COMPARATIVE MEDIA STUDIES/WRITING

Comparative Media Studies/Writing combines the study of contemporary media (film, television, 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, see Academic Resources (http://catalog.mit.edu/mit/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 Studies and Languages; History; Literature; Music and Theater Arts; Philosophy; Science, Technology, and Society; Media Arts and Sciences; Science, Technology, and Urban Studies.

The SB in Comparative Media Studies requires 10 subjects. Majors are required to take 21L.011 The Film Experience, CMS.100 Introduction to Media Studies, one Tier II subject, one Tier III 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 (http://catalog.mit.edu/degree-charts/writing-course-21w/#creativewritingtext) (fiction, nonfiction prose, poetry), science writing (http://catalog.mit.edu/degree-charts/writing-course-21w/#sciencewritingtext), and digital media (http://catalog.mit.edu/degree-charts/writing-course-21w/#digitalmediatext)—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.

The writing major is an option for students interested in journalism, longer forms like the science documentary, and communication issues related to the public understanding of science and technology. It is also designed to work as a complementary major for students majoring in science, engineering, or another field of study at MIT. Students also fulfill an internship requirement, which provides in-depth practical experience.

The digital media emphasis offers in-depth study of emerging interactive and nonlinear styles of narrative, as well as individual and collaborative experience in producing digitally mediated forms, both aesthetic and utilitarian. Students may gain extensive experience in using a variety of authoring systems to develop large-scale websites, web-based hypertext products, computer games, interactive fiction and poetry, and digitally mediated visual worlds. Knowledge of programming is often helpful, but not necessary.

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 21L.011 The Film Experience, CMS.100 Introduction to Media Studies, and one more subject in CMS. The joint requires more writing subjects, but otherwise follows the requirements of the respective undergraduate program.

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Experience or CMS.100 Introduction to Media Studies; one Tier II subject; one Tier III subject; 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 subject selection from an advisor in their engineering or science field, and must also file a petition with the Subcommittee on the Communication Requirement. See joint degree programs under the Department of Humanities section (http://catalog.mit.edu/schools/humanities-arts-social-sciences/humanities/#undergraduatetext).

**Joint Degree Programs in Writing**
Joint degree programs are offered in writing in combination with a field in engineering or science (the 21E and 21S degrees). See the joint degree programs listed under Humanities (http://catalog.mit.edu/schools/humanities-arts-social-sciences/humanities/#undergraduatetext).

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier I</th>
<th>Subject Description</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21L.011 or CMS.100</td>
<td>The Film Experience or Introduction to Media Studies</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tier II**
Select one of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMS.400</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS.403[J]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS.405</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS.407</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tier III**
Select five subjects from among the writing subjects in the area of focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Description</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Studies in Film</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Debates in Media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select three elective subjects</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Units**

**Minor in Writing**
The minor consists of six subjects that are selected to focus on one of three areas: creative writing, science writing, or digital media. It is arranged in two tiers of study as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier I</th>
<th>Subject Description</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select one of the following:</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21W.013 Writing and Rhetoric: Introduction to Contemporary Rhetoric</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21W.014 Writing and Rhetoric: Exploring Visual Media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21W.015 Writing and Rhetoric: Writing about Sports</td>
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<tr>
<td>21W.021 Writing and Experience: MIT Inside, Live</td>
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<tr>
<td>21W.022 Writing and Experience: Reading and Writing Autobiography</td>
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<tr>
<td>21W.026 Writing and Experience: The Hero in the Postmodern World</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21W.031 Science Writing and New Media: Explorations in Communicating about Science and Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21W.032 Science Writing and New Media: Introduction to Digital Media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21W.034 Science Writing and New Media: Perspectives on Medicine and Public Health</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21W.035 Science Writing and New Media: Elements of Science Writing for the Public</td>
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<tr>
<td>21W.036 Science Writing and New Media: Writing and the Environment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21W.041[J] Writing About Literature</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21W.042[J] Writing with Shakespeare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21W.755 Writing and Reading Short Stories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21W.756 Writing and Reading Poems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Units**

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. The program aims to prepare students for careers in fields such as journalism, teaching and research, government or public service, museum work, information science, corporate consulting, media industry marketing and management, and educational technology.

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; HyperStudio; the Trope Tank; the Creative Communities Initiative; and the Mobile Experience Laboratory. Typically graduate students spend 15-20 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 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 two terms of Workshop, a subject that offers hands-on experience in media. In their final term, they take a 24-unit subject devoted to completing the master’s thesis, plus the 3-unit Colloquium in Comparative Media. Typically, students will graduate with a total of 144 units; however, a minimum of 139 units is required for the master’s degree in order to accommodate some electives that are 9-unit instead of 12-unit subjects.

