J] Advertising and Media: Comparative Perspectives
Same subject as 21G.036[J]
Subject meets with 21G.190, CMS.888
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

See description under subject 21G.036[J].
J. Wang

CMS.360 Introduction to Civic Media
Subject meets with CMS.860
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Examines civic media in comparative, transnational and historical perspectives. Introduces various theoretical tools, research approaches, and project design methods. Students engage with multimedia texts on concepts such as citizen journalism, transmedia activism, media justice, and civic, public, radical, and tactical media. Case studies explore civic media across platforms (print, radio, broadcast, internet), contexts (from local to global, present-day to historical), and use (dialogic, contentious, hacktivist). As a final project, students develop a case study or project proposal. Students taking the graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 16.

Staff

CMS.361 Networked Social Movements: Media and Mobilization
Subject meets with CMS.861
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Provides an overview of social movement studies as a body of theoretical and empirical work, with an emphasis on understanding the relationship between social movements and the media. Explores multiple methods of social movement investigation, including textual and media analysis, surveys, interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and co-research. Covers recent innovations in social movement theory, as well as new data sources and tools for research and analysis. Includes short papers, a literature review, and a final research project. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 16.

S. Costanza-Chock

CMS.362 Civic Media Collaborative Design Studio
Subject meets with CMS.862
Prereq: One subject in CMS or MAS
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-S
Can be repeated for credit.

Project-based studio focusing on collaborative design of civic media provides a service-learning opportunity for students interested in working with community organizations. Multidisciplinary teams create civic media projects based on real-world community needs. Covers co-design methods and best practices to include the user community in iterative stages of project ideation, design, implementation, testing, and evaluation. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 16.

Staff

CMS.375 Reading Climate Through Media
Subject meets with CMS.875
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Explores how climate is construed in the contemporary media in order to gain a better understanding of how views of climate change are shaped and received in the public sphere. Studies the pathways that take us from climate science to media content, from the big data of global scale to the particulars and narratives of the human experience. Surveys a variety of media forms--reports, articles, comics, videos, films, photography, poetry and fiction--that reflect on the contemporary human challenges of dealing with a changing natural environment of our own making. Emphasizes the role of media in shaping public opinion, both in the US and globally, and its influence on public (and voter) perceptions on which a vast body of regulation and funding for environmental management is based. Students work individually and in teams to produce a selection of the media forms studied. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 20.

J. Paradis
CMS.376 History of Media and Technology
Subject meets with CMS.876
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered
Acad Year 2021-2022: U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

Surveys the interrelated histories of communications media and technological development, from the emergence of 19th-century forms of mass print media and telegraphy, to sound capture and image-based forms (e.g., film, radio, and television), to the shift from analog to digital cultures. Examines how new forms of communication exert social, political, and cultural influences in the global context. Explores how technological innovation and accelerating media affect social values and behaviors in the popular and global adoption of a media device. Includes two papers and a research project on aspects of media history. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Enrollment limited.
J. Paradis

CMS.400 Media Systems and Texts
Prereq: One subject in Comparative Media Studies or permission of instructor
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Explores theoretical, historical and critical approaches to the comparative study of media. Examines media from three perspectives: the historical evolution of particular media forms (media in transition); the migration of particular narratives across different media forms (trans-media texts); and the ways in which media texts and systems cross cultural and national boundaries (global crossings). Instruction and practice in written and oral communication provided.
J. Picker

CMS.405 Visual Design
Prereq: 21L.011 or CMS.100
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Examines the process of making and sharing visual artifacts using a trans-cultural, trans-historical, constructionist approach. Explores the relationship between perceived reality and the narrative imagination, how an author's choice of medium and method constrains the work, how desire is integrated into the structure of a work, and how the cultural/economic opportunity for exhibition/distribution affects the realization of a work. Instruction and practice in written and oral communication provided. Limited to 20.
D. F. Harrell

CMS.407 Sound Studies
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Explores the ways in which humans experience the realm of sound and how perceptions and technologies of sound emerge from cultural, economic, and historical worlds. Examines how environmental, linguistic, and musical sounds are construed cross-culturally. Describes the rise of telephony, architectural acoustics, and sound recording, and the globalized travel of these technologies. Addresses questions of ownership, property, authorship, and copyright in the age of digital file sharing. Particular focus on how the sound/noise boundary is imagined, created and modeled across diverse sociocultural and scientific contexts. Auditory examples--sound art, environmental recordings, music--will be provided and invited. Instruction and practice in written and oral communication provided. Limited to 20.
J. Picker

CMS.586[J] Introduction to Education: Looking Forward and Looking Back on Education
Same subject as 11.124[J]
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-6-3 units. HASS-S; CI-H

One of two introductory subjects on teaching and learning science and mathematics in a variety of K-12 settings. Topics include education and media, education reform, the history of education, simulations, games, and the digital divide. Students gain practical experience through weekly visits to schools, classroom discussions, selected readings, and activities to develop a critical and broad understanding of past and current forces that shape the goals and processes of education, and explores the challenges and opportunities of teaching. Students work collaboratively and individually on papers, projects, and in-class presentations. Limited to 25.
E. Klopfer
CMS.587[J] Introduction to Education: Understanding and Evaluating Education
Same subject as 11.125[J]
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-6-3 units. HASS-S; CI-H

One of two introductory subjects on teaching and learning science and mathematics in a variety of K-12 settings. Topics include student misconceptions, formative assessment, standards and standardized testing, multiple intelligences, and educational technology. Students gain practical experience through weekly visits to schools, classroom discussions, selected readings, and activities to develop a critical and broad understanding of past and current forces that shape the goals and processes of education, and explores the challenges and opportunities of teaching. Students work collaboratively and individually on papers, projects, and in-class presentations. Limited to 25.

E. Klopfer

CMS.590[J] Design and Development of Games for Learning
Same subject as 11.127[J]
Subject meets with 11.252[J], CMS.863[J]
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-6-3 units. HASS-H

See description under subject 11.127[J].

E. Klopfer

CMS.591[J] Educational Theory and Practice I
Same subject as 11.129[J]
Prereq: None. Coreq: CMS.586[J]
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Concentrates on core set of skills and knowledge necessary for teaching in secondary schools. Topics include classroom management, student behavior and motivation, curriculum design, educational reform, and the teaching profession. Classroom observation is a key component. Assignments include readings from educational literature, written reflections on classroom observations, practice teaching and constructing curriculum. The first of the three-course sequence necessary to complete the Teacher Education Program. Limited to 15; preference to juniors and seniors.

G. Schwanbeck

CMS.592[J] Educational Theory and Practice II
Same subject as 11.130[J]
Prereq: CMS.591[J]
U (IAP)
3-0-9 units

Concentrates on the theory and psychology associated with student learning. Topics include educational theory, educational psychology, and theories of learning. Students assume responsibility for full-time teaching of two or more classes at their designated school. Class sessions focus on debriefing and problem-solving. Second of a three-course sequence necessary to complete the Teacher Education Program.

G. Schwanbeck

CMS.593[J] Educational Theory and Practice III
Same subject as 11.131[J]
Prereq: CMS.592[J]
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Students continue their IAP student teaching through mid March. Topics include educational psychology, theories of learning, and using technology and evaluating its effectiveness to enhance student learning. Assignments include readings from educational literature, written reflections on student teaching, presentations on class topics and creating a project that supports student learning at the school where the MIT student is teaching. This is the third of the three-course sequence necessary to complete the Teacher Education Program.

G. Schwanbeck

CMS.594 Education Technology Studio
Subject meets with CMS.894
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-S
Can be repeated for credit.

Uses media and technology to develop new forms of learning experiences for schools, workplace, and informal settings. Students participate in a range of projects that hone understanding and skills in learning science, instructional design, development, and evaluation. Topics vary but include developing new media and activities for massive open online courses, creating practice spaces for practitioners in the professions and humanities, and developing new approaches to assessment in complex learning environments. May be repeated for credit with permission of instructor if project content differs. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

J. Reich
COMPARATIVE MEDIA STUDIES/WRITING

CMS.595 Learning, Media, and Technology
Subject meets with CMS.895
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Addresses new digital technologies that are transforming learning across the lifespan - from reading apps for toddlers, intelligent tutors for school children, and blended learning for college students, to MOOCs for adults and interest-based learning communities for hobbyists. Focuses on how these technologies shape people's lives and learning. Students explore how education technologies operate in complex social-technical systems, and acquire analytic tools and strategies that can be applied to other complex systems. They also refine their thinking about the opportunities, limits, and tradeoffs of educational technology. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

J. Reich

CMS.603 Independent Study
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Opportunity for individual research in comparative media studies. Registration subject to prior arrangement for subject matter and supervision by a faculty member.

Staff

CMS.604 Independent Study
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged [P/D/F]
Can be repeated for credit.

Opportunity for individual research in comparative media studies. Registration subject to prior arrangement for subject matter and supervision by a faculty member.

Staff

CMS.605 Media Internship
Prereq: None
U (Fall, IAP, Spring)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Part-time internships arranged in Boston and the wider Northeast for students wishing to develop professional experience in a media production organization or industry. Students work with a CMS faculty advisor to produce a white paper on a research topic of interest based on their intern experience. Students planning to take this subject must contact the instructor before the end of the preceding term.

Staff

CMS.606 Media Internship
Prereq: None
G (Fall, IAP, Spring)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Part-time internships arranged in Boston and the wider Northeast for students wishing to develop professional experience in a media production organization or industry. Students work with a CMS/W faculty advisor to produce a white paper on a research topic of interest based on their intern experience. Students planning to take this subject must contact the instructor before the end of the preceding term.

Staff

CMS.608 Game Design
Subject meets with CMS.864
Prereq: One subject in Comparative Media Studies or permission of instructor
U (Fall)
3-3-6 units. HASS-A

Practical instruction in the design and analysis of non-digital games. Provides students the texts, tools, references, and historical context to analyze and compare game designs across a variety of genres. In teams, students design, develop, and thoroughly test their original games to better understand the interaction and evolution of game rules. Covers various genres and types of games, including sports, game shows, games of chance, card games, schoolyard games, board games, and role-playing games. Students taking the graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 20.

