

CTPR 288
Fall 2018 SYLLABUS
ORIGINATING AND DEVELOPING IDEAS FOR FILMS
Class Section: 18467
Tuesdays 1-3:50 pm
Classroom: SCA 258
2 units

Professor Doe Mayer
Mary Pickford Chair
Email: dmayer@usc.edu
Office phone: 213-740-7511
Office: SCA 413
Office Hours: Tuesday 10-11am or other times and preferably by appointment

REQUIRED READING:

"Creative Filmmaking From the Inside Out," Dannenbaum, Hodge, Mayer; Fireside, Simon & Schuster, 2003.
"Developing Story Ideas" by Michael Rabiger, ISBN 978-1-136-95623-0; Routledge, 2017

RECOMMENDED BUT NOT REQUIRED READING

"The Artist's Way," Julia Cameron, ISBN 0-87477-694-5; Jeremy P. Tarcher/Perigee Books; paperback, 2016 (earlier editions are acceptable also)
"Writing Down the Bones," Natalie Goldberg; ISBN 0-87773-375-9; Shambala Publications, Inc., paperback, 2005
"Fearless Creating," Eric Maisel; ISBN 0-87477-805-0; Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam Book, paperback, 1995
"Writing Your Life," Deena Metzger; ISBN 0-06-250612-9; Harper San Francisco, paperback, 1992

GOALS OF THIS COURSE:

- 1. To strengthen your ability to conceive and develop ideas that will lead to compelling, authentic, personally meaningful films.**
- 2. To facilitate the expression and development of your own unique artistic identity, cinematic voice and point of view through an exploration of personal experience, interests, concerns, values and inherent taste.**
- 3. To motivate you to develop ideas for stories and characters through observation of, research into, and direct experience with real life.**

4. To introduce connections between cinematic creativity and liberal arts education, drawing from a broad range of cultural sources.
5. To encourage awareness of the infinite possibilities for creative expression inherent in cinema, including documentary and experimental forms.
6. To enhance your collaborative skills through group discussion, giving and responding to feedback, and collective brainstorming.
7. To enable you to create a diverse portfolio of project ideas, outlines and treatments that you can draw on in future production classes.

This is not a screenwriting class. The emphasis is on observation, visualization, developing intuition, self-exploration, emotional response, inspiration, aesthetics, meaning, impact, purpose, cultural context, what you want to express as a filmmaker and why, what you think film can and should be — all brought to bear through class discussion on the specific ideas you are developing. Additionally, this is not a class where you get a great deal of critique of your work. Rather it is meant to be a safe environment to try many options and not be afraid to fail. Failure in this class will only have to do with not putting enough effort in and missing deadlines or too many classes.

ONGOING ASSIGNMENTS:

Observational Notebook — Awakening your senses. Keep a small notebook or sketchbook with you at all times. Write down notes and create word and/or image sketches. You are encouraged to also take still photographs of things you see around you that interest you. Try to write at least a short paragraph every day in which you describe something you saw that day, and how you responded to it.

Use the following 10 categories to stimulate what you seek out to observe, and to help you organize what you find:

Senses	—	sense impressions — smells, sounds, tactile sensations, tastes, visual images
Locations	—	places that are evocative
Objects	—	things that are suggestive of some deeper significance
Characters	—	people you find intriguing or complex
Dialogue	—	comments or exchanges you overhear that pique your interest
Situations	—	revealing circumstances and incidents
Acts	—	behavior that is emblematic or provocative
Titles	—	words or phrases you encounter that seem like intriguing titles
Themes	—	beliefs, ideas and values that seem basic to your understanding of life
Questions	—	questions you have about what you observe, about your response, and deeper questions evoked in the process

The goals of this exercise are for you to become a better watcher and listener; to develop sharper insights into human nature, behavior and relationships; to develop a habit of observing life and taking note of it; to become more attuned to your own distinctive interests and responses; and to have a storehouse of observations to draw on when creating stories, characters and dramatic or comic situations.

