

**JAMESTOWN COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**State University of New York**

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**INSTITUTIONAL COURSE SYLLABUS**

**Course Title:** Rhetoric of Vision and Sound

**Course Abbreviation and Number:** CMM 1750

**Credit Hours:** 3

**Course Type:** Lecture

**Course Description:** This communication and media arts foundation course explores the vision and sound codes used in various forms of mediated communication. Students will examine films, television, radio, and the Internet to gain an understanding of the techniques employed by producers and directors to create meaning beyond content and script. Students will explore the grammatical elements which comprise the rhetoric of vision and sound: the use of light, color, two- and three-dimensional space, time, motion, and sound. In today's media saturated environment, the ability to decode mediated messages is a valuable critical thinking skill for all citizens; students interested in becoming producers of media will find the knowledge they have gained in this course especially helpful to their production efforts.

Prerequisite: ENG 1510.

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**General Education Requirements Met**

SUNY

The Arts

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**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

1. Demonstrate how visual codes are used in media production, including camera shot selection, aspect ratio, use of lighting, and use of color.
2. Demonstrate how mediated codes are culturally determined.
3. Explain how time can be expanded or compressed through edit techniques, and how continuity in time and space is used to achieve the perception of continuity.
4. Identify the basic elements of a soundscape, and analyze sound complexities within films.

*A pre-requisite for this course is approved for the SUNY General Education category listed. This course will reinforce the student learning outcomes for this category.*

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**Topics Covered:**

- Light:
  - Vertical angle -interpreting/controlling above and below eye-level key light positions
  - Horizontal angle -interpreting/controlling contrast; establishing softness or harshness
  - The nature of shadows -interpreting/controlling time and weather conditions
  - The color of light -interpreting/controlling interior/exterior conditions and time of day/year
  - Light and lighting instruments as dramatic agents
- Color:
  - Physiological and psychological perception of color
  - Additive and subtractive mixing; color interactions
- Composition:
  - Two-dimensional space: framing, aspect ratio, image size, vector energy, spatial continuity, gestalt and closure, balance, stability/instability
  - Three-dimensional space: depth of field, interpreting/controlling perspective, z-axis and motion, lens selection
- Shot selection:
  - Interpreting/controlling shot selection; dramatic intensification through shot selection
  - Interpreting/controlling subjective and objective points of view
- Time and motion:
  - Objective/subjective time; accelerated perception of time; decelerated perception of time
  - Continuity over time
- Editing:
  - montage vs. mise en scene
  - interpreting/controlling meaning through transitional device, e.g. cut vs. dissolve vs. wipe vs sfx.
- Sound:

- Sound fundamentals: pitch, volume, timbre, voice
- Soundscapes: identifying components, mixing and perspective
- Sound complexities: psychological perception of sound
- Sound and vision interaction

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**Information for Students**

- Expectations of Students
  - [Civility Statement](#)
  - [Student Responsibility Statement](#)
  - [Academic Integrity Statement](#)
- [Accessibility Services](#)

Students who require accommodations to complete the requirements and expectations of this course because of a disability must make their accommodation requests to the Accessibility Services Coordinator.
- [Get Help: JCC & Community Resources](#)
- [Emergency Closing Procedures](#)
- Course grade is determined by the instructor based on a combination of factors, including but not limited to, homework, quizzes, exams, projects, and participation. Final course grade can be translated into a grade point value according to the following:

A=4.0	B+=3.5	B=3	C+=2.5	C=2	D+=1.5	D=1	F=0
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- Veterans and active duty military personnel with special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployments, drill requirements, VA appointments) are welcome and encouraged to communicate these to the instructor.

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**Effective Date:** Fall 2021