



Title: **Depth of Field: Exploring Identity Through Literature and Video Production**

Length of Course: **Full Year (2 semesters; 3 trimesters; 4 quarters)**

Subject Area – Discipline: **English (“b”)**

UC Honors designation: Honors

CTE Sector: **Arts, Media and Entertainment**

CTE Pathway: **Production and Managerial Arts**

Grade/Level(s): **11, 12**

Prerequisite(s): Successful completion of English 10 or equivalent.

Course Overview:

"The ends you serve that are selfish will take you no further than yourself but, the ends you serve that are for all, in common, will take you into eternity."

- Marcus Garvey

Depth of Field: Exploring Identity Through Literature and Video Production challenges students to examine and express themselves as individuals and as active participants in a democratic society. Beginning with analyzing their preconceived notions of self, they will use this same critical lens on other figures in fiction and nonfiction in order to shed light on how different writers and artists negotiate individual and group identity. As they develop their critical analytic skills, they will also mature as artists by creating a series of real-world video projects in response to the topics and readings of the course. By the end of the year, each student will have an individual portfolio of representative work and will have worked on a collaborative documentary video project.

Course Content:

Unit 1. Focus on Identity "Who am I?"

Students will explore characters in "coming of age" stories through both literature (e.g. *The Glass Castle* and *Me Talk Pretty One Day*) and popular film (e.g. *Stand by Me*).

Students will read, analyze, and produce written and visual media that attempts to answer the essential question of what constitutes “identity” as it is defined in memoir. The dichotomy between objective experience and diversity of subjective experience will be a critical element of this unit. Students will synthesize the topics covered in this unit through a 90-second video in which they introduce themselves. In this unit, students learn to: communicate individual identity and values and speak with an awareness of self. Students also begin learning the process of non-linear video editing, camera operation, audio production, the role of aesthetics in film and composition team management.

Unit 1 - Key Assignments

A. Focus on Identity: Defining Myself - Individual Video Collage

As both technical review of multimedia skills and exercise in self-reflection and discovery, students will study and engage in a Socratic Seminar on Hurston / Walls, Cisneros, and Paz, as they answer a series of personal questions, e.g., "What three items would you grab if your house was on fire and why?" "What cultural images, universal icons, words, colors, fonts, music, totems, words, etc., best define who you believe yourself to be right now?" "What images, etc, best represent others misbeliefs about yourself and why?" Students will explore the form of the "coming of age" story and learn about how individuals strive to achieve their identity through challenges and relationships. Students will script their answers into a three-page, 2-3 minute audio/visual multi-media collage incorporating images, personal narration, text, video, music and sound that represent the personal, social and cultural influences on one's identity and beliefs, as well as the conflicting labels, biases, and cultural histories that they and others use to shape personal identity. Students will present video collages and post viewer responses to shared commonalities.

B. The Identity Crisis: Identity Achievement vs. Role Confusion Literary Analysis Paper

Students will read "Identity Formation in Adolescence: Change or Stability?" and discuss how Erikson's and Marcia's frameworks fit within the characters from *The Glass Castle*, *Demian*, and *Some Like it Hot*. Students will produce a formal literary analysis paper that synthesizes these frameworks with the characters in the literature and film.

C. The Power of Visual Juxtaposition to Alter Perception: Extending Kuleshov Through Creative Editing and Postproduction

Students examine the history and work of Lev Kuleshov, and view the classic film *Rear Window* to create their own personal 30 second "Kuleshov" video that sets them against

varying chroma-keyed backgrounds and images to demonstrate the power of juxtaposition to alter visual interpretation.

D. Where I'm From Poem and Narrative Slideshow

Students read George Ella Lyon's "Where I'm From," a poem that uses the writer's memories of specific objects and experiences as an affirmative statement of her identity. Students will use her poem as a template to create their own "Where I'm From" poem and create a slideshow using personal and found images with either text or audio narration.

E. Personal Statement

The personal statement is intended for application to higher education. However, it is also a critical opportunity for self-reflection. Students discuss how an incident or a series of incidents, a significant personal quality, a talent, an accomplishment, or a contribution gives them pride or makes them who they are. Students have a choice of prompt, to accommodate different colleges and interests. Regardless of prompt, students must write a minimum of 750 words and a maximum of 1,000. The prompt should be teacher-approved.

Unit 2. Focus on Character - Who am I like?

Through analysis and interpretation, students examine, interpret, and apply how character traits are revealed through literary techniques--both written and visual, comparing and contrasting the two forms of media. Students read and analyze literature and visual media to inform the production of media that attempts to answer the essential question: "How one can identify with others?". Students illustrate an understanding of persona and archetypes through analytical, reflective, and creative writing and visual media.