P. Tan, R. Eberhardt
CMS.609[J] The Word Made Digital
Same subject as 21W.764[J]
Subject meets with CMS.846
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered
Acad Year 2021-2022: U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

See description under subject 21W.764[J]. Limited to 18.
N. Montfort

CMS.610 Media Industries and Systems: The Art, Science and Business of Games
Subject meets with CMS.922
Prereq: Two CMS subjects or permission of instructor
U (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Examines the interplay of art, science, law, and commerce in the production, marketing, distribution, and consumption of historic and contemporary videogames. Students create prototypes and develop marketing programs to illustrate the challenges of producing videogames in a professional context. Combines perspectives on media industries and systems with an examination of the creative process, development, and trends that shape content. Includes discussions with industry leaders in various areas. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.
C. Weaver

CMS.611[J] Creating Video Games
Same subject as 6.073[J]
Prereq: 6.01, CMS.301, or CMS.608
U (Spring)
3-3-6 units. HASS-A

Introduces students to the complexities of working in small, multidisciplinary teams to develop video games. Covers creative design and production methods, stressing design iteration and regular testing across all aspects of game development (design, visual arts, music, fiction, and programming). Assumes a familiarity with current video games, and the ability to discuss games critically. Previous experience in audio design, visual arts, or project management recommended. Limited to 24.
P. Tan, S. Verrilli, R. Eberhardt, A. Grant

CMS.614[J] Network Cultures
Same subject as 21W.791[J]
Subject meets with CMS.867
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Focuses on the social and cultural aspects of networked life through internet-related technologies (including computers, mobile devices, entertainment technologies, and emerging media forms). Theories and readings focus on the cultural, social, economic, and political aspects of internet use and design. Topics include online communication and communities, social media, gender and race in network spaces, activism and hacking, networked publics, remix culture and intellectual property. Instruction and practice in written and oral communication provided. Students taking the graduate version complete additional readings and assignments.
T. L. Taylor

CMS.615 Games for Social Change
Subject meets with CMS.815
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Examines how various movements have tried over time to create games that enable players to enact social change. Students collaborate in teams to design and prototype games for social change and civic engagement. In a workshop setting, teams develop games and showcase them at an end-of-term open house. Features guest speakers from academia and industry as well as the nonprofit sector and the gaming community. Readings explore principals of game design and the social history of games. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.
S. Osterweil

CMS.616[J] Games and Culture
Same subject as 21W.768[J], WGS.125[J]
Subject meets with CMS.868
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Examines the social, cultural, economic, and political aspects of digital games. Topics include the culture of gameplay, gaming styles, communities, spectatorship and performance, gender and race within digital gaming, and the politics and economics of production processes, including co-creation and intellectual property. Students taking graduate version complete additional readings and assignments.
T. L. Taylor
CMS.617 Advanced Game Studio
Prereq: CMS.608 or CMS.611[J]
U (Fall)
3-3-6 units. HASS-A

Students join the class in pre-formed teams, which work under the supervision of experienced mentors to complete a term-long game creation project. Covers management best practices for software engineering teams; creative expression as a collaborative project; developing and evaluating prototypes for potential viability, and translating them into a final polished product; planning and running qualitative testing of design elements; and targeting and selecting an appropriate audience for testing. Includes regular reviews and critiques to discuss progress, design, and work plan. Culminates with public presentation of games. Limited to 15.

P. Tan, S. Verrilli

CMS.618[J] Interactive Narrative
Same subject as 21L.489[J], 21W.765[J]
Subject meets with CMS.845
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

See description under subject 21W.765[J].
N. Montfort

CMS.619[J] Gender and Media Studies
Same subject as WGS.111[J]
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

See description under subject WGS.111[J].
K. Surkan

CMS.621 Fans and Fan Cultures
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: U (Spring)
Acad Year 2021-2022: Not offered
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Examines media audiences - specifically, fans - and the subcultures that evolve around them. Examines the different historical, contemporary and transnational understandings of fans. Explores products of fan culture, i.e., clubs, fiction, "vids," activism, etc. Readings place these products within the context of various disciplines. Students consider the concept of the "aca-fan" and reflect on their own "fannish" practices. Requires several short papers. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 20.

Staff

CMS.627 Imagination, Computation, and Expression Studio
Subject meets with CMS.827
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

Can be repeated for credit.

Aims to help students invent and analyze new forms of computer-based art, gaming, social media, interactive narrative, and related technologies. Students participate in a range of new and ongoing projects that are designed to hone skills in research, development, design, and evaluation. Topics vary from year to year; examples include cognitive science and artificial intelligence-based approaches to the arts; social aspects of game design; computing for social empowerment; and game character, avatar, and online profile design. May be repeated for credit with permission of instructor. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

D. F. Harrell

CMS.628 Advanced Identity Representation
Subject meets with CMS.828
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

Can be repeated for credit.

Studies and develops computational identity systems for games, social media, virtual worlds, and computer-based artwork. An interdisciplinary set of readings (cognitive science, computer science, art, and sociology) looks at both the underlying technology and the social/cultural aspects of identity. Includes topics such as developing improved characters, avatars, agents, social networking profiles, and online accounts. Engages students in on-going research projects. Explores how social categories are formed in digital media, including gender, class, and ethnicity, along with everyday social categories (such as those based on personality or shared media preferences). Experience required in one of the following: computer programming, graphic design, web development, interaction design, or social science research methods. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

D. F. Harrell
CMS.631 Data Storytelling Studio
Subject meets with CMS.831
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered
Acad Year 2021-2022: U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A
Explores visualization methodologies to conceive and represent systems and data, e.g., financial, media, economic, political, etc. Covers basic methods for research, cleaning, and analysis of datasets. Introduces creative methods of data presentation and storytelling. Considers the emotional, aesthetic, ethical, and practical effects of different presentation methods as well as how to develop metrics for assessing impact. Work centers on readings, visualization exercises, and a final project. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

CMS.633 Digital Humanities: Topics, Techniques, and Technologies
Subject meets with CMS.833
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Examines theory and practice of using computational methods in the emerging field of digital humanities. Develops an understanding of key digital humanities concepts such as data representation, digital archives, information visualization, and user interaction through the study of contemporary research in conjunction with working on real-world projects for scholarly, educational, and public needs. Students create prototypes, write design papers, and conduct user studies. Some programming and design experience is helpful but not required. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

CMS.634 Designing Interactions
Subject meets with 4.569[J], CMS.834[J]
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-3-6 units. HASS-E
Can be repeated for credit.
Explores the future of mobile interactions and pervasive computing, taking into consideration design, technological, social and business aspects. Discusses theoretical works on human-computer interaction, mobile media and interaction design, and covers research and design methods. Students work in multidisciplinary teams and participate in user-centric design projects aimed to study, imagine and prototype concepts illustrating the future of mobile applications and ubiquitous computing. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Repeatable for credit with permission of instructor. Limited to 12.
F. Casalegno, T. Nagakura

CMS.635 Designing Active Archives
Subject meets with CMS.835
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Investigates the digital archive as an emerging platform for critical inquiry and creative engagement through analysis, conceptualization, and experimentation with user-oriented design. Readings provide theoretical, analytical, and practical perspectives on topics such as participatory digital culture, data curation, visualization, and the archive’s role in activism. Students work throughout the term to develop a group project. Students taking graduate version complete additional readings and assignments.
K. Fendt

CMS.636 Extending the Museum
Subject meets with CMS.855
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Investigates the museum as a participatory public space and rethinks visitor engagement and museum education in light of digital technologies, including extended reality (XR) technologies. Students develop concepts, models, and prototypes that integrate physical and digital spaces in novel ways in close collaboration with partners at local museums. Readings provide theoretical, critical, and analytical foundations for collaborative class projects. Students taking graduate version complete additional readings and assignments.
K. Fendt
CMS.701 Current Debates in Media
Subject meets with CMS.901
Prereq: CMS.100
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Addresses important, current debates in media with in-depth discussion of popular perceptions and policy implications. Students use multiple perspectives to analyze texts emanating from these debates, and present their findings through discussions and reports. Explores emerging topics (e.g., piracy and IP regimes, net neutrality, media effects, social media and social change, and changing literacies) across media forms and from various historical, transcultural, and methodological perspectives. Examines the framing of these issues, their ethical and policy implications, and strategies for repositioning the debate. Instruction and practice in written and oral communication provided. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

CMS.S60 Special Subject: Comparative Media Studies
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (IAP; partial term)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Seminar or lecture on a topic that is not covered in the regular curriculum.

CMS.S61 Special Subject: Comparative Media Studies
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (IAP)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Seminar or lecture on a topic that is not covered in the regular curriculum.

CMS.S62 Special Subject: Comparative Media Studies
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Spring)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Seminar or lecture on a topic that is not covered in the regular curriculum.

CMS.S63 Special Subject: Comparative Media Studies
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered
Acad Year 2021-2022: U (Fall)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Seminar or lecture on a topic that is not covered in the regular curriculum.

CMS.THT Comparative Media Studies Pre-Thesis Tutorial
Prereq: Permission of advisor
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
1-0-5 units

Student works with an advisor to define his/her thesis. By the end of the term, student must have a substantial outline and bibliography for thesis and must have selected a three-person thesis committee. Advisor must approve outline and bibliography.

CMS.THU Undergraduate Thesis in Comparative Media Studies
Prereq: CMS.THT
U (Fall, IAP, Summer)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

The CMS Undergraduate Thesis is a substantial research project or comparable exercise. A written thesis ranges in length from 35 to 50 pages. Digital projects are assessed on the quality of research and argumentation, as well as presentation, and must include a substantial written component. Student gives an oral presentation of his/her thesis at the end of the term. Thesis is not required for CMS majors.

CMS.UR Research in Comparative Media Studies
Prereq: None
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged [P/D/F]
Can be repeated for credit.

Individual participation in an ongoing research project. For students in the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program.