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>Subject</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMS.790</td>
<td>Media Theories and Methods I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS.791</td>
<td>Media Theories and Methods II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS.796</td>
<td>Major Media Texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS.801</td>
<td>Media in Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS.950</td>
<td>Workshop I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS.951</td>
<td>Workshop II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS.990</td>
<td>Colloquium in Comparative Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS.THG</td>
<td>Master’s Thesis</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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John E. Burchard Professor Emerita of Humanities

Joe Haldeman, MFA
Adjunct Professor Emeritus of Fiction

Robert Kanigel, BS
Professor Emeritus of Science Writing
CMS.100 Introduction to Media Studies
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
3-3-6 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.
Fall: S. Costanza-Chock
Spring: J. Picker

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.
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, play testing, 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.
M. Jakobsson, S. Verrilli

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.
J. Diaz

CMS.308 The Visual Story: Graphic Novel, Type to Tablet
Subject meets with CMS.808
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-E

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, W. Uricchio
CMS.309[J] Transmedia Storytelling: Modern Science Fiction
Same subject as 21W.763[J]
Subject meets with CMS.809
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-2-7 units. HASS-A

See description under subject 21W.763[J].
S. Lewitt

CMS.311[J] Media in Weimar and Nazi Germany
Same subject as 21G.055[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2016-2017: Not offered
Acad Year 2017-2018: U (Spring)
2-2-8 units. HASS-H; CI-H

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

CMS.312 Topics in National and Post-National Cinema
Subject meets with CMS.812
Prereq: CMS.100 or permission of instructor
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Studies contemporary films emerging from nations such as South Korea, Iran, and Denmark. Explores the importance of cultural settings, the nature of local funding schemes and production practices, and deeper stylistic continuities with the past. Focuses on one nation's productions (including émigré filmmakers), considering their history, innovations, and meanings in a world in which the idea of nation is increasingly challenged by such factors as immigration, labor outsourcing, and multiculturalism. Examines film's relationship with other media forms, such as television and social media. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.
H. J. Chung

CMS.313 Silent Film
Subject meets with CMS.813
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2016-2017: U (Fall)
Acad Year 2017-2018: Not offered
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: 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. 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)
3-1-8 units. HASS-E; CI-H

See description under subject ES.333[J].
D. Custer, G. Ramsay
CMS.334[J] South Asian America: Transnational Media, Culture, and History
Same subject as 21W.788[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2016-2017: Not offered
Acad Year 2017-2018: U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
See description under subject 21W.788[J].
V. Bald

CMS.335[J] Short Attention Span Documentary
Same subject as 21W.790[J]
Subject meets with 21W.890
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A
See description under subject 21W.790[J].
V. Bald

CMS.336[J] The Social Documentary: Analysis and Production
Same subject as 21W.786[J]
Subject meets with CMS.836
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2016-2017: U (Spring)
Acad Year 2017-2018: Not offered
3-0-9 units. HASS-A
See description under subject 21W.786[J].
V. Bald

CMS.338 Innovation in Documentary: Technologies and Techniques
Subject meets with CMS.838
Prereq: CMS.100 or permission of instructor
U (Spring)
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.350[J] Topics and Methods in 21st-Century Journalism
Same subject as 21W.737[J]
Subject meets with CMS.850
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
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.
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 (Spring)
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.
S. Costanza-Chock
CMS.361 Networked Social Movements: Media and Mobilization
Subject meets with CMS.861
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2016-2017: U (Spring)
Acad Year 2017-2018: Not offered
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.
S. Costanza-Chock

CMS.362 Civic Media Collaborative Design Studio
Subject meets with CMS.862
Prereq: One subject in CMS or MAS
U (Spring)
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.
S. Costanza-Chock

CMS.363 Civic Media, Past and Future
Subject meets with CMS.873
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-E
Explores the history and futures of civic media and the corresponding vision of citizenship that civic media facilitates. Topics include orality and literacy during the rise of democratic governance in ancient Greece, the affordances and limitations of new civic media in the 19th and 20th centuries, the role of education in promoting civic media use, the "Gutenberg parenthesis," and the emergence of secondary orality in the digital age. Uses historical case studies to illustrate the political and economic effects of new civic media; to enhance theoretical and practical understanding of communication, technology, and political action; and to imagine future models to maximize the opportunities and efficacy of civic media. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.
E. Schiappa

CMS.376 History of Media and Technology
Subject meets with CMS.876
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2016-2017: U (Spring)
Acad Year 2017-2018: Not offered
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.
J. Paradis
CMS.400 Media Systems and Texts
Prereq: One subject in Comparative Media Studies or permission of instructor
U (Fall)
3-3-6 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.403[J] Media and Methods: Performing
Same subject as 21M.703[J]
Prereq: CMS.100, 21L.011, or permission of instructor
Acad Year 2016-2017: U (Spring)
Acad Year 2017-2018: Not offered
3-3-6 units. HASS-H