Unit 2 - Key Assignments

A. Character Sketches - *Hamlet*

Students read Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and view at least three separate productions of specific *Hamlet* scenes. Students respond in their notebooks with a focus on the major characters and how they are revealed by the playwright and by each director. Students will note character action, reaction, appearance, gestures, what character says, thinks (soliloquy), and what is said about the character. Students also explore how the crisis and emerging conflict of a particular scene reveals a character's best and worst behavioral responses. Students will then write a character sketch of three main characters in *Hamlet*.

B. Two minute Silent Video

Following the reading, note taking, and discussion of Hamlet's character traits, students will break into groups of three and each, in turn, will function as writer/talent/director/editor. Each student will script a short scene that places the character of Hamlet in a messy bedroom and through the selection of lighting, composition and frame selection will reveal both character traits and tone of this ordeal. How does Hamlet respond to his unweeded environment? How are his frustrations, fear, sense of vengeance, impotence, madness and his final move to action expressed and portrayed? Students will edit for dramatic effect, using original music to illustrate tone and a specific point of view. Assessment: Students will learn critical skills in the process of synthesizing a digital project as short as a two minute film. The quality of picture, camera placement, editing and creation of an original soundtrack and their understanding of tone in depicting a fictional character in a contemporary setting will fulfill their understanding of balancing form with content.

C. The Poem and Video Poem

Following a reading of selected character poems including "Richard Cory" by Edwin Robinson and "Walking Around" by Pablo Neruda and the reading, writing and analysis of the Graphic novel, *Stitches*, each student will write a poem based on the important themes they decided the main character of *Stitches* represents. They will move from the textual content to the visual interpretations of the abstraction. Demonstrating images to the students and their personal response in deciphering meaning. The poem will focus on the character as metaphor. Students will then script out their poem and create an abstract video rich in imagery and original sound embracing the essence of the character.

[Unit 3 - Using Your Voice: Expanding Depth of Field](#)

"What good are these ideas if nobody is listening?" Unit Three takes a significant leap as it takes students away from the focus on self-identity into their role in a larger community. Studying George Orwell's *1984*, contemporary dystopian novel, *Boomsday*, and other shorter literary works, students will explore the role of the individual in conflict with society. Students will study how public opinion is manipulated by those in power through persuasive techniques and rhetorical devices in writing and media. They will then integrate these techniques into their own written, oral, and media products in order to expand their depth of field from the individual to their role within a larger community. They will produce persuasive research-based Public Service Announcements (PSAs), with supplementary persuasive written material based on research. Students will

continue to expand their understanding of social issues by revisiting previously-identified topics, exploring multiple points of view, and engaging in academic discourse to express a position with reliable supporting evidence.

Unit 3 - Key Assignments

A. Letter from Prison

Beginning with a quick-write: "If you could speak to 1,000,000 people, what would you say?" students will start to explore what they consider important. Subsequently, they will read essays/speeches that advocate a point of view ("On Civil Disobedience," Thoreau; "Letter from the Birmingham Jail," M.L. King, Patrick Henry's speech) and dissect which language techniques these authors used to influence readers. Students will respond to the writing prompt: "What issue would you go to jail for?" and then write a concise "Letter from Prison," 300-500 words, to persuade others why this issue fits the criteria of civil disobedience.

B. Expository Essay: Influence of Media Response to Literature/Film

Students will choose a film that focuses on media manipulation and the intersection between news and entertainment (e.g., "Face in the Crowd," "Ace in the Hole," "Network," "Wag the Dog") and read the political satire, *Boomsday*. Then they will write an expository paper comparing and analyzing the contents of the film and book with their own perceptions of contemporary media.

C. Persuasive Appeals Storyboards

Students will view a number of public service announcements ("antibullying," "tobacco awareness," etc.). Each student will choose a PSA topic and prepare and deliver a one-minute "elevator pitch" to classmates applying ethos, pathos and logos. Classmates will then coalesce into production teams around topics. Students will learn about Aristotle's Persuasive Appeals (logos, ethos, pathos) by deconstructing TV commercials and designing storyboards for their own commercials that utilize these persuasive techniques. The teacher will screen TV commercials (examples: political candidates, beauty, automobiles) and ask students: "How much of this appeal is based on logos? How much on ethos? How much on pathos?" Students will design storyboards of three commercials - one that relies on logic, one for credibility, and the last one for emotion - promoting the same product or message. Each storyboard will be supplemented with a one-page essay justifying the use of each appeal.

D. PSA Infographic

Students will learn to use demographic research and analysis to create an effective infographic promoting the message of their PSA. Based on background data collected, each production team will generate an infographic (see <http://www.visual.ly> for examples) that includes a minimum of six credible sources. The infographic will amplify research to provide information about the scope of the problem, potential solutions to the problem, and contact information for organizations that address the problem. Graphic elements of the infographic can be inserted as B-roll for the PSA.

