

## IML 499: Hypercinemas Studio



### Professor

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION - 4 units

The technologies of cinema are in a state of spectacular innovation. Familiar attributes of the medium are being renewed and reborn through Ultra High Definition resolutions, high frame rate acquisition, flying cameras and immersive VR Cinema experiences. The goal of the Hypercinemas Studio course is to situate these new practices within the critical and historical context of Media Arts + Practice; to investigate the continuities between emerging technologies and the earliest experiments of cinema; to transcend spectacle in order to achieve a material understanding of current tools and how they can support a critically engaged cinematic practice. Key concerns of the class include representations of space, place and the flows of power; temporality and posthuman vision; the mobility of cameras and bodies; the complex capitulations of art, science and commerce.

Course participants will engage with existing works representing the current state of the art in hypercinematic efforts. They will work together to create a vocabulary of critique uniquely suited to the languages hypercinemas. Their own practical experiments will then draw on this foundation of theoretical inquiry and critique to advance our understanding of what is at stake aesthetically and culturally in the evolving languages of representation. The hands-on studio nature of the course operates from the belief that thinking through making is an integral project of contemporary media scholarship.

The course is structured around a series of creative exercises designed to acquaint them with the foundational tools and workflows of hypercinemas. These include experiments with large format acquisition and exhibition (4K and IMAX), spherical (VR) video and aerial photography (subject to University approval). This sequence is also designed to encourage students to arrive at their own ideas of methodology and creative goals. Each project will address a key research question posited by the student; the goal is to ask a question that can only be answered through an engagement with the tools of hypercinema. Students will support each other's projects, sharing time and resources to achieve collaborative creative success.

## **Assignments and Grading Percentages**

### Reading Responses and Presentations - Ongoing 15%

Class readings will be scheduled throughout the semester and will provide the basis for group discussions. Students will take turns working in pairs to prepare short presentations on a given week's reading as a way to shape that week's discussion. Occasionally written responses will be assigned. Schedule TBD.

### Visible Concerns - In Class Week 2 15%

As a class we'll brainstorm issues and topics that concern us and then attempt to use our existing cinematic tools to discover, observe and represent evidence of these topics. What do we see? Without revealing the subject of a given piece, we will watch and try to deduce it from audio visual material alone. Rules: observational documentary style only - no staging, no VO, no interviews, no graphics, no text, no music. We will then revisit these topics in each of the subsequent experiments of hypercinematic technique.

### Experiments with large format (4K video on IMAX screen) 15%

How do we see differently when there is more to see? Does the ultra high resolution of 4K image acquisition, experienced on the staggeringly immersive IMAX screen change the way we conceive of our visual world and our ability to represent it?

### Experiments with Spherical video 15%

Drawing on pre- and early-cinematic artifacts for inspiration, students will create living landscapes in spherical (VR) video. How is subject position created through a sense of place and vantage point?

### Experiments with aerial photography 15%

Students will plan and execute short video projects utilizing aerial photography. Key concerns are the relationships between space, subjectivity and power. Students are challenged to represent familiar spaces in such a way that unseen power dynamics are made visible through the unique perspectives and mobilities of a drone-mounted camera. Students will work in groups in collaboration with a licensed pilot, first learning the affordances of this approach and then creating and executing a shooting and flight plan.

### Final Project: Proposal, annotated bibliography, final deliverable 25%

The final project is an opportunity for students to synthesize their theoretical and practical learning from the course into a hybrid research / media project. Students will develop and share their ideas through a written proposal and annotated bibliography before undertaking production.

### Readings

Bazin, Andre. "The Myth of Total Cinema" and "The Ontology of the Photographic Image." In Bazin, André, Dudley Andrew, and Jean Renoir. 2004. *What Is Cinema?: Volume I: 1*. Translated by Hugh Gray. 1 edition. University of California Press.

Trumbull lights up 'Hypercinema' (Variety)

<http://variety.com/2012/digital/news/trumbull-lights-up-hypercinema-1118050369/>

Duncombe, S. (2007). Chapter Six. *Dream: Re-imagining Progressive Politics in an Age of Fantasy*. New York: New Press. Distributed by W.W. Norton.

Fenlon, Wesley. "48 FPS and Beyond: How High Frame Rate Films Affect Perception - Tested.com."

2015. Tested. Accessed February 7.

<http://www.tested.com/art/movies/452387-48-fps-and-beyond-how-high-frame-rates-affect-perception/>.

Fessenden, M. (n.d.). "High-Speed Video Shows When the Smell of Rain Begins." Retrieved February 7, 2015, from

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/high-speed-video-shows-when-smell-rain-begins-180953958/>

Willis, H. (2005). *New digital cinema: Reinventing the moving image*. London: Wallflower Press.

Youngblood, G. (1970). *Expanded cinema*. New York: Dutton.

*Into the Belly of the Image: Historical Aspects of Virtual Reality* Author(s): Oliver Grau Source: Leonardo, Vol. 32, No. 5, Seventh New York Digital Salon (1999), pp. 365-371 Published by: The MIT Press Stable URL:<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1576818>

Haraway, D. (n.d.). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 575-575.

Eco, U. (1986). *Travels in hyper reality: Essays*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Best, Steven, and Douglas Kellner. "Debord and the Postmodern Turn: New Stages of the Spectacle." *Illuminations*. University of Texas at Austin. Accessed 7 Feb. 2015.  
<<http://www.uta.edu/huma/illuminations/kell17.htm>>.