Weekly Journal — Every week on Sunday evenings before midnight, you will be required to email your class journal to the instructor. The journal is seen only by the instructor. It has two parts: the first is a selection from your observational notebook above; the second is a discussion of whatever feels relevant that week to your experience in this class or to your creative development in general. A lot of your most important learning will happen experientially outside the classroom, and journals are a way to be more conscious of all aspects of this process, more mindful and more self-aware. Please send journal in the body of the email—not as an attachment and label each week by number in the subject line.

Surfing as a Source: Develop a computer folder— Begin tracking your habits when you surf the web. YouTube? Facebook? Twitter? Instagram? Now start considering the story ideas that you might find there. Read a daily newspaper, and at least one magazine that includes current events or human interest stories. Online or hard copies are fine. Clip articles, photographs and artwork that interest you. Create a folder on your laptop for images and articles. You should try to let material surprise you.

Dream Journal — Begin jotting down separate, private notes of dreams you have, for use in the Dream Sequence assignment. Do this first thing in the morning. Focus on the images and the emotions your dream evokes.

Reading Assignments — Chapters from “Creative Filmmaking” and “Developing Story Ideas,” your required texts, will be assigned, as well as occasional handouts in class that will be required reading.

Written Assignments — All outside-of-class assignments must be computer-printed or typed. In addition, come to class prepared for in-class pen-written exercises with a class notebook with blank pages.

Technology Policy-- For this class we will use what might be called the Harvard Business School Rule: during the class, students will not be allowed to use laptops, mobile phones, or wireless connections. Unless permitted by the instructor, cell phones must always be turned off during class. Infractions will affect your grade. There is a break in the class (2:30 or so) when you can access phones etc.

-

To understand the reasons for this policy, you may want to read the following: a study called “Why you should take notes by hand – not on a laptop”; a New Yorker piece called “The Case for Banning Laptops in the Classroom”; and the studies of the late Stanford University Professor (and USC Annenberg School graduate) Cliff Nass that show the dangers of multitasking (summarized in this NPR segment. Or, read Nicolas Carr’s piece in the Wall Street Journal last year called “How Smartphones Hijack Our Minds: Research suggests that as the brain grows dependent on phone technology, the intellect weakens.” The Los Angeles Times published an article on this “off the grid” policy in 2015.

IMPORTANT:

In addition to in-class contact hours, all courses must also meet a minimum standard for out-of-class time, which accounts for time students spend on homework, readings, writing, and other academic activities. **For each unit of in-class contact time, the university expects two hours of out of class student work per week over a semester.**

(Please refer to the *Contact Hours Reference* at arr.usc.edu/services/curriculum/resources.html.)

GRADING CRITERIA

In-class exercises	30%
Participation*	15%
Ongoing assignments (journal, notebook, clipping file, readings)	55%
TOTAL	100%

Assignments - will be evaluated both on the quality of the work and the ability to meet deadlines.

*Class participation - includes learning how to: workshop ideas in a group; provide constructive criticism; respond to critiques of your own work; sharing observations on assigned reading and classmates e-mailed assignments submitted prior to class.

Guidelines for this class:

This class will be conducted as a seminar, and so substantive student participation and regular attendance are required. Attendance will be taken for each class and tardiness or absence will have significant bearing on your grade. I expect you to complete assignments on time. If you have questions, please speak to me at least a week in advance of deadlines.

Grading Scale (Example)

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Production Division Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Two unexcused absences will result in a student's grade being lowered by one full letter (IE: A becomes B). A third unexcused absence will result in a student's grade being lowered by one, additional full letter (IE: B becomes C). A student's grade will be lowered by one full letter for each additional unexcused absence. Two late class arrivals equate to one full absence.

In order for an absence to be excused, the student must have approval from the professor and provide documentation at the next attended class session.

If a student misses class due to an emergency, the student must contact the professor prior to class or contact the Production Office at 213-740-3317.

COURSE SCHEDULE INCLUDING TOPICS, READINGS, HOMEWORK AND DELIVERABLES

WEEK ONE IN-CLASS – 8/21

Write a brief essay (one to two pages) on whatever has tugged at your sleeve up to this point in your life.

For example:

What has most worried you, pleased you, saddened you, outraged you, given you the greatest joy?

What have been your concerns, dreams, obsessions, demons?

What has made you pay attention?

What have you tried to ignore?

What have been your turning points?

What now feels most important, meaningful, fulfilling?