E. PSA Production Process

Each team will prepare an audio-visual script based on their data collection and infographic. Casting, location scouting, production plan (shooting schedule; B-roll; music; props, equipment). The class will screen and critique raw footage from each team. Teams will edit a rough draft of their PSAs for class screening and critique. Teams will re-edit and complete PSAs.

Unit 4 - Wide Angle: Focusing Ideas into Action

"How do I turn ideas into action?" Students continue to expand on the relationship between self and community by studying literature and visual media that explore one's role as writer, documentarian, artist, and change-maker. Beginning with a reading of Julia Alvarez's *In the Time of Butterflies*, students will understand the historical context of the novel from the perspectives of multiple narrators. After reading selections from *The Laramie Project*, students will further explore the engagement between fiction and the social context from which it arises. Students identify a local social issue, investigate the stakeholders, and create a call to action. Students integrate rhetorical and cinematic techniques to compose a five-minute documentary video that artistically delivers a broader, socially-relevant message.

Unit 4 - Key Assignments

A. Critical Analysis Paper: Documentary

Students watch a model documentary film of their choosing, paying attention to elements that make the documentary seem "trustworthy" and ways the documentarian has made the subject matter compelling. Students then produce a paper in which they analyze the cinematic devices, pacing, and structure that make the documentary effective or not effective.

B. Documentary Pitch

Each student will write a proposal (1-2 pages) for a short video documentary that includes topic, questions, list of interviewees, list of scenes, and an argument to support

the merit of the topic. Students will then pitch their projects to the class and establish production teams.

B. Investigative Research Paper

Students independently research the topic/person they are interested in following in their documentary. In preparation for beginning the documentary, students compile their research into a formal research paper with appropriate parameters (e.g. students research a variety of elements in order to determine which ones are essential for further investigation/inclusion in the documentary they intend to produce).

C. Documentary Script

Students collaborate on a script for a five-minute documentary. This script includes an introduction with a compelling hook that draws in the viewer. Each subsequent sequence in the script demonstrates a distinct purpose with a clear expression of visual elements. The script concludes wrapping up the thesis of the documentary within the context of material explored in the main sequences.

D. Documentary Film

Students produce a five-minute documentary on a local social issue. The documentary will take on a social issue that is important to them. They will study the Media Matters Film Festival entries as models. Students will be required to analyze a selected documentary made by students in a location and culture specific to their particular lives. An example would be the very short film, *Kony 2012*. Following a repeated viewing, the students will identify the following:

1. Audience
2. Juxtaposition of images and number of cuts in the film
3. Music and how it is used to propel the content
3. Variety of Camera Framing
4. Effectiveness of Message
5. Necessary elements needed to create the film
6. The use of titles/subtitles/textual information
7. Pacing, rhythm and tone of the film

Students in groups of two or three will then address complicated social problems in their community that strongly affects their lives or the lives of those they love, and brainstorm what the simplest approach would be in solving such a problem. The solution may be as simple as the school buying an alarm clock for those students who are chronically late to school, or creating a pool of readers to visit retirement homes to read books to the elderly. The students will then attempt to design a short film that incorporates the 8 questions above within their topic.

Unit 5 - Demo Reel: Revisiting the Self

"Who am I...now?" Students will identify applicable pathway skills and personal attributes necessary for managing personal career and post-secondary plans through self-reflection and evaluation, reflecting on how they have developed over the course of the year as students, artists, and community members. Students will use professional written and spoken industry-standard language to produce multimedia presentations, portfolios, and resumes appropriate for potential employment, post-secondary, or intern opportunities.

Unit 5 - Assignments

A. Reflective Piece

Students reflect on relevant experiences and skills gained through their work in digital media production. They highlight positive experiences and identify areas of strength in the digital media production process. Students select action verbs to describe technical, interpersonal, and physical skills related to Arts Media and Entertainment pathways. This written work must be three to four double-spaced pages. Students will read *A Rebel Without a Crew* as a model of a film director reflecting on his initiation in the film industry.

B. AME "Demo Reel"

Students view and evaluate professional demo reels to gain an understanding of their role in promoting one's own talents and skills. They review and annotate their own works to use in their demo reels. Students create a shot-list or storyboard to map out the sequence of the demo reels and pitch their storyboards to a small group for constructive feedback. Students create a rough edit of their demo reels and present the demo reels for peer feedback. Students use the feedback to complete a final version of their demo reels. Students then export the demo reels in the appropriate video format.

C. Portfolio Senior Exhibition or Screening Involving Industry Professionals

Students write a one-paragraph introduction and objective stating how their portfolio reflects their immediate goals and intentions as growing professionals. Students present to the CTE Advisory Committee in an interview or a selection process.