Staff
CMS.URG Research in Comparative Media Studies
Prereq: None
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.
Individual participation in an ongoing research project. For students in the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program.
Staff

Graduate Subjects

CMS.790 Media Theories and Methods I
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall)
3-3-6 units
An advanced introduction to core theoretical and methodological issues in comparative media studies. Topics covered typically include the nature of theory, the gathering and evaluation of evidence, the relationship of media to reality, formal approaches to media analysis, the ethnographic documentation of media audiences, cultural hierarchy and taste, modes of production, models of readership and spectatorship.
W. Uricchio

CMS.791 Media Theories and Methods II
Prereq: CMS.790
G (Spring)
3-3-6 units
An advanced introduction to core theoretical and methodological issues in comparative media studies. Topics covered typically include globalization, propaganda and persuasion, social and political effects of media change, political economy and the institutional analysis of media ownership, online communities, privacy and intellectual property, and the role of news and information within democratic cultures.
H. Hendershot

CMS.796 Major Media Texts
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall)
3-3-6 units
Intensive close study and analysis of historically significant media “texts” that have been considered landmarks or have sustained extensive critical and scholarly discussion. Such texts may include oral epic, story cycles, plays, novels, films, opera, television drama and digital works. Emphasizes close reading from a variety of contextual and aesthetic perspectives. Syllabus varies each year, and may be organized around works that have launched new modes and genres, works that reflect upon their own media practices, or on stories that migrate from one medium to another. At least one of the assigned texts is collaboratively taught, and visiting lectures and discussions are a regular feature of the subject.
L. Parks

CMS.801 Media in Transition
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall)
3-0-9 units
Centers on historical eras in which the form and function of media technologies were radically transformed. Includes consideration of the “Gutenberg Revolution,” the rise of modern mass media, and the “digital revolution,” among other case studies of media transformation and cultural change. Readings in cultural and social history and historiographic method.
E. Schiappa

CMS.806 Making Comics and Sequential Art
Subject meets with CMS.306
Prereq: None
G (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units
Applied introduction to comics and sequential art production. Builds skills in how to develop storylines; develop and draw characters, panels, and backgrounds; prepare for print production; and comprehend the basics of sequential language, composition, and layout. Students engage with crucial personal and political issues at stake across a range of comics genres: superhero, biographical, and countercultural. Addresses not just how we create comics, but why we create comics. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 16.
M. Cordero
**CMS.807 Critical Worldbuilding**  
Subject meets with CMS.307  
Prereq: None  
G (Fall)  
3-3-6 units

Studies the design and analysis of invented (or constructed) worlds for narrative media, such as television, films, comics, and literary texts. Provides the practical, historical and critical tools with which to understand the function and structure of imagined worlds. Examines world-building strategies in the various media and genres in order to develop a critical and creative repertoire. Participants create their own invented worlds. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 13.  
*J. Diaz*

**CMS.808 The Visual Story: Graphic Novel, Type to Tablet**  
Subject meets with CMS.308  
Prereq: None  
G (Spring)  
Not offered regularly; consult department  
3-0-9 units

Focuses on the interactions between graphic stories and media technologies from the rotary press of the late 19th century to contemporary touch screens, exploring the changing relations among narrative expression, reader experience and media form. Working with examples from Pulitzer's Yellow Kid and McKay's Little Nemo, through the classic comics (from DC superheroes to EC horror) and graphic novels to interactive and non-linear texts (Cognitos Operation Ajax), the course examines such elements as graphic design, interface and form as well as the circulation and economies of these various media-based texts.  
*J. Paradis*

**CMS.809 Transmedia Storytelling: Modern Science Fiction**  
Subject meets with 21W.763[J], CMS.309[J]  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered  
Acad Year 2021-2022: G (Fall)  
3-2-7 units

Explores transmedia storytelling by investigating how science fiction stories are told across different media, such as the short story, the novel, the screenplay, moving image, and games. Students consider issues of aesthetics, authorship, and genre, while also contextualizing discussion within the broader framework of the political issues raised by film, TV, and other kinds of science fiction texts. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.  
*H. Hendershot*

**CMS.813 Silent Film**  
Subject meets with CMS.313  
Prereq: None  
G (Spring)  
Not offered regularly; consult department  
3-3-6 units

Examines how the key elements of today's films - composition, continuity editing, lighting, narrative structure - were originally created. Studies the history of cinema, from its origins in the late 19th century to the transition to sound in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Students view a range of films (both mainstream and experimental) from all over the world, with a particular focus on US productions. Emphasis on how color, sound, and other developments paved the way for today's technological innovations. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.  
*H. Hendershot*

**CMS.814 Phantasmal Media: Computer-Based Art Theory and Practice**  
Subject meets with 21W.753[J], CMS.314[J]  
Prereq: None  
G (Spring)  
Not offered regularly; consult department  
3-0-9 units

Engages students in theory and practice of using computational techniques for developing expressive digital media works. Surveys approaches to understanding human imaginative processes, such as constructing concepts, metaphors, and narratives, and applies them to producing and understanding socially, culturally, and critically meaningful works in digital media. Readings engage a variety of theoretical perspectives from cognitive linguistics, literary and cultural theory, semiotics, digital media arts, and computer science. Students produce interactive narratives, games, and related forms of software art. Some programming and/or interactive web scripting experience (e.g., Flash, Javascript) is desirable. Students taking the graduate version complete a project requiring more in-depth theoretical engagement.  
*D. F. Harrell*
CMS.815 Games for Social Change
Subject meets with CMS.615
Prereq: None
G (Spring)
3-0-9 units

Students will collaborate in teams to design and prototype games for social change and civic engagement. Run as a workshop in which student teams develop their games and showcase them at a semester-end open house. Features guest speakers from academia and industry as well as the non-profit sector and the gaming community. Readings will explore principals of game design, and the social history of games. Graduate students will complete additional assignments.
S. Osterweil

CMS.821 Fans and Fan Cultures
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: G (Spring)
Acad Year 2021-2022: Not offered
3-0-9 units

Examines media audiences - specifically, fans - and the subcultures that evolve around them. Examines the different historical, contemporary and transnational understandings of fans. Explores products of fan culture, i.e., clubs, fiction, "vids," activism, etc. Readings place these products within the context of various disciplines. Students consider the concept of the "aca-fan" and reflect on their own "fannish" practices. Requires several short papers. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 20.
Staff

CMS.827 Imagination, Computation, and Expression Studio
Subject meets with CMS.627
Prereq: None
G (Fall)
3-0-9 units

Can be repeated for credit.

Aims to help students invent and analyze new forms of computer-based art, gaming, social media, interactive narrative, and related technologies. Students participate in a range of new and ongoing projects that are designed to hone skills in research, development, design, and evaluation. Topics vary from year to year; examples include cognitive science and artificial intelligence-based approaches to the arts; social aspects of game design; computing for social empowerment; and game character, avatar, and online profile design. May be repeated for credit with permission of instructor. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.
D. F. Harrell

CMS.828 Advanced Identity Representation
Subject meets with CMS.628
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Studies and develops computational identity systems for games, social media, virtual worlds, and computer-based artwork. An interdisciplinary set of readings (cognitive science, computer science, art, and sociology) looks at both the underlying technology and the social/cultural aspects of identity. Includes topics such as developing improved characters, avatars, agents, social networking profiles, and online accounts. Engages students in on-going research projects. Explores how social categories are formed in digital media, including gender, class, and ethnicity, along with everyday social categories (such as those based on personality or shared media preferences). Experience required in one of the following: computer programming, graphic design, web development, interaction design, or social science research methods. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.
D. F. Harrell

CMS.830 Studies in Film
Subject meets with 21L.706
Prereq: Permission of instructor
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered
Acad Year 2021-2022: G (Fall, Spring)
3-3-6 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Intensive study of films from particular periods, genres, or directors, or films focusing on specific formal or theoretical problems. Previous topics include The Contemporary Horror Film, Film Remixes, Film Narrative, Heroic Cinema, and Color in Film. Students taking graduate version complete different assignments. May be repeated for credit with permission of instructor if content differs. Limited to 12.
P. Donaldson, E. Brinkema
COMPARATIVE MEDIA STUDIES/Writing

CMS.831 Data Storytelling Studio
Subject meets with CMS.631
Prereq: None
G (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units
Explores visualization methodologies to conceive and represent systems and data, e.g., financial, media, economic, political, etc. Covers basic methods for research, cleaning, and analysis of datasets. Introduces creative methods of data presentation and storytelling. Considers the emotional, aesthetic, ethical, and practical effects of different presentation methods as well as how to develop metrics for assessing impact. Work centers on readings, visualization exercises, and a final project. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

Staff

CMS.833 Digital Humanities: Topics, Techniques, and Technologies
Subject meets with CMS.633
Prereq: None
G (Fall)
3-0-9 units
Examines theory and practice of using computational methods in the emerging field of digital humanities. Develops an understanding of key digital humanities concepts such as data representation, digital archives, information visualization, and user interaction through the study of contemporary research in conjunction with working on real-world projects for scholarly, educational, and public needs. Students create prototypes, write design papers, and conduct user studies. Some programming and design experience is helpful but not required. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

K. Fendt

CMS.834[J] Designing Interactions
Same subject as 4.569[J]
Subject meets with CMS.634
Prereq: None
G (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-3-6 units
Can be repeated for credit.
Explores the future of mobile interactions and pervasive computing, taking into consideration design, technological, social and business aspects. Discusses theoretical works on human-computer interaction, mobile media and interaction design, and covers research and design methods. Students work in multidisciplinary teams and participate in user-centric design projects aimed to study, imagine and prototype concepts illustrating the future of mobile applications and ubiquitous computing. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Repeatable for credit with permission of instructor. Limited to 12.

F. Casalegno, T. Nagakura

CMS.835 Designing Active Archives
Subject meets with CMS.635
Prereq: None
G (Fall)
3-0-9 units
Investigates the digital archive as an emerging platform for critical inquiry and creative engagement through analysis, conceptualization, and experimentation with user-oriented design. Readings provide theoretical, analytical, and practical perspectives on topics such as participatory digital culture, data curation, visualization, and the archive’s role in activism. Students work throughout the term to develop a group project. Students taking graduate version complete additional readings and assignments.

K. Fendt
CMS.836 Social Justice and The Documentary Film
Subject meets with 21W.786[J], CMS.336[J]
Prereq: None
G (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units

Explores the history and current state of social-issue documentary. Examines how cultural and political upheaval and technological change have converged at different moments to bring about new waves of activist documentary film production. Particular focus on films and other non-fiction media of the present and recent past. Students screen and analyze a series of key films and work in groups to produce their own short documentary using digital video and computer-based editing. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 18.

V. Bald

CMS.837 Film, Music, and Social Change: Intersections of Media and Society
Subject meets with 21W.787
Prereq: None
G (Fall)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units

Examines films from the 1950s onward that document music subcultures and moments of social upheaval. Combines screenings of films about free jazz, glam rock, punk, reggae, hip-hop, and other genres with an examination of critical/scholarly writings to illuminate the connections between film, popular music, and processes of social change. Students critique each film in terms of the social, political, and cultural world it documents, and the historical context and effects of the film's reception. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 18.