What do you value most?

Try to write in specifics rather than generalities. Search for vivid images and telling details, but don't get bogged down in how well this is written. Write it quickly, spontaneously and without self-judgment. This essay will be handed in, but read only by the instructor, and will not in any way be judged or graded.

The writer should never be ashamed of staring. There is nothing that does not require his attention. — Flannery O'Connor

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK TWO - 8/28

- 1) Bring in a small found object that you know nothing about but find intriguing, resonant, provocative, mysterious, soulful, etc. Good places to look might be thrift shops, junk yards, etc. For this assignment, don't choose a photograph, but if you come across a found photograph you like, keep it for a future assignment.
- 2) Bring in a list of three "worlds" - sub-cultures - that interest you but that you know little or nothing about.
- 3) Required Reading p1-46 pages of "Creative Filmmaking" Introduction & Introspection

...I need observation as a point of departure. My father [Auguste Renoir], who distrusted imagination, said "If you paint the leaf of a tree without using a model you risk becoming stereotyped, because your imagination will only supply you with a few leaves whereas Nature offers you millions, all on the same tree. No two leaves are exactly the same. The artist who paints only what is in his mind must very soon repeat himself." — Jean Renoir

Nobody sees a flower really — it is so small it takes time — we haven't time — and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time. — Georgia O'Keefe

WEEK TWO IN-CLASS – 8/28

Found Objects & the Associate Cluster/Spider

Look closely at the objects you and the rest of the class brought. Notice what first grabs your attention, then what you see after spending some time looking. Also pay attention to your emotional response and sense of connection. Take your object, or arrange a trade, and spend five minutes doing an associative cluster. Then, in ten minutes, write the life history of the object.

The problem with screenwriters today is that they don't write from experience. They write from having watched 25 years of television. — David Colden

Experience is not what happens to you; it is what you do with what happens to you. — Aldous Huxley

Music is your own experience, your thoughts, your wisdom. If you don't live it, it won't come out your horn. — Charlie Parker

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK THREE – 9/4

- 1) On one day this week, make an hourly observational “sketch” of what you see around you from the time you wake up to the time you go to sleep. Pick a day when you have a variety of activities happening, rather than a day of back-to-back classes. Notice people’s expressions, gestures, body language and all the other nuances of their behavior and interactions. Think about how they have chosen to present themselves to the world through their clothes, hairstyle and makeup. Look for clues to the kind of work they do, and the life they lead. Try to guess “their story.”
- 2) Required Reading pp 47-70 Inquiry “Creative Filmmaking” & pp 3-24, Chaps 1-3, Rabiger
- 3) Begin to make plans to experience one of the “worlds” you brought in this week (you can pick a different one if you’ve been struck with a new, more engaging idea). Plan to spend enough time (a couple of hours at least) so that you get a sense of the texture, detail and characters of this world. For Week Seven, 10/2, you will come to class with a set of observations (as in the observational notebook) drawn specifically from this experience.
- 4) “Rediscovering the Roots” play assignment from Creative Filmmaking p. 45

WEEK THREE IN-CLASS 9/4

1. Check-in – Hour by Hour exercise
2. Write spontaneously and non-stop as you listen to music pieces. Don’t seek plot or story — let what you write flow associatively from the music, emphasizing emotion and image.

3. Autobiographical Survey, Rabiger, p. 25 Assignment 4-1 What influenced You?
4. Report on “Rediscovering the Roots” play assignment

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK FOUR – 9/11

1. Required Reading pp 71-92 Intuition, “Creative Filmmaking”
2. Do Assignment 4-1 & 4-2, Rabiger, p. 25-27
3. Reread the essay you wrote in class the first week, trying to view it as if it were written by someone else. Ask yourself, “what themes would be particularly important to this filmmaker?” Select a theme, and create an assemblage* which reifies** that theme. Make minimal or no use of representations of characters, and do not use text. Try out your assemblage on a friend before bringing it to class to see if the theme is being evoked in the way you intend.