D. Autobiographical Sales Pitch (Professional Personal Statement)

The students will integrate information from past journal entries, blog posts, and and teacher recommendations to compose a letter (statement) that would help them land a

position in the industry. Students will write a 1-2 page narrative piece to accompany their resume that includes their written, oral, and technical strengths in ELA and AME, and how those strengths support their professional goals and objectives, including specific examples. Students should include how they feel about the industry and why they chose this particular sector to convince potential employers why should be considered for employment.

Course Materials:

Title: Final Cut Pro 7

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 2010

Publisher: Peachpit

Author(s): Weynand, Diana

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Making Real-life Videos: Great Projects for the Classroom and the Home

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 2006

Publisher: Allworth

Author(s): Williams, Matthew

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Identity Formation in Adolescence: Change or Stability?

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 2012

Publisher: Springer Science Business Media

Author(s): Klimstra, Theo A.; Hale III, William W.; Raaijmakers, Quinten A. W.; Branje, Susan J. T.; Meeus, Wim H. J.

URL Resource: <http://www.springerlink.com/content/w74676136344w52k/>

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Demian, the Story of Emil Sinclair's Youth

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 1965

Publisher: Harper & Row

Author(s): Hesse, Hermann

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Their Eyes Were Watching God

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 1990

Publisher: Perennial Library

Author(s): Hurston, Zora Neale

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Where I'm From: Where Poems Come From

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 1999

Publisher: Absey & Co.

Author(s): Lyon, George Ella

Usage: Primary Text Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Me Talk Pretty One Day

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 2000

Publisher: Little, Brown

Author(s): Sedaris, David

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: The Glass Castle: A Memoir

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 2006

Publisher: Scribner

Author(s): Walls, Jeannette

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Film: Stand by Me

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 1986

Publisher: Columbia Pictures

Author(s): n/a

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Film: Some Like It Hot

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 1959

Publisher: MGM/UA

Author(s): n/a

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Video: The Cutting Edge: The Magic of Movie Editing

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 2004

Publisher: n/a

Author(s): n/a

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Film: Rear Window

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 1954

Publisher: Paramount

Author(s): n/a

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Video: "Ways of Seeing"

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: n/a

Publisher: n/a

Author(s): Berger, John

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 1920

Publisher: n/a

Author(s): T.S. Eliot

URL Resource: <http://www.bartleby.com/198/1.html>

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Richard Corey

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: n/a

Publisher: n/a

Author(s): Robinson, Edwin Arlington

URL Resource: <http://www.bartleby.com/104/45.html>

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: "Walking Around"

Edition: n/a

Publication

Date: n/a

Publisher: n/a

Author(s): Neruda, Pablo

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: The Tragedy of Hamlet: Prince of Denmark

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 1998

Publisher: Penguin

Author(s): Shakespeare, William

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Stitches: A Memoir

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 2009

Publisher: Norton

Author(s): Small, David

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Cindy Sherman: The Complete Untitled Film Stills

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 2003

Publisher: Museum of Modern Art

Author(s): Sherman, Cindy

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Boomsday: A Novel

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 2007

Publisher: Twelve/Warner

Author(s): Buckley, Christopher

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: 1984

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 1949

Publisher: Harcourt

Author(s): Orwell, George

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Civil Disobedience

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 1849

Publisher: Public Domain

Author(s): Thoreau, Henry David

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: n/a

Publisher: n/a

Author(s): King, Jr., Martin Luther

URL Resource: http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Film: Hoop Dreams

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: n/a

Publisher: n/a

Author(s): n/a

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Mr. Smith Goes to Washington

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: n/a

Publisher: n/a

Author(s): n/a

URL Resource: <http://americanrhetoric.com>

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Barack Obama at Ebenezer Baptist Church

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 2008

Publisher: n/a

Author(s): n/a

URL Resource:

[http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobama/barackobamaebenezerba
ptist.htm](http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobama/barackobamaebenezerba
ptist.htm)

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: In the Time of Butterflies

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 1994

Publisher: Algonquin Books

Author(s): Alvarez, Julia

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: The Laramie Project

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 2001

Publisher: Vintage Books

Author(s): Kaufman, Moises

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Documentary Storytelling; Creative Non-fiction Onscreen

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 2003

Publisher: Focal Press

Author(s): Bernard, Sheila Curran

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Video: KONY 2012

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 2012

Publisher: n/a

Author(s): Russell, Jason

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety

Title: Media Matters Film Festival Entries

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: n/a

Publisher: n/a

Author(s): n/a

URL Resource: <http://www.mediathatmattersfest.org/>

Usage: Primary Text - Excerpts

Title: Rebel Without a Crew

Edition: n/a

Publication Date: 1996

Publisher: Plume

Author(s): Rodriguez, Robert

Usage: Primary Text - Read in entirety or near entirety