V. Bald

CMS.838 Innovation in Documentary: Technologies and Techniques
Subject meets with CMS.338
Prereq: CMS.100 or permission of instructor
Acad Year 2020-2021: G (Fall)
Acad Year 2021-2022: Not offered
3-0-9 units

Discusses emerging technologies and techniques available to media-makers (e.g., location-based technologies, transmedia storytelling, crowdsourcing, and interactivity) and their implications on the film and television documentary. Studies the development of these tools and considers the many new directions in which they may take the genre. Includes screenings, meetings with documentary makers, and an experimental component in which students can explore new approaches to documentary production. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

W. Uricchio

CMS.839 Virtual Reality and Immersive Media Production
Subject meets with CMS.339
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Spring)
3-0-9 units

Provides an overview of historical developments and current innovations in virtual reality (e.g., gear, software, and storytelling techniques) and looks into new trends in augmented, mixed and holographic reality. Includes practical instruction and a step-by-step exploration of the fundamentals of virtual reality creation - from new visual languages and grammars, to storyboarding, scripting, sound design and editing, to new and innovative ways to capture, scan and reproduce 360-degree images. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 18.

S. Rodriguez

CMS.840 Literature and Film
Subject meets with 21L.435
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-3-6 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Investigates relationships between the two media, including film adaptations as well as works linked by genre, topic, and style. Explores how artworks challenge and cross cultural, political, and aesthetic boundaries. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

K. Surkan
CMS.841 Introduction to Videogame Theory
Subject meets with CMS.300
Prereq: None
G (Fall)
3-3-6 units
Introduction to the interdisciplinary study of videogames as texts through an examination of their cultural, educational, and social functions in contemporary settings. Students play and analyze videogames while reading current research and theory from a variety of sources in the sciences, social sciences, humanities, and industry. Assignments focus on game analysis in the context of the theories discussed in class. Includes regular reading, writing, and presentation exercises. No prior programming experience required. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 20.
M. Jakobsson

CMS.842 Playful and Social Interaction Design Exploration
Prereq: None
G (Spring)
3-0-9 units
Explores the role of technology in relation to playful and social interaction. Deepens understanding of the potential and limitations of iterative design and rapid prototyping used as research methods. Familiarizes students with the theoretical foundations of interaction design and explorative design research, as well as practice methods applied to working with physical and digital design materials.
M. Jakobsson

CMS.844 Exploratory Programming for the Arts and Humanities
Prereq: None
G (Spring)
3-1-8 units
Introduces programming through “free projects” in which students choose (or discover) the direction of their project through exploration. Covers the fundamentals of programming and how to develop a programming practice. Students complete analytical and generative projects, using different media. Examines how to think with computation, how computation and media interact, and how computation can be understood as a part of culture. No background in programming required. Limited to 18.
N. Montfort

CMS.845 Interactive Narrative
Subject meets with 21L.489[J], 21W.765[J], CMS.618[J]
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall)
3-0-9 units
Provides a workshop environment for understanding interactive narrative (print and digital) through critical writing, narrative theory, and creative practice. Covers important multisequential books, hypertexts, and interactive fictions. Students write critically, and give presentations, about specific works; write a short multisequential fiction; and develop a digital narrative system, which involves significant writing and either programming or the structuring of text. Programming ability helpful. Graduate students complete additional assignments.
N. Montfort

CMS.846 The Word Made Digital
Subject meets with 21W.764[J], CMS.609[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered
Acad Year 2021-2022: G (Spring)
3-0-9 units
Considers the many uses of text, language, and writing in creative digital media. Focuses on non-narrative uses of text, such as in information display, visual and lyrical settings, and human-legible computer code. Considers the use of text within the context of computing and different computing platforms. Draws on concepts and approaches from poetics, the material history of texts, and computer science. Assignments include individual and group writing projects, which involve reading and modifying computer programs. Previous programming experience and writing coursework helpful. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 18.
N. Montfort
CMS.848 Apocalyptic Storytelling
Subject meets with 21W.748
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall)
3-0-9 units

Focuses on the critical making of apocalyptic, post-apocalyptic and dystopian stories across various narrative media. Considers the long history of Western apocalypticism as well as the uses and abuses of apocalypticism across time. Examines a wide variety of influential texts in order to enhance students' creative and theoretical repertoires. Students create their own apocalyptic stories and present on selected texts. Investigates conventions such as plague, zombies, nuclear destruction, robot uprising, alien invasion, environmental collapse, and supernatural calamities. Considers questions of race, gender, sexuality, colonialism, trauma, memory, witness, and genocide. Intended for students with prior creative writing experience. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 15.

J. Diaz

CMS.850 Topics and Methods in 21st Century Journalism
Subject meets with 21W.737[J], CMS.350[J]
Prereq: None
G (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units

Gives a broad understanding of what it means to produce journalism today. Evaluates the limitations and strengths of specific types of media, ranging from New York Times stories to Twitter feeds. Provides students with tools to effectively communicate their own work and research to non-specialist audiences. Students submit assignments via an online portal, which mimics the style and substance of an online news source. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 12.

S. Mnookin

CMS.855 Extending the Museum
Subject meets with CMS.636
Prereq: None
G (Spring)
3-0-9 units

Investigates the museum as a participatory public space and rethinks visitor engagement and museum education in light of digital technologies, including extended reality (XR) technologies. Students develop concepts, models, and prototypes that integrate physical and digital spaces in novel ways in close collaboration with partners at local museums. Readings provide theoretical, critical, and analytical foundations for collaborative class projects. Students taking graduate version complete additional readings and assignments.

K. Fendt

CMS.860 Introduction to Civic Media
Subject meets with CMS.360
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: G (Fall)
Acad Year 2021-2022: Not offered
3-0-9 units

Examines civic media in comparative, transnational and historical perspective. Introduces various theoretical tools, research approaches, and project design methods. Students engage with multimedia texts on concepts such as citizen journalism, transmedia activism, media justice, and civic, public, radical, and tactical media. Case studies explore civic media across platforms (print, radio, broadcast, internet), contexts (from local to global, present-day to historical), and use (dialogic, contentious, hacktivist). As a final project, students develop a case study or project proposal. Students taking the graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 16.

Staff
CMS.861 Networked Social Movements: Media and Mobilization
Subject meets with CMS.361
Prereq: None
G (Spring)
3-0-9 units
Provides an overview of social movement studies as a body of theoretical and empirical work, with an emphasis on understanding the relationship between social movements and the media. Explores multiple methods of social movement investigation, including textual and media analysis, surveys, interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and co-research. Covers recent innovations in social movement theory, as well as new data sources and tools for research and analysis. Includes short papers, a literature review, and a final research project. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 16.
S. Costanza-Chock

CMS.862 Civic Media Collaborative Design Studio
Subject meets with CMS.362
Prereq: One subject in CMS or MAS
G (Fall)
3-0-9 units
Can be repeated for credit.
Project-based studio focusing on collaborative design of civic media provides a service-learning opportunity for students interested in working with community organizations. Multidisciplinary teams create civic media projects based on real-world community needs. Covers co-design methods and best practices to include the user community in iterative stages of project ideation, design, implementation, testing, and evaluation. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 16.
Staff

CMS.863[J] Design and Development of Games for Learning
Same subject as 11.252[J]
Subject meets with 11.127[J], CMS.590[J]
Prereq: None
G (Spring)
3-6-3 units
See description under subject 11.252[J].
E. Klopfer

CMS.864 Game Design
Subject meets with CMS.608
Prereq: One subject in Comparative Media Studies or permission of instructor
G (Fall)
3-3-6 units
Practical instruction in the design and analysis of non-digital games. Provides students the texts, tools, references, and historical context to analyze and compare game designs across a variety of genres. In teams, students design, develop, and thoroughly test their original games to better understand the interaction and evolution of game rules. Covers various genres and types of games, including sports, game shows, games of chance, card games, schoolyard games, board games, and role-playing games. Students taking the graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 20.
P. Tan, R. Eberhardt

CMS.867 Network Cultures
Subject meets with 21W.791[J], CMS.614[J]
Prereq: None
G (Spring)
3-0-9 units
Focuses on the social and cultural aspects of networked life through internet-related technologies (including computers, mobile devices, entertainment technologies, and emerging media forms). Theories and readings focus on the cultural, social, economic, and political aspects of internet use and design. Topics include online communication and communities, social media, gender and race in network spaces, activism and hacking, networked publics, remix culture and intellectual property. Students taking the graduate version complete additional readings and assignments.
T. L. Taylor

CMS.868 Games and Culture
Subject meets with 21W.768[J], CMS.616[J], WGS.125[J]
Prereq: None
G (Fall)
3-0-9 units
Examines the social, cultural, economic, and political aspects of digital games. Topics include the culture of gameplay, gaming styles, communities, spectatorship and performance, gender and race within digital gaming, and the politics and economics of production processes, including co-creation and intellectual property. Students taking graduate version complete additional readings and assignments.
T. L. Taylor
CMS.871 Media in Cultural Context  
Subject meets with 21L.715  
Prereq: Permission of instructor  
G (Spring)  
Not offered regularly; consult department  
3-0-9 units  
Can be repeated for credit.

Seminar uses case studies to examine specific media or media configurations and the larger social, cultural, economic, political, or technological contexts within which they operate. Organized around recurring themes in media history, as well as specific genres, movements, media, or historical moments. Previously taught topics include Gendered Genres: Horror and Maternal Melodramas; Comics, Cartoons, and Graphic Storytelling; and Exploring Children's Culture. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Approved for credit in Women's and Gender Studies when content meets the requirements for subjects in that program. Limited to 12.

M. Marks

CMS.875 Reading Climate Through Media  
Subject meets with CMS.375  
Prereq: None  
G (Spring)  
3-0-9 units

Explores how climate is construed in the contemporary media in order to gain a better understanding of how views of climate change are shaped and received in the public sphere. Studies the pathways that take us from climate science to media content, from the big data of global scale to the particulars and narratives of the human experience. Surveys a variety of media forms--reports, articles, comics, videos, films, photography, poetry and fiction--that reflect on the contemporary human challenges of dealing with a changing natural environment of our own making. Emphasizes the role of media in shaping public opinion, both in the US and globally, and its influence on public (and voter) perceptions on which a vast body of regulation and funding for environmental management is based. Students work individually and in teams to produce a selection of the media forms studied. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 20.