*Assemblage: a sculpture consisting of an arrangement of miscellaneous objects, such as scraps of metal, cloth and string

**Reify: to embody, to make concrete

When I’m trying to control the story and make it do something, it doesn’t work. When I quit trying, when I let the story tell me what it is, I get to a whole deeper level in my writing. Letting your work do itself this way requires, of course, an extremely intense, alert attitude. It’s not passive; it’s actively passive, passively active. One of those great Chinese ideas you chase all your life. — Ursula K. LeGuin

WEEK FOUR IN-CLASS – 9/11

1. Presentation of assemblages
2. Discussion of Rabiger Assignment 4-1 & 4-2

In school, I was always best in science and art. Actually, I wanted to be a painter.... Eventually, I realized that science and art are the same anyway. The artist has a paintbrush, and I have a tunneling microscope and a computer, but the creativity is the same. — James Gimzewski

The fairest thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of art and true science. — Albert Einstein

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK FIVE – 9/18

1. What other fields of study and areas of culture speak to you? Bring to class next week something from an area other than film that feels mysterious, provocative, emotionally resonant and exciting to you. It should not be text-based, at least not in a linear, narrative manner. This thing, for example, might be a photograph, painting, drawing (from art, architecture, science, anthropology), a poem or set of song lyrics that is evocative without having an obvious literal meaning or narrative, an object with specific significance in a field (a

fossil, a model of a molecule, a geometric shape), and so forth. Be prepared to describe for us the thoughts and emotions this thing calls up in you.

2. Also bring in twenty items (on separate 3x5 index cards) from your observational notebook, two from each of the categories listed in the syllabus. Write the category on one side of the card, and the observation (no more than brief one sentence long) on the other side. Bring to class.
3. Choose by Week Eight, a myth (or fairy-tale, fable, legend, etc.) that you are interested in adapting to a contemporary setting.
4. Required Reading pp 93-116 Interaction, "Creative Filmmaking"

The first sign that a baby is going to be a human being and not a noisy pet comes when he begins naming the world and demanding the stories that connect its parts. Nothing passes but the mind grabs it and looks for a way to fit it into a story, or into a variety of possible scripts.... — Kathryn Morton

WEEK FIVE IN-CLASS – 9/18

1. Instant Story: shuffle and spread out the index cards category-side up. Create three piles by selecting one card at random from each of the following categories:

Pile A: Senses, Characters, Questions

Pile B: Locations, Dialogue, Situations, Titles

Pile C: Objects, Acts, Themes

Look at the observations in Pile A. As spontaneously as possible, write a one-sentence description of a short documentary film (5-10 minutes) inspired by these observations (you don't have to use all three, and the inspiration can be oblique). Then write a one-sentence description of a short experimental film (5-10 minutes) based on the same observations. Finally, write a one-sentence description of a short narrative film (5-10 minutes). The entire process with Pile A should take no longer than ten minutes. Repeat with Piles B and C.

Select one of the three sets of ideas (A, B, or C) you generated with Instant Story. In 20 minutes, rewrite your descriptions for the documentary, experimental and narrative short films as three three-sentence treatments (beginning, middle, end).

2. Discussion of object from other studies.
3. A Feast of Photographic Images – choose one
Choose a color or shape in photograph you have been chosen. Create an associative cluster - "spider" - around the word (two minutes). Then write for five minutes. Try to let the writing "do itself."

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK SIX – 9/25

- 1) Locate a “found” candid photograph (one that is not posed, and about which you know as little as possible)
- 2) Required Reading pp 117-147 Impact “Creative Filmmaking”
- 3) Artistic Nurturing – what visual or performance arts do you enjoy and experience now or in the past? Go on an artist date and be prepared to discuss it in class in Week 11 on Oct. 30.
- 4) Remember that by Week 8 (10/9), you need to have chosen the myth (or fairy-tale, fable, legend, etc.) that you plan to adapt.

WEEK SIX IN CLASS – 9/25

Your Found Photograph

Imagine that the “found” photograph you have selected is a single frame from somewhere within a short or very short film (1-10 minutes in length). Next, start a cluster writing based on a word or phrase suggested by the photograph. In 10 minutes, write a brief two-paragraph treatment for that film. Then write 2 paragraphs as follows: the first paragraph should focus on potential images, motifs and themes in the film, perhaps discovered or clarified during the cluster writing. The second paragraph should be three sentences — one each for the beginning, the middle and the end of your story. Don’t include plot or character details. Pass your photograph to the left, and repeat the writing process with the photograph you receive from the right.