Seminar examines an array of performance disciplines from the perspective of the performer. Explores what it means to read the human body as a dynamic medium of expression; how fundamental techniques of the performer shift across cultural borders and in step with changing social contexts and historical traditions; and how the expressive tactics of one media platform adapt to the demands of another. Students engage in close analysis of performance practices, acquiring a theoretical and historical framework for thinking about performance across disciplines. Complemented by outside readings, video viewings, short essays, and studio performances, this course is intended to provide students with an introduction to core concepts in performance studies as they relate more generally to the study of media. Instruction and practice in written and oral communication provided.

C. Fusco

CMS.405 Media and Methods: Seeing and Expression
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2016-2017: U (Spring)
Acad Year 2017-2018: Not offered
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.

D. F. Harrell

CMS.407 Media and Methods: Sound
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2016-2017: U (Spring)
Acad Year 2017-2018: Not offered
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.

Staff

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.603 Independent Study
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.
**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, 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, 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.607 From Gamer to Player: Theory and Practice of Player Research**  
Subject meets with CMS.843  
Prereq: CMS.300, CMS.608, or permission of instructor  
U (Spring)  
Not offered regularly; consult department  
3-0-9 units. HASS-S  
Focuses on the theories and methods of researching digital game players. Draws on approaches from humanities, social science, and mass communication fields to inform and inspire student research. Examines the strengths, weaknesses, and appropriate use of different data collection methods. Emphasizes familiarity with research philosophy, rules and regulations for working with human subjects. Analyzes current research on digital games and their players to inform understanding of research in practice. Students theorize and develop a player-focused study, collect data, and produce a research paper analyzing their data over the course of the term. Students taking the graduate version complete additional assignments.  
*T. Harper*

**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.  
*P. Tan, R. Eberhardt*

**CMS.609[J] The Word Made Digital**  
Same subject as 21W.764[J]  
Subject meets with CMS.846  
Prereq: None  
U (Spring)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-A  
See description under subject 21W.764[J].  
*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)  
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.  
P. Tan, S. Verrilli, R. Eberhardt  

CMS.612[J] Writing for Videogames  
Same subject as 21W.767[J]  
Prereq: None  
U (Spring)  
Not offered regularly; consult department  
3-0-9 units. HASS-A  
Explores the convergence of fiction, dramatic writing and game design in writing for videogames. Addresses the problematic relationship between storytelling and games, from both an analytical and practical standpoint. Discusses theory and analysis of pre-existing games. Assignments provide students the opportunity to tackle specific writing problems in a creative way. Basic programming knowledge and previous coursework in game design, videogame theory, interactive narrative or play writing is useful but not required. Graduate students complete additional assignments.  
C. Fernandez Vara  

CMS.613[J] Writing for Social Media  
Same subject as 21W.751[J]  
Prereq: None  
U (Spring)  
Not offered regularly; consult department  
3-0-9 units. HASS-A  
See description under subject 21W.751[J].  
Staff  

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. 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 (Fall)  
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.

_P. Tan, S. Verrilli_

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

See description under subject WGS.111[J].

_K. Surkan_

**CMS.621 Fans and Fan Cultures**
Subject meets with CMS.821
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
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.

_Staff_

**CMS.622 Applying Media Technologies in the Arts and Humanities**
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
2-2-8 units. HASS-A

Introduces students to the use of new media technologies to design and develop fresh approaches to creating new content in the arts and humanities. Students explore the rapidly expanding world of contemporary media technologies through team work in which they choose from a selection of approaches such as mobile data, civic media, digital humanities, and game prototyping to create novel media objects or compositions. Readings include a selection of classic and contemporary critical and design works from the arts and humanities.

_J. Paradis_
CMS.627 Imagination, Computation, and Expression Studio
Subject meets with CMS.827
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Fall)
Not offered regularly; consult department
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. Fox Harrell

CMS.628 Advanced Identity Representation
Subject meets with CMS.828
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Spring)
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
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.

Staff

CMS.633 Digital Humanities: Topics, Techniques, and Technologies
Subject meets with CMS.833
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
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.

K. Fendt
**CMS.634 Designing Interactions**
Subject meets with 4.569[J], CMS.834[J]
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
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.

F. Casalegno, T. Nagakura

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**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.

*Fall: J. Paradis*  
*Spring: W. Uricchio*

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

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

*T. Rojas*

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**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.

*Staff*

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

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

*C. Peterson, E. Zuckerman*

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**CMS.THT Comparative Media Studies Pre-Thesis Tutorial**
Prereq: Permission of advisor
U (Fall, Spring)
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.