J. Paradis

CMS.876 History of Media and Technology  
Subject meets with CMS.376  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered  
Acad Year 2021-2022: G (Fall)  
3-0-9 units

Surveys the interrelated histories of communications media and technological development, from the emergence of 19th-century forms of mass print media and telegraphy, to sound capture and image-based forms (e.g., film, radio, and television), to the shift from analog to digital cultures. Examines how new forms of communication exert social, political, and cultural influences in the global context. Explores how technological innovation and accelerating media affect social values and behaviors in the popular and global adoption of a media device. Includes two papers and a research project on aspects of media history. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

J. Paradis

CMS.888 Advertising and Media: Comparative Perspectives  
Subject meets with 21G.036[J], 21G.190, CMS.356[J]  
Prereq: Permission of instructor  
G (Spring)  
3-0-9 units

Compares modern and contemporary advertising culture in China, the US, and other emerging markets. First half focuses on branding in the old media environment; second half introduces the changing practice of advertising in the new media environment. Topics include branding and positioning, media planning, social media campaigns, cause marketing 2.0, social TV, and mobility marketing. Required lab work includes interactive sessions in branding a team product for the US (or a European country) and China markets. Taught in English and requires no knowledge of Chinese. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

J. Wang
CMS.894 Education Technology Studio
Subject meets with CMS.594
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall)
3-0-9 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Uses media and technology to develop new forms of learning experiences for schools, workplace, and informal settings. Students participate in a range of projects that hone understanding and skills in learning science, instructional design, development, and evaluation. Topics vary but include developing new media and activities for massive open online courses, creating practice spaces for practitioners in the professions and humanities, and developing new approaches to assessment in complex learning environments. May be repeated for credit with permission of instructor if project content differs. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

J. Reich

CMS.895 Learning, Media, and Technology
Subject meets with CMS.595
Prereq: None
G (Fall)
3-0-9 units

Addresses new digital technologies that are transforming learning across the lifespan - from reading apps for toddlers, intelligent tutors for school children, and blended learning for college students, to MOOCs for adults and interest-based learning communities for hobbyists. Focuses on how these technologies shape people’s lives and learning. Students explore how education technologies operate in complex social-technical systems, and acquire analytic tools and strategies that can be applied to other complex systems. They also refine their thinking about the opportunities, limits, and tradeoffs of educational technology. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

J. Reich

CMS.901 Current Debates in Media
Subject meets with CMS.701
Prereq: None
G (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units

Addresses important, current debates in media with in-depth discussion of popular perceptions and policy implications. Students use multiple perspectives to analyze texts emanating from these debates, and present their findings through discussions and reports. Explores emerging topics (e.g., piracy and IP regimes, net neutrality, media effects, social media and social change, and changing literacies) across media forms and from various historical, transcultural, and methodological perspectives. Examines the framing of these issues, their ethical and policy implications, and strategies for repositioning the debate. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

Staff

CMS.915 Understanding Television
Subject meets with 21L.432
Prereq: Permission of instructor
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered
Acad Year 2021-2022: G (Spring)
3-0-9 units
Can be repeated for credit.

A cultural approach to television’s evolution as a technology and system of representation. Considers television as a system of storytelling and mythmaking, and as a cultural practice studied from anthropological, literary, and cinematic perspectives. Focuses on prime-time commercial broadcasting, the medium’s technological and economic history, and theoretical perspectives. Considerable television viewing and readings in media theory and cultural interpretation are required. Previously taught topics include American Television: A Cultural History. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

D. Thorburn
CMS.920 Popular Culture and Narrative  
Subject meets with 21L.430  
Prereq: Permission of instructor  
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered  
Acad Year 2021-2022: G (Spring)  
3-0-9 units  
Can be repeated for credit.  
Examines relationships between popular culture and art, focusing on problems of evaluation and audience, and the uses of different media within a broader social context. Typically treats a range of narrative and dramatic works as well as films. Previously taught topics include Elements of Style; Gender, Sexuality and Popular Narrative. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Approved for credit in Women's and Gender Studies when content meets the requirements for subjects in that program. May be repeated for credit with permission of instructor.  
Staff

CMS.922 Media Industries and Systems: The Art, Science and Business of Games  
Subject meets with CMS.610  
Prereq: Permission of instructor  
G (Spring)  
Not offered regularly; consult department  
3-0-9 units  
Examines the interplay of art, science, law, and commerce in the production, marketing, distribution, and consumption of historic and contemporary videogames. Students create prototypes and develop marketing programs to illustrate the challenges of producing videogames in a professional context. Combines perspectives on media industries and systems with an examination of the creative process, development, and trends that shape content. Includes discussions with industry leaders in various areas. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.  
Staff

CMS.925 Film Music  
Subject meets with 21M.284  
Prereq: Permission of instructor  
G (Fall)  
3-0-9 units  
Surveys styles and dramatic functions of music for silent films of the 1910s-20s, and music in sound films from the 1930s to the present. Close attention given to landmark scores by American and European composers, including Korngold, Steiner, Rozsa, Prokofiev, Copland, Herrmann, Rota, Morricone, and Williams. Subsidiary topics include new trends in contemporary film-scoring, pop scores, the impact of electronics, and specialized genres (e.g., animation). Students taking the graduate version complete different assignments. Some background in the study of film and/or music is expected.  
M. Marks

CMS.935 Documentary Photography and Photojournalism: Still Images of a World in Motion  
Subject meets with 21W.749  
Prereq: Permission of instructor  
G (Fall, Spring)  
Not offered regularly; consult department  
3-0-9 units  
Meets with 21W.749, but assignments differ.  
B. D. Colen

CMS.950 Workshop I  
Prereq: Permission of instructor  
G (Fall)  
2-3-7 units  
Provides an opportunity for direct project development experience and emphasizes intellectual growth as well as the acquisition of technical skills. Students attend regular meetings to present and critique their work and discuss its implications.  
J. Paradis

CMS.951 Workshop II  
Prereq: CMS.950  
G (Spring)  
Not offered regularly; consult department  
4-2-6 units  
A continuation of Workshop I. Provides an opportunity for direct project development experience and emphasizes intellectual growth as well as the acquisition of technical skills. Students attend regular meetings to present and critique their work and discuss its implications.  
Staff
CMS.990 Colloquium in Comparative Media
Prereq: None
G (Fall, Spring)
2-0-1 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Exposes students to the perspectives of scholars, activists, mediamakers, policymakers, and industry leaders on cutting edge issues in media. Registered CMS graduate students only.

Staff

CMS.992 Portfolio in Comparative Media
Prereq: CMS.950 or permission of instructor
G (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged

Students work individually with an advisor to produce a portfolio project which combines technical skills and a substantial intellectual component.

Staff

CMS.993 Teaching in Comparative Media
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall, IAP, Spring)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

For qualified graduate students interested in teaching. Offers experience in classroom and/or tutorial teaching under the supervision of a Comparative Media Studies faculty member.

Staff

CMS.994 Independent Study
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged [P/D/F]
Can be repeated for credit.

Opportunity for individual research in comparative media studies. Registration subject to prior arrangement for subject matter and supervision by a faculty member.

Staff

CMS.995 Independent Study
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Opportunity for individual research in comparative media studies. Registration subject to prior arrangement for subject matter and supervision by a faculty member.

Staff

CMS.996 Special Subject: Comparative Media Studies
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (IAP; partial term)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Seminar or lecture on a topic that is not covered in the regular curriculum.

Staff

CMS.997 Special Subject: Comparative Media Studies
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (IAP)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Seminar or lecture on a topic that is not covered in the regular curriculum.

L. Koslov

CMS.998 Special Subject: Comparative Media Studies
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Spring)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Seminar or lecture on a topic that is not covered in the regular curriculum.

Staff

CMS.999 Special Subject: Comparative Media Studies
Prereq: Permission of instructor
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered
Acad Year 2021-2022: G (Fall)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Seminar or lecture on a topic that is not covered in the regular curriculum.

Staff

CMS.THG Master's Thesis
Prereq: Permission of advisor
G (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Completion of a graduate thesis, to be arranged with a faculty member, who becomes the thesis supervisor. Required of all CMS students.

Staff
First-Year Writing Subjects

First-year writing subjects provide a foundation for future communication-intensive subjects, and also function as a starting point for concentrating, minoring, or majoring in Writing. While the topical focus of writing assignments varies across these subjects, all first-year writing subjects develop students’ understanding of genre, audience, argument, discourse, source use, and writing process. All written work goes through stages of drafting, peer review, and revision. Because these subjects are limited to 15 students per section, students receive detailed feedback at all stages of the writing process, and have many opportunities for individual conferences with instructors. Active class participation and short oral presentations are required. Please note: Students can take no more than one subject in each category (e.g., 21W. 01x, 21W. 02x, 21W. 03x) for credit.

21W.011 Writing and Rhetoric: Rhetoric and Contemporary Issues
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
Credit cannot also be received for 21W.012, 21W.013, 21W.014, 21W.015, 21W.016

Provides the opportunity for students - as readers, viewers, writers, and speakers - to engage with social and ethical issues they care deeply about. Explores perspectives on a range of social issues, such as the responsibilities of citizens, freedom of expression, poverty and homelessness, mental illness, the challenges of an aging society, the politics of food, and racial and gender inequality. Discusses rhetorical strategies that aim to increase awareness of social problems; to educate the public about different perspectives on contemporary issues; and to persuade readers of the value of particular positions on, or solutions to, social problems. Students analyze selected texts and photographs, as well as documentary and feature films, that represent or dramatize social problems or issues. Students also write essays about social and ethical issues of their own choice. Limited to 15.

A. Walsh

21W.012 Writing and Rhetoric: Food for Thought
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
Credit cannot also be received for 21W.011, 21W.013, 21W.014, 21W.015, 21W.016

Explores many of the issues that surround food as both material fact and personal and cultural symbol. Includes non-fiction works on topics such as family meals, food’s ability to awaken us to “our own powers of enjoyment” (M.F.K. Fisher), and eating as an “agricultural act” (W. Berry). Students read Michael Pollan’s best-selling book *In Defense of Food* and discuss the issues it raises about America’s food supply and eating habits, as well as the rhetorical strategies it employs. Assignments include narratives, analytical essays, and research-based essays. Limited to 15.