[Baudrillard, J., & Poster, M. \(1988\). Selected writings. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.](#)

What would feminist data visualization look like? | MIT Center for Civic Media

Werner Herzog Talks Virtual Reality - The New Yorker (The New Yorker)

<http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/werner-herzog-talks-virtual-reality>

## **Weekly Schedule**

**All classes in SCI L104 unless noted below**

### **Week One - 8/25**

**Introductions: the course, the assignments, the wiki, each other.**

**[Streetview in-class exercise.](#)**

***For next week:***

- **Set-up your Student Page on the wiki**
- **[Week 2 Reading Response](#)**

### **Week Two - 9/1**

**Intro to GH4 workshop /**

**[Visible Concerns in-class assignment](#)**

**[Proper encoding for IMAX intro](#)**

***For Next Week:***

- **[Aerial Workshop 1 readings, viewings, preparation and reflection](#)**

- *Make sure your Visible Concerns output is online and viewable*

### Week Three - 9/8 **\*\*CHANGE\*\*** SCI Lobby

Aerial Cinematography Workshop 1 - CANCELED due to technical difficulties  
GH4 Intro Workshop instead

*For Next Week:*

Read: Bazin, Andre. "The Myth of Total Cinema" and "The Ontology of the Photographic Image."

### Week Four - 9/15 IMAX Lab in Zemeckis Center

Reading Discussion

Matt Scott IMAX introduction

Screen visible concern videos

*For next week:*

[Review the aerial materials](#)

[View your classmates' Visible Concern videos and add comments!](#)

### Week Five - 9/22 SCI Lobby

Aerial Cinematography Workshop 1 - Rescheduled!

*For Next Week*

- [Proposals for Large Format project due \(group\)](#)
- [Readings and Reading Response For Week Six](#)

### Week Six - 9/29 SCI L104

Large format Proposals Due

Week Six Reading Response Due

In-class

Reviewing proposals

Shooting schedules

Post production schedules

Review how to deliver footage  
Shooting Large Format Projects

*For next week:*

**Reflection: Aerial Workshop 1**

Add aerial aspect to large format proposal: top 3 location choices on campus

### **Week Seven - 10/6 No formal class meeting**

**Due: Reflection: Aerial Workshop 1**

Shooting Large Format Projects / Editing

*For Next Week -*

**Week 8 Readings and Responses**

### **Week Eight - 10/13**

Week 8 Reading Response Due  
Editing Large Format  
Spherical Workshop (?)

## **4K Footage Due to Matt Scott by Monday 10/17 5PM**

### **Week Nine - 10/20 IMAX lab**

Screening Large Format Projects

*For Next Week*

**Large Format Project Written Reflection (individual)**

**Week 10 Readings and Responses**

### **Week Ten - 10/27**

**Large Format Project Written Reflection Due (individual)**

**Week 10 Readings and Responses Due**

**Spherical Workshop**

*For Next Week*

Spherical Project Proposal  
Week 11 Readings and Responses

**Week Eleven - 11/3**

Spherical Project Proposal Due  
Week 11 Readings and Responses Due  
Shooting/Working on Spherical Projects

*For next week*

Final Project Proposal  
Week 12 Readings and Responses

**Week Twelve - 11/10**

Final Project Proposal Due  
Week 12 Readings and Responses Due

Editing and or Shooting Spherical  
Shooting Aerial

*For Next Week*

Spherical Projects Due

**Week Thirteen - 11/17**

Spherical Due  
Experiencing Spherical Projects

**Week Fourteen - 11/24 - THANKSGIVING**

**Week Fifteen - 12/1**

Editing / Feedback / Testing of Final Projects

**Final Exam Period - Final screenings and presentations - IMAX Lab - 12/8 (time to be confirmed)**

## Course Policies

### COMMUNICATION

Please check your email and the class wiki regularly. Emails and wiki posts will include follow-ups to in-class discussions, schedule updates, and meeting management. The wiki may be found by following the MA+P Portal link at <http://map.usc.edu>. Feel free to use the wiki and its blog area to contribute to the class' ongoing discussions. If you will not be in class, you are expected to send an email notification. Your absence will be considered unexcused if you fail to send a notification. Also, it is prohibited to use your mobile devices (phones, tablets, laptops) during class sessions for work unrelated to the course (no texting, emailing, web surfing etc.).

### CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Please be open about concerns or issues that may arise and we will do our utmost to address them in a timely fashion. You may contact MA+P Director Holly Willis if a resolution is not forthcoming.

### POLICIES

**Statement on Fair Use:** Fair use is a legal principle that defines certain limitations on the exclusive rights of copyright holders. MA+P seeks to apply a reasonable working definition of fair use that will enable students and instructors to develop multimedia projects without seeking authorization for non-commercial, educational uses. Four factors should be considered when determining whether a use is fair: (1) the purpose and character of use, (2) the nature of the copyrighted work, (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work. In general, we regard the reproduction of copyrighted works for the purposes of analysis or critique in this class to be covered by the principle of fair use.

**Citation Guidelines:** All projects will need to include academically appropriate citations in the form of a Works Cited section, which covers all sources, in order to receive a passing grade. The Works Cited is either included in the project or as a separate document, as appropriate to your project. The style we use is APA 6th edition and you may refer to these guidelines:<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

**Statement on Academic Integrity:** USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the



recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A:<http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at:<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

**Statement for Students with Disabilities:** Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

**Emergency Plan:** In the event of an emergency, all attempts will be made to continue MA+P courses as usual. If we cannot meet synchronously, we will continue with our asynchronous work. In addition, all course materials are backed up on a secondary site (usually Blackboard) in the event that the primary wiki site should go down.