*Staff*

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**CMS.THU Undergraduate Thesis in Comparative Media Studies**
Prereq: CMS.THT
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, 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.

*Staff*

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

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.
H. Hendershot

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.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.
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 McKays 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, W. Uricchio

CMS.809 Transmedia Storytelling: Modern Science Fiction  
Subject meets with 21W.763[J], CMS.309[J]  
Prereq: None  
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 screenplay, moving image, and games. Students read and write critical essays and collaborate to produce their own work of science fiction in a roundtable workshop environment. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

S. Lewitt

CMS.812 Topics in National and Post-National Cinema  
Subject meets with CMS.312  
Prereq: CMS.100 or permission of instructor  
Acad Year 2016-2017: G (Spring)  
Acad Year 2017-2018: Not offered  
3-0-9 units

Studies contemporary films emerging from nations such as South Korea, Iran, and Denmark. Explores the importance of cultural settings, the nature of local funding schemes and production practices, and deeper stylistic continuities with the past. Focuses on one nation's productions (including émigré filmmakers), considering their history, innovations, and meanings in a world in which the idea of nation is increasingly challenged by such factors as immigration, labor outsourcing, and multiculturalism. Examines film's relationship with other media forms, such as television and social media. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

Staff

CMS.813 Silent Film  
Subject meets with CMS.313  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2016-2017: G (Fall)  
Acad Year 2017-2018: Not offered  
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: Theory and Practice  
Subject meets with 21W.753[J], CMS.314[J]  
Prereq: None  
G (Fall)  
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. Harrell
CMS.815 Games for Social Change
Subject meets with CMS.615
Prereq: None
G (Fall)
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
Subject meets with CMS.621
Prereq: None
G (Spring)
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.

Staff

CMS.827 Imagination, Computation, and Expression Studio
Subject meets with CMS.627
Prereq: None
G (Fall)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units

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. Fox Harrell

CMS.828 Advanced Identity Representation
Subject meets with CMS.628
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Spring)
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
G (Fall, Spring)
3-3-6 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Intensive study of films from a particular period or genre, or films by a single director. Previous topics include Technologies of Seeing: Pre-Cinema to Early Cinema, Hollywood/Bollywood, Film Analysis, and Shakespeare on Film. Students taking graduate version complete different assignments.

E. Brinkema
CMS.831 Data Storytelling Studio
Subject meets with CMS.631
Prereq: None
G (Spring)
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 (Spring)
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 (Fall, Spring)
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.

F. Casalegno, T. Nagakura

CMS.836 The Social Documentary: Analysis and Production
Subject meets with 21W.786[J], CMS.336[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2016-2017: G (Spring)
Acad Year 2017-2018: Not offered
3-0-9 units
An introduction to the history of the social documentary from the 1960s through the 1980s. Explores how social upheaval and the shift to smaller, more portable film cameras, and ultimately hand-held video, converged to bring about an upsurge of socially engaged documentary film production. Students screen and analyze a series of key films from the period and work in groups to produce their own short documentary using digital video and computer-based editing.

V. Bald

CMS.837 Film, Music, and Social Change: Intersections of Media and Society
Subject meets with 21W.787
Prereq: None
G (Fall)
3-0-9 units
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.

V. Bald
CMS.838 Innovation in Documentary: Technologies and Techniques
Subject meets with CMS.338
Prereq: CMS.100 or permission of instructor
G (Spring)
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.840 Literature and Film
Subject meets with 21L.435
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Spring)
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.

M. Bronstein

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.

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.843 From Gamer to Player: Theory and Practice of Player Research
Subject meets with CMS.607
Prereq: CMS.300, CMS.608, or permission of instructor
G (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units
Focuses on the theories and methods of researching digital game players. Draws on approaches from humanities, social science, and mass communication fields to inform and inspire student research. Examines the strengths, weaknesses, and appropriate use of different data collection methods. Emphasizes familiarity with research philosophy, rules and regulations for working with human subjects. Analyzes current research on digital games and their players to inform understanding of research in practice. Students theorize and develop a player-focused study, collect data, and produce a research paper analyzing their data over the course of the term. Students taking the graduate version complete additional assignments.

T. Harper

CMS.845 Interactive Narrative
Subject meets with 21L.489[J], 21W.765[J]
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Spring)
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
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.
N. Montfort

CMS.850 Topics and Methods in 21st Century Journalism
Subject meets with 21W.737[J], CMS.350[J]
Prereq: None
G (Fall)
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.
S. Mnookin

CMS.860 Introduction to Civic Media
Subject meets with CMS.360
Prereq: None
G (Spring)
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.
S. Costanza-Chock

CMS.861 Networked Social Movements: Media and Mobilization
Subject meets with CMS.361
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2016-2017: G (Spring)
Acad Year 2017-2018: Not offered
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.
S. Costanza-Chock

CMS.862 Civic Media Collaborative Design Studio
Subject meets with CMS.362
Prereq: One subject in CMS or MAS
G (Spring)
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.
S. Costanza-Chock

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.