S. Carlisle

21W.013 Writing and Rhetoric: Introduction to Contemporary Rhetoric
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
Credit cannot also be received for 21W.011, 21W.012, 21W.014, 21W.015, 21W.016

Considers how rhetoric shapes current events in politics, science, and society. Students study rhetoric as a theoretical framework for developing persuasive arguments, as a method of analyzing written, oral, and visual texts, and as a mode of human inquiry. Assignments include analytical, persuasive, and research-based essays, as well as oral presentations, group discussions, and debates. Readings drawn from political speeches, scientific arguments, and popular media. Limited to 15.

L. Harrison-Lepera

21W.014 Writing and Rhetoric: Exploring Visual Media
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
Credit cannot also be received for 21W.011, 21W.012, 21W.013, 21W.015, 21W.016

Explores the rhetoric of visual media and the meaning of the digital revolution. Students analyze readings and films and discuss the power of media in defining social issues and shaping ideas of self, family, and community. They also write essays that sharpen skills in analyzing visual rhetoric, developing and supporting arguments, and using sources. Limited to 18.

A. Walsh

Comparative Media Studies/Writing | 31
21W.015 Writing and Rhetoric: Writing about Sports
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
Credit cannot also be received for 21W.011, 21W.012, 21W.013, 21W.014, 21W.016
Examines the role of sports in our individual lives and American culture at large. Considers a broad range of issues, such as heroism and ethical conundrums, gender equality, steroids, and the proper role of sports in college life. Examples of high-quality, descriptive and analytic sports writing serve as the focus for class discussion and as models for student essays. Limited to 15.
A. Karatsolis

21W.016 Writing and Rhetoric: Designing Meaning
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
2-2-8 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
Credit cannot also be received for 21W.011, 21W.012, 21W.013, 21W.014, 21W.015
Explores how we use rhetoric in text, visuals, and other modes to make meaning. Uses analysis, composition, and debate about rhetorical strategies to develop theoretical and empirical knowledge of how design choices shape our texts and our understanding of the world. In lab, students experiment with rhetorical strategies and assess their effects. Limited to 15.
S. Lane

21W.021 Writing and Experience: MIT Inside, Live
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
Credit cannot also be received for 21W.022
Acting as participant-observers, students investigate MIT’s history and culture through visits to the Institute’s archives and museums, relevant readings, and depictions of MIT in popular culture. Students chronicle their experiences and insights through a variety of writing projects, culminating in the completion of a portfolio. Limited to 15.
J. Graziano

21W.022 Writing and Experience: Reading and Writing Autobiography
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
Credit cannot also be received for 21W.021
Draws on a range of autobiographical writing as examples for students to analyze. Students write essays that focus on their own experience, exploring topics such as intellectual growth and development, the childhood and high school years, life at MIT, the influence of place upon one’s personality and character, and the role politics and religion play in one’s life. Emphasizes clarity, specificity, and structure; investigates various modes of writing (narrative, analytical, expository) and their suitability for different purposes. Limited to 15.
L. Harrison Lepera, N. Jackson, S. Carlisle, S. Carlisle, L. Harrison Lepera, A. Walsh

21W.031 Science Writing and New Media: Explorations in Communicating about Science and Technology
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
Credit cannot also be received for 21W.034, 21W.035, 21W.036
Examines principles of good writing, focusing on those associated with scientific and technical writing. Considers the effects of new media as an avenue for communicating about science. Students discuss scientific articles and essays and work in small groups to critique each other’s writing. Assignments include a critical review, a science essay for the general public, and a research or service project proposal. Students choose topics that reflect their background and interests. Formal and informal presentations and group discussions develop oral communication skills. Limited to 15.
J. Melvold
21W.034 Science Writing and New Media: Perspectives on Medicine and Public Health
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
Credit cannot also be received for 21W.031, 21W.035, 21W.036
Public health topics, such as AIDS, asthma, malaria control, obesity, and sleep deprivation, provide a unifying focus as students explore diverse modes of science writing. Readings include essays by such writers as Atul Gawande, Danielle Ofri, Jerome Groopman, and William Carlos Williams, as well as peer-reviewed journal articles. Assignments include a critical review, a scientific literature review, a brochure suitable for general distribution, an autobiographical narrative, a resume, a job application letter, and oral presentations. Limited to 18.
C. Taft

21W.035 Science Writing and New Media: Elements of Science Writing for the Public
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
Credit cannot also be received for 21W.031, 21W.034, 21W.036
Provides an introduction to writing about science (including medicine, technology, and engineering) for general readers. Emphasizes background research as a foundation for strong science writing. Students read works by accomplished science writers. Each assignment focuses on a different popular form, such as news article, interview, essay, and short feature. Limited to 15.
J. Berezin, A. Carleton, K. Boiko

21W.036 Science Writing and New Media: Writing and the Environment
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
Credit cannot also be received for 21W.031, 21W.034, 21W.035
Develops written and oral communication skills through the study and practice of environmental science writing. Covers a wide range of genres, including such standard forms as the scientific literature review. Students adapt the content of their papers and oral presentations to the distinctive needs of specific audiences. Assignments provide thematic coherence and a basis for independent student research. Limited to 15.
C. Taft

21W.041[J] Writing About Literature
Same subject as 21L.000[J]
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
See description under subject 21L.000[J]. Enrollment limited.
W. Kelley, I. Lipkowitz

21W.042[J] Writing with Shakespeare
Same subject as 21L.010[J]
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
See description under subject 21L.010[J].
D. Henderson

Undergraduate Subjects

Same subject as ES.729[J]
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-1-8 units. HASS-E; CI-H
See description under subject ES.729[J]. Limited to 18; preference to ESG students.
D. Custer

21W.735 Writing and Reading the Essay
Prereq: Writing sample and permission of instructor
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered
Acad Year 2021-2022: U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H
Exploration of formal and informal modes of writing nonfiction prose. Extensive practice in composition, revision, and editing. Reading in the literature of the essay from the Renaissance to the present, with an emphasis on modern writers. Classes alternate between discussion of published readings and workshops on student work. Individual conferences. Limited to 18.
Staff
21W.737[J] Topics and Methods in 21st-Century Journalism  
Same subject as CMS.350[J]  
Subject meets with CMS.850  
Prereq: None  
U (Spring)  
Not offered regularly; consult department  
3-0-9 units. HASS-H  
See description under subject CMS.350[J]. Limited to 12.  
S. Mnookin  

21W.738[J] Intersectional Feminist Memoir  
Same subject as WGS.238[J]  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered  
Acad Year 2021-2022: U (Spring)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-H  
See description under subject WGS.238[J].  
K. Ragusa  

21W.739[J] Darwin and Design  
Same subject as 21L.022[J]  
Prereq: None  
U (Fall)  
Not offered regularly; consult department  
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H  
See description under subject 21L.022[J].  
A. Kibel  

21W.740 Writing Autobiography and Biography  
Prereq: None  
U (Fall)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-A  
Writing an autobiography is a vehicle for improving one’s style while studying the nuances of the language. Literary works are read with an emphasis on different forms of autobiography. Students examine various stages of life, significant transitions, personal struggles, and memories translated into narrative prose, and discuss: what it means for autobiographer and biographer to develop a personal voice; and the problems of reality and fiction in autobiography and biography.  
K. Manning  

21W.741[J] Black Matters: Introduction to Black Studies  
Same subject as 24,912[J], 21H.106[J], 21L.008[J], CMS.150[J], WGS.190[J]  
Prereq: None  
U (Spring)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-A, HASS-H; CI-H  
See description under subject 24,912[J].  
M. Degraff & D. Fox Harrell  

21W.742[J] Writing about Race  
Same subject as WGS.231[J]  
Prereq: None  
U (Fall)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H  
The issue of race and racial identity have preoccupied many writers throughout the history of the US. Students read Jessica Abel, Diana Abu-Jaber, Lynda Barry, Felicia Luna Lemus, James McBride, Sigrid Nunez, Ruth Ozeki, Danzy Senna, Gloria Anzaldua, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Carmit Delman, Stefanie Dunning, Cherrie Moraga, Hiram Perez and others, and consider the story of race in its peculiarly American dimensions. The reading, along with the writing of members of the class, is the focus of class discussions. Oral presentations on subjects of individual interest are also part of the class activities. Students explore race and ethnicity in personal essays, pieces of cultural criticism or analysis, or (with permission of instructor) fiction. All written work is read and responded to in class workshops and subsequently revised. Enrollment limited.  
K. Ragusa  

21W.743 Voice and Meaning: Speaking to Readers through Memoir  
Prereq: None  
U (Spring)  
Not offered regularly; consult department  
3-0-9 units. HASS-E  
Explores the memoir genre with particular attention to the relationships between form and content, fact and truth, self and community, art and “healing,” coming to voice and breaking silence. Readings include works by Nick Flynn, Meena Alexander, Art Spigelman, James McBride, Ruth Ozeki, and Cheryl Strayed, with a focus on the ways in which these writers make meaning out of specific events or moments in their own lives as a way of engaging with larger questions of family, race, history, loss, and survivorship. Drawing on lessons taken from these works, students write a short memoir of their own. Limited to 18.  
K. Ragusa  

21W.744 The Art of Comic Book Writing  
Prereq: None  
U (Fall)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-A  
Students create short scripts and full-length comic book narratives across a variety of genres, while analyzing a wide range of comics (corporate and independent, print and web). Focuses on scripts; drawing skills not required, but illustrations or storyboards are welcome. Special attention to questions of gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality in both critical and creative work. Limited to 13.  
M. Liu
21W.745 Advanced Essay Workshop
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H
Can be repeated for credit.
For students with experience in writing essays and nonfiction prose. Focuses on negotiating and representing identities grounded in gender, race, class, nationality, and sexuality in prose that is expository, exploratory, investigative, persuasive, lyrical, or incantatory. Authors include James Baldwin, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Audre Lorde, Richard Rodriguez, Alice Walker, John Edgar Wideman, Diana Hume George, bell hooks, Margaret Atwood, Patricia J. Williams, and others. Designed to help students build upon their strengths as writers and to expand their repertoire of styles and approaches in essay writing. Approved for credit in Women's and Gender Studies when content meets the requirements for subjects in that program. Limited to 18.

K. Manning

21W.746 Humanistic Perspectives on Medicine: From Ancient Greece to Modern America
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H
For students with experience in nonfiction prose and interest in the non-science side of medicine. Advanced study of the art of essay (form, style, techniques of persuasion) and practice of that form. Students required to write substantial essays and revise their work. Students read and discuss the writings of distinguished physicians from antiquity to the late 20th century. Limited to 18.