I think there are two primal responses to the image. One is to find identification, and the other is to find narrative. And it’s incredible how both those needs will always outweigh one’s attempt to resist them. — Atom Egoyan

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK SEVEN – 10/2

Develop your experience and understanding of one of the “worlds” you have chosen (you can pick a different one if you’ve been struck with a new, more engaging idea). Plan to spend enough time (a couple of hours at least) so that you get a sense of the texture, detail and characters of this world. Come to class with a set of observations (as in the observational notebook) drawn specifically from this experience.

WEEK SEVEN IN CLASS – 10/2

Bring your set of written observations of your “world experience” (be prepared to describe your experience to the class as well).

Discuss elements of a documentary.

ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEK EIGHT – 10/9

Read pp. 106-117, Chap. 15, Rabiger

1. Prepare for Presentation Your Myth and Adaptation

Write a concise one-paragraph synopsis of the myth or the part of a myth that you plan to adapt to a contemporary setting; a three-sentence treatment of your adaptation; and a concise paragraph on what, at this point, you feel about the story's spine (or theme, or idea, or "what the story is really about," etc.), its central conflict or dramatic tension, and the emotions you want the audience to experience at the end (be careful to describe this in terms of what you want them to feel, not what you want them to think). The entire assignment should be no more than one page total. Bring to class.

Plan ahead – Read Documentary Subject, pp. 141-150-, Chap. 19, Rabiger

2. Work on Your Documentary Idea (one-two pages) and presentation (five-minute oral presentation with still photos, three-minute excerpt from your interview), due Week 11.

Starting either from the "world" you explored, or with a new topic discovered from or inspired by your clippings file, interview on audiotape for at least 30 minutes a potential character for a documentary film, and take still photographs of real-life situations relevant to your topic. As you get further into the research, continue to focus and refine your approach. You should explore such questions as: 1) What will the film be about? 2) What will the film really be about? (thematic subtext, your point of view); 3) What will be up on the screen? What will the audience see and hear? 4) What will the structure of the film be (e.g., chronological, topical, by character, etc.); 5) What will the style of the film be? What will make it cinematic? 6) Why did you choose this topic? Why should this film be made? Why are you the person to make it?

The documentarist makes endless choices. He selects topics, people, vistas, angles, lenses, juxtaposition, sounds, words. Each selection is an expression of his point of view, whether he is aware of it or not, whether he acknowledges it or not. — Eric Barnouw

I prefer to have people look at [the film "Mr. Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter Jr."] and see what they make of it, in the way I did it thinking: "What am I doing? What am I really doing?" — Errol Morris

WEEK EIGHT IN-CLASS 10/9

1. Present Your Myth and Adaptation in Class

2. Choose a character from your observations that interests you, one that is perhaps somewhat

unfamiliar and yet not a total enigma. Spend a few moments recalling that character as vividly and as distinctly as possible.

Now imagine you are one of the angels in “Wings of Desire.” You can sense what this person is thinking and feeling, you can move with them, but you can’t interact and they’re unaware of you. Don’t think ahead, don’t impose anything, just follow this person and see where they go and what they do. Write for 15 minutes.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK NINE – 10/16

I believe first memories have an enormous impact, and what I think is so beautiful about them is that they are definitely yours, there’s nothing derivative about them. They’re perhaps the only thing that you will ever know as your own. — Jane Campion

1. Think of an early memory, perhaps just a fleeting moment, that you can say is “definitely yours,” and one that you haven’t told often as a story. Try first to remember the specific senses, and then your emotions. Write out what you remember as vividly and as specifically as possible, without editing and without trying to impose meaning or narrative. Try this a few times, then choose a specific memory and use it as the catalyst for an idea for a short film. Feel free to fictionalize the idea, but keep at least an image or moment that comes from the memory. Think of elements of cinematic expression: performance, production design, camera, lighting, editing, sound design, music. Write a one-paragraph treatment.
2. Also, for Week 10 reread your dream journal from the beginning of the term until now. Think about what you learn from reading all the entries as a group. What are you struck by when you consider them together? Next, choose one dream that intrigues you, and that you wouldn’t mind others hearing, and bring it to class.
3. Pick a favorite dream sequence from a film and bring it to class next week (maximum 5 mins.) It should be assessable to project from the Internet.