P. Tan, R. Eberhardt

CMS.866 Writing for Videogames
Subject meets with 21W.767[J], CMS.612[J]
Prereq: None
G (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units

Explores the convergence of fiction, dramatic writing and game design in writing for videogames. Addresses the problematic relationship between storytelling and games, from both an analytical and practical standpoint. Discusses theory and analysis of pre-existing games. Assignments provide students the opportunity to tackle specific writing problems in a creative way. Basic programming knowledge and previous coursework in game design, videogame theory, interactive narrative or play writing is useful but not required. Graduate students complete additional assignments.

C. Fernandez Vara

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 (Fall)
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.

S. Frampton
CMS.873 Civic Media, Past & Future
Subject meets with CMS.363
Prereq: None
G (Fall)
3-0-9 units
Explores the history and futures of civic media and the corresponding vision of citizenship that civic media facilitates. Topics include orality and literacy during the rise of democratic governance in ancient Greece, the affordances and limitations of new civic media in the 19th and 20th centuries, the role of education in promoting civic media use, the "Gutenberg parenthesis," and the emergence of secondary orality in the digital age. Uses historical case studies to illustrate the political and economic effects of new civic media; to enhance theoretical and practical understanding of communication, technology, and political action; and to imagine future models to maximize the opportunities and efficacy of civic media. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.
E. Schiappa

CMS.876 History of Media and Technology
Subject meets with CMS.376
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2016-2017: G (Spring)
Acad Year 2017-2018: Not offered
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.880 From Print to Digital: Technologies of the Word, 1450-Present
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall)
3-0-9 units
Explores the impact of new technology on the recording and distribution of words at three different times: the invention of the printing press ca. 1450; the adaptation of electricity to communication technology in the 19th century (telegraph, telephone, phonograph); and the emergence of digital media today. Assignments include essays and online projects. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.
Staff

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.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.
Fall: J. Paradis
Spring: W. Uricchio
CMS.915 Understanding Television
Subject meets with 21L.432
Prereq: Permission of instructor
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
G (Fall)
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)
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.
C. Weaver

CMS.925 Film Music
Subject meets with 21M.284
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall)
3-3-6 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, Rotà, 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)
3-0-9 units
Meets with 21W.749, but assignments differ.
B. D. Colen
CMS.950 Workshop I
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall)
4-2-6 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.
F. Harrell

CMS.951 Workshop II
Prereq: CMS.950
G (Spring)
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.
I. Condry

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.
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.S96 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.
T. Rojas

CMS.S97 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.
Staff

CMS.S98 Special Subject: Comparative Media Studies
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.
Seminar or lecture on a topic that is not covered in the regular curriculum.
C. Peterson, E. Zuckerman
CMS.S99 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.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

The Program in Writing offers introductory writing as well as advanced coursework in these areas: 1) Creative Writing; 2) Science Writing; and 3) Digital Media.

First-Year Writing Subjects
Students write frequently, give and receive feedback on work in progress, improve their work by revising, read the work of accomplished writers, and participate actively in class discussions and workshops. Short oral presentations are also required. Emphasizes writing with an awareness of audience and purpose. Writing and Rhetoric focuses on forms of exposition, including narration, critique, argument, and persuasion, to develop students’ ability to write clear and effective prose. Writing and Experience focuses on the ways writers transform experience into finished and polished writing in the forms of essay, memoir, and autobiography. Science Writing and New Media focuses on writing about science and new media and develops students’ ability to write clear and effective prose for a range of media. Writing about Literature focuses on reading and writing skills used to analyze literary texts. Writing with Shakespeare focuses on writing and speaking, using Shakespeare as a model. Readings and assignments vary by subject and focus on themes relevant to each genre.

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.
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.
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.
L. Harrison-Lepera

21W.014 Writing and Rhetoric: Exploring Visual Media
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
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.
A. Walsh

21W.015 Writing and Rhetoric: Writing about Sports
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
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.
K. Boiko

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.
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, 21W.026
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.
L. Marx

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, 21W.026
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.
Fall: L. Marx, N. Jackson, S. Carlisle
Spring: S. Carlisle, L. Harrison Lepera, A. Walsh
21W.026 Writing and Experience: The Hero in the Postmodern World
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
Credit cannot also be received for 21W.021, 21W.022

Students examine and analyze concepts of the hero - from ancient Greece through the writings of Jung and Joseph Campbell - using the lens of postmodernist thought and critical theory, which largely reject the concept of a hero as role model or ideal. Studies the flaws of the great leaders of earlier times and discusses how the image of the hero influences world view, informs choices, and functions as metaphor in ethical dilemmas. Explores the characteristics that define a hero and how they have changed over time. Considers whether or not certain figures meet the definition of a hero, whether their deeds remain compelling, and whether they still deserve a place in cultural dialog. Students read essays, fiction, and plays depicting heroes in both literature and history, and use workshops and revision to turn ideas and experience into powerful written communication.

