MUSC 499: The Music Video: From Popular Music to Film and Digital Media

University of Southern California, Fall 2014
Tuesday, Thursday, 2:00-3:20
UUC B2
Instructor: Dr. Richard Brown
Office: MUS 310 (Office Hour: T/Th 1-2pm) richarhb@usc.edu
www.richardhbrownjr.com

Course Description: Since its emergence in the late 1970s, the music video has become the dominant means of advertising popular music and musicians, as well as one of the most influential multimedia genres in history. Music videos have affected aesthetic style in a wide range of film and television genres, introducing experimental and avant-garde techniques to a mass audience. Because most music videos last only a few minutes, it is difficult to make sense of their often-conflicting images, sounds, and messages. This course challenges participants to read music videos as texts by engaging with their visual and auditory materials. We will explore how the gender, race, and class of video participants shapes meaning, as well as how pacing and editing contribute to (or detract from) a narrative flow. We will also consider the music video in relation to notions of stardom and celebrity, and will speculate on the future of the music video amid drastic changes in the production and marketing of media. The second portion of the course applies these analytical skills to a wide variety of media, including video games, live concert films, film and television music placements, television title sequences and end credits, user generated content, YouTube, remixes and more.

Course Materials:
There is one required textbook available for free via USC’s electronic Ebook access: Carol Vernallis’ Experiencing Music Video: Aesthetics and Cultural Context (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004). All assigned readings from this book will be indicated in the syllabus as “EMV”. To retrieve the textbook readings, search for the title in Homer and click on the “electronic access” link. Weekly YouTube Playlists will be posted on Blackboard for all video content. Additional weekly topic readings will be posted to blackboard (marked BB in the syllabus), along with Power Point lecture slides and links to the required videos, when available.

Grading:
You will graded on the following items:

- Weekly Online Quizzes via Blackboard: 25% of grade
  - 10 multiple choice questions based off lecture and readings. Two attempts allowed with a 30 minute time limit

- Group presentations: 15% of grade
  - Students will be organized into groups for a 10-15 minute presentation that outlines a specific music video, or other related audiovisual item (YouTube viral video, postclassical film, title sequence, etc.) Presentations will begin after Exam 2

- A midterm exam: 30% of class grade
  - Essay based on readings and lectures

- A final exam: 30% of class grade
  - Essay based on readings and lectures
Class Policies
Exams cannot be rescheduled for any reason barring verifiable medical emergency. By verifiable, we mean that you will provide an official letter from a medical doctor explaining your condition.

You are responsible for obtaining notes for any lectures you miss from fellow classmates.

Students with disabilities who need special arrangements are required to register at the beginning of the semester with the Office of Disabilities, and to let us know about the issue as early as possible.

The USC Academic Integrity Code applies to all portions of this course and will be enforced (See SCampus).

Grading is as follows:
- 90-100% = A
- 80-89% = B
- 70-79% = C
- 65-69% = D
- below 65 = F

Pluses and minuses are as follows: B+ means 87 through 89; A- means 90 through 93, etc.

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. Website and contact information for DSP:
http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

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, (www.usc.edu/scampus or http://scampus.usc.edu) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis
In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.
Schedule

(Weekly video screenings subject to change as new and more interesting videos are released – don’t worry, I’ll make sure the midterm and final review sheets clearly outline which examples you are accountable for!)

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Aug 26/28</td>
<td>Introduction to Music Video; Terms and Analysis; narrative</td>
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<td>Screening: Miley Cyrus, “We Can’t Stop” (2013), dir. Diane Martel</td>
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<td>Aerosmith, “Crazy” (1993), dir. Marty Callner</td>
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<td>Best Coast, “The Only Place” (2012), dir. Ace Norton</td>
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<td>Nas, “Daughters” (2012), dir. Chris Robinson</td>
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<td>Reading: <em>A Hard Day’s Night</em> (1964, dir. Richard Lester)</td>
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<td>EMV, 3-26.</td>
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<td>II</td>
<td>Sept. 2/4</td>
<td>Avant Garde and Experimental Film; Editing</td>
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<td>Screening: Adele, “Rolling in the Deep” (2010), dir. Sam Brown</td>
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<td>Lady Gaga, “Bad Romance” (2009), dir. Francis Lawrence</td>
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<td>Beyoncé, “Countdown” (2011), dir. Adria Petty</td>
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<td>Jay-Z &amp; Kanye West, “Ni**as In Paris” (2012), dir. Kanye West</td>
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<td>Oscar Fischinger, “An Optical Poem” (1938)</td>
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<td>James Whitney, “Yantra” (1957)</td>
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<td>Len Lye, “Swinging in Lambeth Park”</td>
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<td>Rene Clair, “Entr’Acte” (1924)</td>
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<td>Stan Brakhage, “DogStarMan” (1964-5)</td>
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<td>Kenneth Anger, “Scorpio Rising” (1964)</td>
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<td>Stan VanDerBeek, “Science Friction: (1966)</td>
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<td>Maya Deren, <em>Meshes of the Afternoon</em> (1943)</td>
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<td>Reading: EMV, 27-53.</td>
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<td>III</td>
<td>Sept. 9/11</td>
<td>Concert Films; Actors and Stars in Music Videos</td>
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<td>Screening: Justin Timberlake, “Suit &amp; Tie” ft. JAY Z (2013), dir. David Fincher</td>
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<td>M.I.A. &quot;Bad Girls” (2013), dir. Romain Gavras</td>
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Beach House, "Wishes" – Dr. by Eric Warheim
Miley Cyrus, “Wrecking Ball” (2013), dir. Terry Richardson

Beach Boys, ‘Good Vibrations” (1966)
The Monkees, “I’m a Believer” (1966)
Bob Dylan, “Don’t Look Back” (1965)
The Song Remains The Same, dir. Peter Clifton and Joe Massot (1976)
Rattle and Hum, dir. Phil Joanou (1988)
Gimmie Shelter, dir. Albert and David Maysles (1970)
Sympathy for the Devil, dir. Jean-Luc Godard
Prince, Sign O The Times (1987)
Madonna, Truth or Dare (1991)
Beyoncé, Life is But a Dream (2013)

Reading: EMV, 54-72.