K. Manning

21W.747 Rhetoric
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H
For students with a special interest in learning how to make forceful arguments in oral and written form. Studies the forms and structures of argumentation, including organization of ideas, awareness of audience, methods of persuasion, evidence, factual vs. emotional argument, figures of speech, and historical forms and uses of arguments. Limited to 18 per section.
S. Strang, A. Karatsolis

21W.748 Apocalyptic Storytelling
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A
Focuses on the critical making of apocalyptic, post-apocalyptic and dystopian stories across various narrative media. Considers the long history of Western apocalypticism as well as the uses and abuses of apocalypticism across time. Examines a wide variety of influential texts in order to enhance students' creative and theoretical repertoires. Students create their own apocalyptic stories and present on selected texts. Examines conventions such as plague, zombies, nuclear destruction, robot uprising, alien invasion, environmental collapse, and supernatural calamities. Considers questions of race, gender, sexuality, colonialism, trauma, memory, witness, and genocide. Intended for students with prior creative writing experience. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 15.
J. Diaz

21W.749 Documentary Photography and Photojournalism: Still Images of a World in Motion
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Fall)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units. HASS-A
Designed to increase students' understanding of, appreciation for, and ability to do documentary photography and photojournalism. Each three-hour class is divided between a discussion of issues and readings, and a group critique of students' projects. Students must have their own photographic equipment and be responsible for processing and printing; either by student or commercial lab. Students must show basic proficiency with their equipment. Readings include Susan Sontag, Robert Coles, Ken Light, Eugene Richards, and others. Previous photographic experience required. Limited to 15.
B. D. Colen
**21W.750 Experimental Writing**  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered  
Acad Year 2021-2022: U (Spring)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-A  

Students use innovative compositional techniques, focusing on new writing methods rather than on traditional lyrical or narrative concerns. Writing experiments, conducted individually, collaboratively and during class meetings, culminate in chapbook-sized projects. Students read, listen to, and create different types of work, including sound poetry, cut-ups, constrained and Oulipian writing, uncreative writing, sticker literature, false translations, artists’ books, and digital projects.  
*N. Montfort*

**21W.752 Making Documentary: Audio, Video, and More**  
Prereq: 21A.550[J], 21W.786[J], or permission of instructor  
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered  
Acad Year 2021-2022: U (Spring)  
3-6-3 units. HASS-A  
Credit cannot also be received for 21W.824  

Focuses on the technical demands of long-form storytelling in sound and picture. Students build practical writing and production skills through a series of assignments: still photo-text works, audio-only documentaries, short video projects (4-6 minutes), and a semester-long, team-produced video science documentary (12-15 minutes). Readings, screenings and written work hone students’ analytical capacity. Students taking the graduate version complete additional assignments. Students from the Graduate Program in Science Writing center their work on topics in science, technology, engineering, and/or medicine.  
*T. Levenson*

**21W.753[J] Phantasmal Media: Computer-Based Art Theory and Practice**  
Same subject as CMS.314[J]  
Subject meets with CMS.814  
Prereq: None  
U (Fall)  
Not offered regularly; consult department  
3-0-9 units. HASS-A  

See description under subject CMS.314[J].  
*D. F. Harrell*

**21W.754[J] Playwriting Fundamentals**  
Same subject as 21M.604[J]  
Prereq: None  
U (Fall)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-A  

See description under subject 21M.604[J].  
*K. Urban*

**21W.755 Writing and Reading Short Stories**  
Prereq: None  
U (Fall, Spring)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-A  

An introduction to writing fiction. Students write their own stories and study essays and short stories by contemporary authors from around the world. Discussion focuses on students' writing and on assigned works in their historical and social contexts. Limited to 15 per section.  
*S. Lewitt, M. Nathan*

**21W.756 Writing and Reading Poems**  
Prereq: None  
U (Fall)  
Not offered regularly; consult department  
3-0-9 units. HASS-A  

Examination of the formal structural and textual variety in poetry. Extensive practice in the making of poems and the analysis of both students’ manuscripts and texts from 16th- through 20th-century literature. Attempts to make relevant the traditional elements of poetry and their contemporary alternatives. Weekly writing assignments, including some exercises in prosody.  
*Staff*

**21W.757 Fiction Workshop**  
Prereq: 21W.755  
U (Fall)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-A  
Can be repeated for credit.  

Intermediate class for students with some experience in writing fiction. Students write short stories and complete other writing exercises. Readings include short story collections by contemporary writers such as Sandra Cisneros, Benjamin Percy, Leila Lalami, Laura Pritchett, Bret Anthony Johnston, and Edward P. Jones. Discussions focus on sources of story material, characterization, setting, architecture, point of view, narrative voice, and concrete detail.  
*J. Diaz*
**21W.758 Genre Fiction Workshop**  
Prereq: Permission of instructor  
U (Spring)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

Students read texts in genres such as fantasy, science fiction, historical fiction, noir, and horror, typically focusing on one genre exclusively in a given semester. Formats may include short stories, novels, films, TV shows and other narrative media. Considers genre protocols and how to write within the restrictions and freedoms associated with each genre. Students write fiction within a genre (or "between" genres) for roundtable workshopping. Intended for students with prior creative writing experience. Limited to 15.  
S. Lewitt

**21W.759 Writing Science Fiction**  
Prereq: None  
U (Fall)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

Students write and read science fiction and analyze and discuss stories written for the class. For the first eight weeks, readings in contemporary science fiction accompany lectures and formal writing assignments intended to illuminate various aspects of writing craft as well as the particular problems of writing science fiction. The rest of the term is given to roundtable workshops on students' stories.  
S. Lewitt

**21W.762 Poetry Workshop**  
Prereq: None  
U (Fall, Spring)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

Can be repeated for credit.

For students with some previous experience in poetry writing. Frequent assignments stress use of language, diction, word choice, line breaks, imagery, mood, and tone. Considers the functions of memory, imagination, dreams, poetic impulses. Throughout the term, students examine the work of published poets. Revision stressed.  
E. Barrett

**21W.763[J] Transmedia Storytelling: Modern Science Fiction**  
Same subject as CMS.309[J]  
Subject meets with CMS.809  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered  
Acad Year 2021-2022: U (Fall)  
3-2-7 units. HASS-A

Explores transmedia storytelling by investigating how science fiction stories are told across different media, such as the short story, the novel, the screenplay, moving image, and games. Students consider issues of aesthetics, authorship, and genre, while also contextualizing discussion within the broader framework of the political issues raised by film, TV, and other kinds of science fiction texts. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.  
H. Hendershot

**21W.764[J] The Word Made Digital**  
Same subject as CMS.609[J]  
Subject meets with CMS.846  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered  
Acad Year 2021-2022: U (Spring)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

Video games, digital art and literature, online texts, and source code are analyzed in the contexts of history, culture, and computing platforms. Approaches from poetics and computer science are used to understand the non-narrative digital uses of text. Students undertake critical writing and creative computer projects to encounter digital writing through practice. This involves reading and modifying computer programs; therefore previous programming experience, although not required, will be helpful. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 18.  
N. Montfort

**21W.765[J] Interactive Narrative**  
Same subject as 21L.489[J], CMS.618[J]  
Subject meets with CMS.845  
Prereq: None  
U (Fall)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

Provides a workshop environment for understanding interactive narrative (print and digital) through critical writing, narrative theory, and creative practice. Covers important multisequential books, hypertexts, and interactive fictions. Students write critically, and give presentations, about specific works; write a short multisequential fiction; and develop a digital narrative system, which involves significant writing and either programming or the structuring of text. Programming ability helpful.  
N. Montfort
21W.768 Games and Culture
Same subject as CMS.616, WGS.125
Subject meets with CMS.868
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-S
See description under subject CMS.616.
T. L. Taylor

21W.769 Playwrights Lab
Same subject as 21M.785
Subject meets with 21M.789
Prereq: 21M.604 or permission of instructor
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered
Acad Year 2021-2022: U (Spring)
4-0-8 units. HASS-A
Can be repeated for credit.

See description under subject 21M.785. Limited to 10.
K. Urban

21W.770 Advanced Fiction Workshop
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A
Can be repeated for credit.

For students with some experience in writing fiction. Write longer works of fiction and short stories which are related or interconnected. Read short story collections by individual writers, such as Sandra Cisneros, Raymond Carver, Edward P. Jones, and Tillie Olsen, and discuss them critically and analytically, with attention to the ways in which the writers’ choices about component parts contribute to meaning. In-class exercises and weekly workshops of student work focus on sources of story material, characterization, structure, narrative voice, point of view and concrete detail. Concentration on revision.
H. Lee

21W.771 Advanced Poetry Workshop
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A
Can be repeated for credit.

For students experienced in writing poems. Regular reading of published contemporary poets and weekly submission of manuscripts for class review and criticism. Students expected to do a substantial amount of rewriting and revision. Classwork supplemented with individual conferences.
E. Funkhouser

21W.773 Writing Longer Fiction
Prereq: A fiction workshop or permission of instructor
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered
Acad Year 2021-2022: U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

Designed for students who have some experience in writing fiction and want to try longer forms like the novella and novel. Students interested in writing a novel are expected to produce at least two chapters and an outline of the complete work. Readings include several novels from Fitzgerald to the present, and novellas from Gogol’s The Overcoat to current examples. Students discuss one another’s writing in a roundtable workshop, with a strong emphasis on revision.
Staff

21W.774 Playwriting Methods (New)
Same subject as 21M.607
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A
See description under subject 21M.607. Enrollment limited.
K. Urban

21W.775 Writing about Nature and Environmental Issues
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: U (Spring)
Acad Year 2021-2022: Not offered
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

Focuses on traditional nature writing and the environmentalist essay. Students keep a web log as a journal. Writings are drawn from the tradition of nature writing and from contemporary forms of the environmentalist essay. Authors include Henry Thoreau, Loren Eiseley, Annie Dillard, Chet Raymo, Sue Hubbel, Rachel Carson, Bill McKibben, and Terry Tempest Williams. Limited to 18.
C. Taft

21W.776 Screenwriting (New)
Same subject as 21M.608
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A
See description under subject 21M.608. Enrollment limited.
K. Urban
21W.777 Science Writing in Contemporary Society
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Drawing in part from their own interests and ideas, students write about science within various cultural contexts using an array of literary and repertorial tools. Studies the work of contemporary science writers, such as David Quammen and Atul Gawande, and examines the ways in which science and technology are treated in media and popular culture. Discussions focus on students' writing and address topics such as false equivalency, covering controversy, and the attenuation of initial observations. Emphasizes long-form narratives; also looks at blogs, social media, and other modes of communication. Not a technical writing class.