S. Lewitt

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.032, 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.

J. Melvold

21W.032 Science Writing and New Media: Introduction to Digital Media
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
Credit cannot also be received for 21W.031, 21W.034, 21W.035, 21W.036

Focuses on digital media production and associated written and oral reports. Working individually and in small, collaborative teams, students create a variety of digital media projects throughout the term, culminating in a larger final project of their choosing. Assignments include audio and video essays, website design, games and interactive fiction, mobile technology, and readings. Students write bi-weekly short essays analyzing their digital projects, as well as a proposal, progress report and completion report for the final project.

E. Barrett

21W.034 Science Writing and New Media: Perspectives on Medicine and Public Health
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
Credit cannot also be received for 21W.031, 21W.032, 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.

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.032, 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.

Fall: J. Berezin, K. Boiko
Spring: 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.032, 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.
C. Taft

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

Creative Writing

Introductory

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.
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.
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  
Consider 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.  
*L. Harrison-Lepera*

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, 21W.026  
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.  
*L. Marx*

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, 21W.026  
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.  
*Fall: L. Marx, N. Jackson, S. Carlisle  
Spring: S. Carlisle, L. Harrison Lepera, A. Walsh*

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

Advanced  

21W.735 Writing and Reading the Essay  
Prereq: Writing sample and permission of instructor  
U (Fall)  
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.  
*Staff*

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], WGS.190[J]
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A, HASS-H; CI-H
See description under subject 24.912[J].
S. Alexandre, M. Degraff

21W.742[J] Writing about Race
Same subject as WGS.231[J]
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
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.
K. Ragusa

21W.743 Voice and Meaning: Speaking to Readers through Memoir, Fact, and Fiction
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units. HASS-E
Studies the meaning of various texts (fiction, nonfiction, poetry) through the chosen voice. Readings include Ian Frazier’s “Hints From Heloise,” Robert Hayden’s “Middle Passage,” E.L. Doctorow’s “The Waterworks,” and Susan Mitchell’s “From The Journals Of The Frog Prince.” Examines how writers of various backgrounds and in a variety of forms use everything from rhythm, syntax and line-breaks to lexicon in order to create character, time, and place. Seeks to ultimately understand how form functions not just as ornamentation, but as meaning.
Staff

21W.745 Advanced Essay Workshop
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Spring)
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.
Staff

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 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.
Fall: S. Strang
Spring: S. Strang, A. Karatsolis

21W.754[J] Playwriting I
Same subject as 21M.604[J]
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A
See description under subject 21M.604[J].
L. Harrington
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.

Fall: Z. Packer, S. Lewitt
Spring: S. Lewitt

21W.756 Writing and Reading Poems
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
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.

H. Lee

21W.758 Genre Fiction Workshop
Prereq: A subject in writing short fiction or comparable writing experience
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

Students read stories and novels from various genres. Includes Warriors, a collection of short stories in genres such as fantasy, science fiction, historical fiction, and horror. Includes novels such as True Grit (western), Hit and Run (crime), Coraline (fantasy/horror), and Starship Troopers and The Dispossessed (both science fiction). Considers genre protocols and how to write within the restrictions and freedoms associated with each genre. Students write a short reaction to each novel, and one short story within a genre (or “between” genres) for roundtable workshopping.

M. Liu

21W.759 Writing Science Fiction
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
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.760 Creative Writing and Visual Culture: Writing in the Museum
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Critically explores how and why objects are collected and consumed, drawing upon visual culture and museum and cultural studies. Students engage in forms of creative writing that imitate museums, enact curatorial gestures, and/or try to dismantle such structures. They also curate their own writing into a chapbook, blog, or other creative form. Readings cover a range of genres. Includes visits to actual and virtual galleries.

G. Henderson
21W.761 (un)Writing the Book
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Explores the material and historical components of books, dissecting and regenerating individual and collective writings into new forms. Students engage in weekly creative experiments and other exercises, handle rare books on field trips to Special Collections, and edit collaborative chapbooks. Examines the history and mystery of the book, considering where this technology has come from and envisioning where it might go.

Staff

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.

Fall: E. Barrett
Spring: E. Funkhouser

21W.769[J] Playwrights' Workshop
Same subject as 21M.785[J]
Subject meets with 21M.789
Prereq: 21M.604[J], 21W.754[J], or permission of instructor
U (Spring)
3-2-7 units. HASS-A
Can be repeated for credit.