F 12 Sept. add/drop deadline

IV Sept. 16/18 Video Art and Early MTV; Settings, Props, and Costumes

Screening: Rilo Kiley, "Let Me Back In" (2013),
Cat Power, “Manhattan” (2013), dir. Greg Hunt
James Blake, “Overgrown” (2013), dir. Nabil Elderkin
Drake, “Started From The Bottom” (2013), dir. Director X
Lana Del Rey, “Summertime Sadness” (2012), Dir. Spencer Susser and Kyle Newman
The Internet, “Dontcha” (2013)

Nam June Paik, Global Groove (1970)
Nam June Paik, Good Morning Mr. Orwell (1984)

Reading: EMV, 73-108.


V Sept. 23/25 MTV I; Lyrics and Music

Chamillionaire, “Ridin’” ft. Krayzie Bone
"Weird Al" Yankovic, “White & Nerdy”
The Shining, dir. Stanley Kubrick, Opening credits
Ariel Pink’s Haunted Graffiti, “Only In My Dreams” (2012), dir. Travis Peterson
Danny Brown, "Grown Up" (2012), dir. Greg Brunkalla

RUN-DMC, "Walk This Way" (1993), dir. Jon Small
The Buggles, “Video Killed the Radio Star” (1978), dir. Russell Mulcahy
Michael Jackson, “Billie Jean” (1982), dir. Steve Barron
Herbie Hancock, “Rockit” (1983), dir. Godley and Creme

Reading: EMV, 137-174


VI Sept. 30/Oct.2 MTV II; Color, Texture, Space, and Time

Screening: Frank Ocean, “Pyramids” (2012), dir. Nabil Elderkin
Minus the Bear, “My Time” (2010), dir. Mike Mohan
Cold Mailman, “My Recurring Dream” (2013), dir. André Chocron
Toro y Moi, “Say That” (2013), dir. HARRYS

Madonna, “Like a Prayer” (1989), dir. Mary Lambert
Madonna, “Vogue” (1990), dir. David Fincher
Madonna, “Cherish” (1989), dir. Herb Ritts
Weezer, “Buddy Holly” (1994), dir. Spike Jonze
Nirvana, “In Bloom” (1991), dir. Kevin Kerslake
Pearl Jam, “Jeremy” (1992), dir. Mark Pellington
Red Hot Chili Peppers, “Under the Bridge” (1992), dir. Gus Van Sant
Public Enemy, “911 is a Joke” (1990)
M.C. Hammer, “U Can’t Touch This” (1990), dir. Rupert Wainwright
Dr. Dre, “Nothin But a G Thang” (1992), dir. Dr. Dre

Reading: EMV, 109-136.


VII Oct. 7/9 MTV III: Auteur Directors, Film Soundtrack Videos, New Country, New New Pop; Connections among Music, Image, and Lyrics

Madonna, “Cherish” (1989), dir. Herb Ritts

Johnny Cash, “Hurt” (1994), Dir. Mark Romanek
Missy Elliot, “The Rain [Supa Dua Fly]” dir. Hype Williams
Bryan Adams, “[ Everything I do] I do it for you”
Whitney Houston, “I Will Always Love You”
Celine Dion, “My Heart Will Go On”
Garth Brooks, “The Dance”
Britney Spears, “Toxic”
Eminem, “The Real Slim Shady”
Christina Aguilera, “Hurt”
Beyoncé, “Single Ladies”

Reading: EMV, 175-198; 209-235.

VIII Oct. 14 Midterm Examination in class

Oct. 16 The Digital Revolution: YouTube

IX Oct. 21/23 User Generated Content; Long Form Music Videos

Screening: “Me at the Zoo” (2005)
“Badgers” (2009)
“Gizmo Flushes” (2006)
Weezer, “Pork and Beans” (2009)

Kanye West, “Runaway” (2010)
Dirty Projectors, “Hi Custodian” (2012)


X Oct. 28/30 User Generated Content

Screening: Me @ The Zoo, dir. Chris Moukarbel and Valerie Veatch (2012)

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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| Nov. 4/6 | Post-Classical Cinema                                              | *Screening:* Moulin Rouge, dir. Baz Luhrmann (2001)  
| Nov. 11/13 | Live Concert Videos; Video Games                                    | *Screening:* Video Out: The Religion is the Signal, dir. Meredith Finkelstein and Paul Vlachos (2005)  
| F. 14 Nov. | Last day to drop with a “W”                                         |                                                                                                                                         |
| Nov. 25  | Television Title Sequences and end credits; Music Placements        | *Reading:* Ramsay Adams, David Hnatiuk, and David Weiss, Music Supervision: Selecting Music for Movies, TV, Games, and New Media. New York: Schirmer, 2005. |
|         |                                                                      | Final Examination: Thursday, December 11, 2-4pm UUC B2                                                                                       |