WEEK NINE IN-CLASS – 10/16

I write shortly after I wake up because one is closest to the dream world that one has just left. — Gore Vidal

Well, although ‘day-to-day’ reality appears to be continuous, there is that other world in which we spend perhaps a third of our lives: the ‘night-to-night’ reality of dreams. And the images in dreams are much more fragmented, intersecting in much stranger and more abrupt ways than the images of waking reality—ways that approximate, at least, the interaction produced by cutting. Perhaps the explanation is as simple as that: We accept the cut because it resembles the way images are juxtaposed in our dreams. — Walter Murch

Present Short Memory Film Idea – Discuss elements of cinematic expression: performance, production design, camera, lighting, editing, sound design, music.

Show favorite dream sequence.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK TEN 10/23

1. Read pp 118-127, Chap. 16, Dream Story, Rabiger
2. Dream as Basis for Film Idea - Begin with a dream or part of a dream you've had. Write a one-paragraph treatment for a short (2-10 minute) film or sequence in a film based on or inspired by the dream. Write as you might write in a dream journal (settings, characters, events, details, emotions, etc.). Feel free to deviate from the actual dream but keep in mind how you experience dreams — try to maintain the “dream-like” quality and resist imposing narrative conventions. Instead, attempt to create coherence and structure through juxtaposition, association, archetype, motif, theme, etc.). All will read their work in class.

WEEK TEN IN CLASS – 10/23

1. Using your previous writing, develop your DREAM AS BASIS FOR FILM idea further. Rewrite and refine what you wrote (you can expand in terms of specific details, but don't add plot). Then describe how you might use the elements of cinematic expression (in terms of performance, production design, camera, lighting, editing, sound design, music, etc.) to create on film the “feel,” the dream-like quality of the sequence and its images.
2. Review Elements of a Documentary.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK ELEVEN – 10/30

Prepare Documentary assignment, due week ELEVEN; read pp. 141-150, Chap. 19, Rabiger

1. Your 5-minute documentary presentation, still photos, and three-minute excerpt from your interview will be due in class. Remember to consider such questions as 1) What will the film be about? 2) What will the film really be about? (thematic subtext, your point of view); 3) What will be up on the screen? What will the audience actually see and hear? 4) What will the structure of the film be (e.g., chronological, topical, by character, etc.); 5) What will the style of the film be? What will make it cinematic? 6) Why did you choose this topic? Why should this film be made? Why are you the person to make it?
2. Start conceptualizing your photo presentation. Choose an idea for a film — either one you thought of as part of this class or one you were already considering, but haven't written out in any detail — and begin to develop the idea by compiling a photo presentation for it, as in Curtis Hanson's L. A. Confidential presentation. Don't write out the story. Just let the idea gestate in your mind as a sequence of visual images associated with character, mood, tone,

setting and emotional content, while trying to keep your ideas as image-based and non-verbal as possible. Look for images you can photograph yourself or cut out or photocopy. The photo presentation is due in class Week 14 (11/20)

WEEK ELEVEN IN CLASS – 10/30

1. Present Documentary Assignment
2. Be prepared to discuss your artist date.

ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEK TWELVE- 11/06

Creative Group Assignment

Creative Group presentations – creating a short film idea from a news story

Co-creating a story from a news article

1. Working with your partner(s), identify a news article that you both agree has potential as the basis for a short fiction film.
2. Create a story from its basic elements – describe in one sentence
3. Who are the characters (probably no more than 3)
4. In one sentence – as you would to your actor – each character
5. Now – how will you structure the story? Beginning? Middle – include 3 scenes? End? You get 2 sentences for each of these parts—
6. What are the obstacles – one sentence
7. Where was the conflict – one sentence

I will put you into partnerships of two. You will need to talk with each other before class and e-mail at least back and forth – the object of this is to continue to develop your co-creating ‘chops’ I want you to have the skeleton of what you are going to present together BEFORE class – and send it to me by Monday night:)