See description under subject 21M.785[J].
A. Brody

21W.770 Advanced Fiction Workshop
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Fall, 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.

Fall: J. Diaz
Spring: H. Lee

21W.771 Advanced Poetry Workshop
Prereq: Prior manuscript submission required
U (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 2016-2017: Not offered
Acad Year 2017-2018: 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.

Z. Packer
Science Writing

Introductory

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.032, 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.

J. Melvold

21W.034 Science Writing and New Media: Perspectives on Medicine and Public Health
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
Credit cannot also be received for 21W.031, 21W.032, 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.

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.032, 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.

Fall: J. Berezin, K. Boiko
Spring: K. Boiko

Advanced

Same subject as ES.729[J]
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-1-8 units. HASS-E; CI-H
See description under subject ES.729[J].
D. Custer

21W.736 News Writing
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2016-2017: U (Fall)
Acad Year 2017-2018: Not offered
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

An introduction to the basics of print journalism, including an overview of journalistic ethics and life in the newsroom. Students learn basic reporting techniques, interviewing, and news writing, with an emphasis on accuracy, clarity, and brevity. Most writing done in class whereby students learn to write under time pressure, as well as in a distracting environment. Techniques of investigative reporting — including interviewing and research into public and private sources — are assigned on a weekly basis for outside classroom work.

B. D. Colen
21W.737[J] Topics and Methods in 21st-Century Journalism
Same subject as CMS.350[J]
Subject meets with CMS.850
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
See description under subject CMS.350[J].
S. Mnookin

21W.739[J] Darwin and Design
Same subject as 21L.022[J]
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H
See description under subject 21L.022[J].
A. Kibel

21W.746 Humanistic Perspectives on Medicine: From Ancient Greece to Modern America
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
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.
K. Manning

21W.749 Documentary Photography and Photojournalism: Still Images of a World in Motion
Subject meets with CMS.935
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Fall, Spring)
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.
B. D. Colen

21W.775 Writing about Nature and Environmental Issues
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
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.
Staff

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 reportorial 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.
Staff

21W.778 Science Journalism
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
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.
B. D. Colen
21W.792 Science Writing Internship
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring, Summer)
0-12-0 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.
Part-time internships in Boston-area media and industries are arranged for students wishing to develop professional writing and publishing skills. Students planning to take this subject must contact the instructor by November of the previous term.

Staff

Digital Media

Introductory

21W.032 Science Writing and New Media: Introduction to Digital Media
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
Credit cannot also be received for 21W.031, 21W.034, 21W.035, 21W.036
Focuses on digital media production and associated written and oral reports. Working individually and in small, collaborative teams, students create a variety of digital media projects throughout the term, culminating in a larger final project of their choosing. Assignments include audio and video essays, website design, games and interactive fiction, mobile technology, and readings. Students write bi-weekly short essays analyzing their digital projects, as well as a proposal, progress report and completion report for the final project.

E. Barrett

Advanced

21W.750 Experimental Writing
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2016-2017: Not offered
Acad Year 2017-2018: U (Fall)
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.751[J] Writing for Social Media
Same subject as CMS.613[J]
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units. HASS-A
Explores how social media is changing our understanding of writing, multimedia, and authorship. Through individual assignments and collaborative work, students contribute to an overarching writing project developed in a networked software environment, and develop their own social media practices. Assigned readings include exemplary selections from existing public social media projects, as well as scholarly work and analysis by noted media critics.

Staff

21W.752 Making Documentary: Audio, Video, and More
Subject meets with 21W.824
Prereq: 21W.786[J], 21A.550[J], or permission of instructor
U (Spring)
3-6-3 units. HASS-A
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: 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. Harrell
21W.763[J] Transmedia Storytelling: Modern Science Fiction
Same subject as CMS.309[J]
Subject meets with CMS.809
Prereq: None
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 screenplay, moving image, and games. Students read and write critical essays and collaborate to produce their own work of science fiction in a roundtable workshop environment. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.
S. Lewitt

21W.764[J] The Word Made Digital
Same subject as CMS.609[J]
Subject meets with CMS.846
Prereq: None
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.
N. Montfort

21W.765[J] Interactive Narrative
Same subject as 21L.489[J]
Subject meets with CMS.845
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
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.767[J] Writing for Videogames
Same subject as CMS.612[J]
Subject meets with CMS.866
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units. HASS-A
See description under subject CMS.612[J].
C. Fernandez Vara