T. Levenson

21W.778 Science Journalism
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: U (Spring)
Acad Year 2021-2022: Not offered
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

An introduction to print daily journalism and news writing, focusing on science news writing in general, and medical writing in particular. Emphasis is on writing clearly and accurately under deadline pressure. Class discussions involve the realities of modern journalism, how newsrooms function, and the science news coverage in daily publications. Discussions of, and practice in, interviewing and various modes of reporting. In class, students write numerous science news stories on deadline. There are additional longer writing assignments outside of class. Enrollment limited.

B. D. Colen

21W.786[J] Social Justice and The Documentary Film
Same subject as CMS.336[J]
Subject meets with CMS.836
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: U (Spring)
Acad Year 2021-2022: Not offered
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

Explores the history and current state of social-issue documentary. Examines how cultural and political upheaval and technological change have converged at different moments to bring about new waves of activist documentary film production. Particular focus on films and other non-fiction media of the present and recent past. Students screen and analyze a series of key films and work in groups to produce their own short documentary using digital video and computer-based editing. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 18.

V. Bald

21W.787 Film, Music, and Social Change: Intersections of Media and Society
Subject meets with CMS.837
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Examines films from the 1950s onward that document music subcultures and moments of social upheaval. Combines screening films about free jazz, glam rock, punk, reggae, hip-hop, and other genres with an examination of critical/scholarly writings to illuminate the connections between film, popular music, and processes of social change. Students critique each film in terms of the social, political, and cultural world it documents, and the historical context and effects of the film's reception. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 18.

V. Bald

21W.788[J] South Asian America: Transnational Media, Culture, and History
Same subject as CMS.334[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: U (Spring)
Acad Year 2021-2022: Not offered
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Examines the history of South Asian immigration, sojourning, and settlement from the 1880s to the present. Focuses on the US as one node in the global circulation, not only of people, but of media, culture and ideas, through a broader South Asian diaspora. Considers the concept of “global media” historically; emphasis on how ideas about, and self-representations of, South Asians have circulated via books, political pamphlets, performance, film, video/cassette tapes, and the internet. Students analyze and discuss scholarly writings, archival documents, memoirs, fiction, blogs and films, and write papers drawing on course materials, lectures, and discussions. Limited to 18.

V. Bald
21W.790[J] Short Attention Span Documentary
Same subject as CMS.335[J]
Subject meets with 21W.890
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered
Acad Year 2021-2022: U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

Focuses on the production of short (1- to 5-minute) digital video documentaries: a form of non-fiction filmmaking that has proliferated in recent years due to the ubiquity of palm-sized and mobile phone cameras and the rise of web-based platforms, such as YouTube. Students shoot, edit, workshop and revise a series of short videos meant to engage audiences in a topic, introduce them to new ideas, and/or persuade them. Screenings and discussions cover key principles of documentary film - narrative, style, pace, point of view, argument, character development - examining how they function and change in short format. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 16.

V. Bald

21W.791[J] Network Cultures
Same subject as CMS.614[J]
Subject meets with CMS.867
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

See description under subject CMS.614[J].

T. L. Taylor

21W.792 Science Writing Internship
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
0-12-0 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Students developing professional writing and publishing skills in part-time internships with Boston area media companies can apply to receive credit. Students planning to take this subject must contact the instructor by the end of November (if they are applying for spring semester) or the end of May (if they are applying for the fall semester).

Staff

21W.794 Graduate Technical Writing Workshop
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (IAP)
1-0-2 units

Designed to improve the student’s ability to communicate technical information. Covers central communication concepts and techniques, including audience, discourse, and genre analysis; strategies for effectively managing, integrating, and documenting information from sources; and methods of structuring information for coherence and credibility. Assignments include an abstract, a literature review, and an oral presentation; students provide feedback to each other. Limited to graduate engineering students based on results of the Graduate Writing Exam.

Staff

21W.798, 21W.799 Independent Study in Writing
Prereq: None
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Primarily for students pursuing advanced writing projects with the assistance of a member of the Writing Program. Students electing this subject must secure the approval of the director of the Writing Program and its Committee on Curriculum. Normal maximum is 6 units; exceptional 9-unit projects occasionally approved. HASS credit awarded only by individual petition to the Subcommittee on the HASS Requirement; minimum of 9 units required for HASS credit. 21W.798 is P/D/F.

Staff

Graduate Subjects

Same subject as STS.477[J]
Prereq: 21H.991
Acad Year 2020-2021: G (Fall)
Acad Year 2021-2022: Not offered
3-0-9 units

Examination of different “voices” used to consider issues of scientific, technological, and social concern. Students write frequently and choose among a variety of non-fiction forms: historical writing, social analysis, political criticism, and policy reports. Instruction in expressing ideas clearly and in organizing a thesis-length work. Reading and writing on three case studies drawn from the history of science; the cultural study of technology and science; and policy issues.

K. Manning
**21W.822 Science Writing Thesis Development and Workshop (New)**
Prereq: None. Coreq: 21W.THG
G (Fall)
3-0-9 units

Develops abilities to produce long-form pieces of science-based journalism, with a focus on constructing multiple narratives, source building and interview techniques, rewriting and working with editors. Students also hone their ability to shape their classmates' work.

_T. Levenson_

**21W.823 Lab Experience for Science Writers**
Prereq: 21W.825
G (Fall, IAP, Spring)
0-2-1 units

During the fall or IAP, students conduct 20 hours of observation in a lab of their choosing that is outside their previous scientific experience. Participation in the work of the lab encouraged. In the spring, students make an in-class presentation and submit a written report of publication quality. Preference to students in the Graduate Program in Science Writing.

_T. Levenson, M. Bartusiak_

**21W.824 Making Documentary: Audio, Video, and More**
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Spring)
3-6-3 units
Credit cannot also be received for 21W.752

Focuses on the technical demands of long-form storytelling in sound and picture. Students build practical writing and production skills through a series of assignments: still photo-text works, audio-only documentaries, short video projects (4-6 minutes), and a semester-long, team-produced video science documentary (12-15 minutes). Readings, screenings and written work hone students' analytical capacity. Students taking the graduate version complete additional assignments. Students from the Graduate Program in Science Writing center their work on topics in science, technology, engineering, and/or medicine. Limited to 7.

_T. Levenson_

**21W.825 Advanced Science Writing Seminar I**
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall)
6-0-18 units

First term of year-long graduate sequence in science writing offers students intensive workshops and critiques of their own writing, and that of published books, articles, and essays; discussions of ethical and professional issues; study of science and scientists in historical and social context; analysis of recent events in science and technology. Emphasis throughout on developing skills and habits of mind that enable the science writer to tackle scientifically formidable material and write about it for ordinary readers. Topics include the tools of research, conceived in its broadest sense— including interviewing, websites, archives, scientific journal articles; science journalism, including culture of the newsroom and magazine-style journalism; science essays. Considerable attention to science writing's audiences, markets, and publics and the special requirements of each.

_Staff_

**21W.826 Advanced Science Writing Seminar II**
Prereq: 21W.825 or permission of instructor
G (Spring)
3-0-9 units

Topics include research for writers, science journalism, and essays; literary science writing, and the social and historical context of science and technology. Includes seminars, lectures, and student writing workshops. Special emphasis on the science essay and on literary and imaginative science writing that employs traditionally fictive devices in nonfiction, including scene-setting and storytelling. Assignments cover science essays, writing on particular disciplines, and investigative and critical science journalism.

_Graduate Program Faculty_
21W.890 Short Attention Span Documentary
Subject meets with 21W.790[J], CMS.335[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2020-2021: Not offered
Acad Year 2021-2022: G (Spring)
3-0-9 units
Focuses on the production of short (1- to 5-minute) digital video documentaries: a form of non-fiction filmmaking that has proliferated in recent years due to the ubiquity of palm-sized and mobile phone cameras and the rise of web-based platforms, such as YouTube. Students shoot, edit, workshop and revise a series of short videos meant to engage audiences in a topic, introduce them to new ideas, and/or persuade them. Screenings and discussions cover key principles of documentary film - narrative, style, pace, point of view, argument, character development - examining how they function and change in short format. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 16.
R. Adams

21W.892 Science Writing Internship
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
0-12-0 units
Field placements tailored to the individual backgrounds of the students enrolled, involving varying degrees of faculty participation and supervision.
Graduate Program Faculty

21W.898 Graduate Independent Study in Writing
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall, IAP, Spring)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.
Opportunity for advanced independent study of writing under regular supervision by a faculty member. Projects require prior approval, as well as a written proposal and a final report.
Consult Staff

21W.899 Graduate Independent Study in Writing
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall, IAP, Spring)
Units arranged [P/D/F]
Can be repeated for credit.
Opportunity for advanced independent study of writing under regular supervision by a faculty member. Projects require prior approval, as well as a written proposal and a final report.
Consult Staff

21W.S60 Special Subject: Writing
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.
Seminar or lecture on a topic that is not covered in the regular curriculum.
Staff

21W.S96 Special Subject: Writing
Prereq: None
G (IAP)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.
Seminar or lecture on a topic that is not covered in the regular curriculum.
Staff

21W.THT Writing Pre-Thesis Tutorial
Prereq: None
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.
Definition of and early stage work on a thesis project leading to 21W.THU. Taken during the first term of a student's two-term commitment to the thesis project. Student works closely with an individual faculty tutor. Required of all students pursuing a full major in Course 21W. Joint majors register for 21.THT.
Staff

21W.THU Writing Program Thesis
Prereq: 21W.THT
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.
Completion of work on the senior major thesis under the supervision of a faculty tutor. Includes oral presentation of the thesis progress early in the term, assembling and revising the final text, and a final meeting with a committee of faculty evaluators to discuss the successes and limitations of the project. Required of students pursuing a full major in Course 21W. Joint majors register for 21.THU.
Staff
21W.THG Graduate Thesis
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
3-0-9 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Research and writing of thesis in consultation with faculty, including individual meetings and group seminars, undertaken over the course of one year.
T. Levenson

21W.UR Research in Writing
Prereq: None
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged [P/D/F]
Can be repeated for credit.

Individual participation in an ongoing research project. For students in the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program.
Staff

21W.URG Research in Writing
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Individual participation in an ongoing research project. For students in the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program.
Staff