WEEK TWELVE IN CLASS -11/06

1. Creative Group Assignment

ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEK THIRTEEN– 11/13

1. Make a list of five key emotional moments in your life. Choose one, then try to bring back the visceral sense of the emotion(s) involved (perhaps an object, journal, letter, photograph, song, etc., will help). Then imagine and visualize an entirely fictional film scene in your mind that captures and conveys that emotion as fully as possible. Think in terms of images, sounds, and character behavior, but don’t worry about plot or how the scene fits into a larger story. Write this scene out, focusing on emotion as expressed in cinematic language — setting, light, body language, dialogue, behavior, etc. Don’t explain, just tell us what would we see and hear. Bring to class.

WEEK THIRTEEN– IN- CLASS – 11/13

Present Key Emotional Moments in Your Life Assignment

1. Start conceptualizing your photo presentation. Choose an idea for a film — either one you thought of as part of this class or one you were already considering, but haven't written out in any detail — and begin to develop the idea by compiling a photo presentation for it, as in Curtis Hanson's L. A. Confidential presentation. Don't write out the story. Just let the idea gestate in your mind as a sequence of visual images associated with character, mood, tone, setting and emotional content, while trying to keep your ideas as image-based and non-verbal as possible. Look for images you can photograph yourself or select from Google images or Flickr. The photo presentation is due in class Week 14,

ASSIGNMENTS WEEK FOURTEEN– IN- CLASS – 11/20

1. Your photo presentations are due Week 14. Plan for about five minutes of conveying to us your vision of character, mood, tone, setting and emotional content, without getting into plot, except perhaps in the most basic way.

WEEK FOURTEEN –IN-CLASS 11/20

Photo presentations due.

WEEK FIFTEEN- 11/27 Guests: selected alumni or other guests whose work epitomizes creative contributions: in class writing in response to the issues raised by guest.

Due as a final journal Dec 2 (by midnight) in three sections as follows:

Please do this assignment in the following order:

1. Create a personal list of 10-15 triggers or ideas for films that you have had this semester. These should be the ideas that feel sticky or appeal to you to pursue in some way. Each trigger should be described as a complete idea in one to three sentences. The triggers should not be descriptions of plots—they should be descriptions of your creative ideas however you want to write them. We have not developed work in this class that starts with plots, as it often feels inauthentic and clichéd, so please reflect that in your trigger ideas. If you have questions, please speak to me in advance.
2. Go back and reread the essay you wrote at the beginning of the term (“whatever has tugged at your sleeve up to this point in your life...”). Write a brief new essay on the extent to which your work in this class has reflected, illuminated, clarified, and/or altered these deeper concerns in your life.

3. Answer the following questions:

Look back on your journals and creative ideas from this past semester. Look at your assignments both inside and outside of class and your notebook with observations about character, locations, objects, situations, acts, themes, moods and sounds.

What surprises you about your ideas?

What confirms your feelings about yourself and your creative thinking?

What do you see as your own arc or growth in this class and your work?

What ideas stand out as areas you would like to pursue in the future?

What kinds of exercises or methodologies were most effective in helping you come up with interesting creative ideas?

ASSIGNMENTS FOR Finals Class- Dec.11 (11-1pm)

Final Summative Class. What have you learned?

Prepare notebooks, journals, clipping files for instructor review and bring them to individual conference meetings with Prof. Mayer Dec. 11 or possibly earlier. Also be prepared to discuss your future plans as part of the individual final meetings.

We haven't even reached by far 10% of what film language can offer, so why do we think it's coming to an end? We're still at the beginning. We can still discover so many possibilities. If we stick to the idea that strong films are always personal, then there's 5.8 billion possibilities for films, 'cause there's that many people whose views we can share. — Tom Tykwer

PLEASE NOTE:

FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which

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/>.

ALL STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO UNDERSTAND AND ABIDE BY THE USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS SAFETY GUIDELINES.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu/>

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. <http://dsp.usc.edu>

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. <https://diversity.usc.edu/>

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, <http://emergency.usc.edu>

USC Department of Public Safety – 213-740-4321 (UPC) and 323-442-1000 (HSC) for 24-hour emergency assistance or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. <http://dps.usc.edu>