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

21W.772 Digital Poetry
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

Digital forms of poetry, including hypertext poems, Flash-animated poems, poems within short digital videos and interactive forms of poetry and games. Readings in early hypertext theory and creative writing. Experiment with creating poetry for wireless access on handheld devices. Test the assumptions of these early theorists through practice of creating digital poetry. Students discuss online examples of each of these kinds of digital poetry and then compose their own work, to present in class for critique and revision. The final project allows students to build upon their experience throughout the term with these forms.
Staff

21W.784 Becoming Digital: Writing about Media Change
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

Compares pre-digital to digital media to explore the unique problems that arise in this transition in relation to documenting conflicts from the perspectives of soldiers, journalists, and civilians. Class selects periods, conflicts and readings. Readings include subject-specific texts and media, augmented by technical and theoretical articles relevant to the course themes. Frequent writing and revision, an oral presentation, and intensive class participation are required.
N. Montfort
21W.785 Communicating with Web-Based Media
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units. HASS-A; CI-H
Analysis, design, implementation, and testing of various forms of
digital communication through group collaboration. Students are
couraged to think about the Web and other new digital interactive
media not just in terms of technology but also broader issues such
as language (verbal and visual), design, information architecture,
communication and community. Students work in small groups
on a term-long project of their choice. Various written and oral
presentations document project development.
E. Barrett

21W.786[J] The Social Documentary: Analysis and Production
Same subject as CMS.336[J]
Subject meets with CMS.836
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2016-2017: U (Spring)
Acad Year 2017-2018: Not offered
3-0-9 units. HASS-A
An introduction to the history of the social documentary from the
1960s through the 1980s. Explores how social upheaval and the
shift to smaller, more portable film cameras, and ultimately hand-
held video, converged to bring about an upsurge of socially engaged
documentary film production. Students screen and analyze a series
of key films from the period and work in groups to produce their own
short documentary using digital video and computer-based editing.
V. Bald

21W.787 Film, Music, and Social Change: Intersections of Media
and Society
Subject meets with CMS.837
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
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.
V. Bald

21W.788[J] South Asian America: Transnational Media, Culture,
and History
Same subject as CMS.334[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2016-2017: Not offered
Acad Year 2017-2018: U (Spring)
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.
V. Bald

21W.789 Communicating with Mobile Technology
Prereq: 1.00, 6.005, or permission of instructor
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H
Students work in small collaborative design teams to propose,
build, and document a semester-long project focused on mobile
applications for cell phones. Additional assignments include
creating several small mobile applications such as context-aware
mobile media capture and games. Students document their work
through a series of written and oral proposals, progress reports, and
final reports. Covers the basics of J2ME and explores mobile imaging
and media creation, GPS location, user-centered design, usability
testing, and prototyping. Java experience recommended.
E. Barrett
21W.790[J] Short Attention Span Documentary
Same subject as CMS.335[J]
Subject meets with 21W.890
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
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.

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

Additional Subjects
21W.798, 21W.799 Independent Study in Writing
Prereq: None
U (Fall, 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.

J. Paradis

21W.800[J] Business Writing for Supply Chain Management
Same subject as ESD.259[J]
Prereq: None
G (Fall)
1-0-2 units

See description under subject ESD.259[J].

P. Siska, B. Arntzen

Same subject as ESD.263[J]
Prereq: None
G (Spring)
1-0-2 units

See description under subject ESD.263[J].

P. Siska

21W.S60 Special Subject: Writing
Prereq: None
U (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 and Humanistic Studies 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 and Humanistic Studies 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.UR Research in Writing and Humanistic Studies
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged [P/D/F]
Can be repeated for credit.

21W.UGC Research in Writing and Humanistic Studies
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.
J. Paradis

Graduate Subjects

21W.794 Graduate Technical Writing Workshop
Prereq: None
G (IAP)
2-0-1 units

Designed to improve the student’s ability to communicate technical information. Covers the basics of working with sources, including summarizing and paraphrasing, synthesizing source materials, citing, quoting, and avoiding plagiarism. Also covers how to write an abstract and a literature review. Limited to graduate engineering students based on results of the Graduate Writing Exam.
Staff

Same subject as STS.477[J]
Prereq: 21H.991[J]
Acad Year 2016-2017: G (Spring)
Acad Year 2017-2018: 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.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.
T. Levenson, M. Bartusiak

21W.824 Making Documentary: Audio, Video, and More
Subject meets with 21W.752
Prereq: 21W.786[J], 21A.550[J], or permission of instructor
G (Spring)
3-6-3 units

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.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
G (Fall, 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.
V. Bald

21W.892 Science Writing Internship
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Spring)
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 Science Writing
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall, Spring)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.
Opportunity for advanced independent study of science writing under regular supervision by a faculty member. Projects require prior approval, as well as a written proposal and a final report.
Consult Graduate Program Headquarters

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

21W.596 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.THG Graduate Thesis
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
6-0-18 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.
M. Bartusiak