

(E)Motion Picture

Point Value

Emotion picture: 250 points

Storyboard: 100 points

Evaluation of team: 50 points

Overview of Assignment

The major assignment for this course is a team assignment wherein each team writes, produces, directs, and edits a short narrative film (8-10 minutes long) that seeks to convey an emotion. Taking our cue from singer-songwriter-producer Janelle Monáe, who films what she calls “Emotion Pictures,” each team will make a film that centers on *one emotion*. Sara Ahmed writes in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004) that emotion comes from the Latin *emovere*, meaning “to move, to move out.” How do emotions *move us*? How do *moving images* make us feel?

The goal of the film is to construct a *narrative*, a *story*, about the emotion your team chooses. The film will not just *represent* the emotion; the film should itself *convey the emotion* in an ethical manner. The title of the film should in some way communicate the emotion, though need not be obvious.

To begin choosing an emotion, I suggest brainstorming about the emotions in your own lives, i.e. What is the dominant student emotion at PLU? What bores people in media today? What is the status of feminist rage? How does anxiety about global warming spread between people? What is the politics of disgust on public busses? What does it feel like to be haunted by a specific thing?

Remember: you are constructing a narrative. There should be *a story* that the viewer can follow. That does not, however, mean the film must be a *linear* narrative (told in sequential order); it can operate *atemporally* (out of whack with our traditional senses of time). It can adhere to conventional genre elements and/or break with them. It can use voiceover, musical clips, sound-mixing, etc. Use your imagination.

Examples:

Janelle Monáe, “Make Me Feel” (2018) – What is the emotion of how “you” make “me” feel in the video? The video conveys a specific emotional state (“powerful with a little bit of tender”) of Monáe as she operates as a “sexual bender.”

Derek Jarman, *Blue* (1991) – What does it feel like to “be blue”? It is not just a color but an emotion, one that he feels as he knows he is dying.

Pete Docter, *Inside Out* (2015) – An animated depiction of emotions of anger, disgust, fury, sadness, and joy inside an 11-year-old girl (your task would be to focus on one.)

Materials

Students will have access to camera and audio equipment and open source (free) video and audio software. (And, we have access to two camera drones.)

If you find it challenging to use the film and audio equipment provided, I strongly urge you to shoot on a smartphone. A smartphone can create quality film content and create a more immediate effect on/intimacy with an audience.

If your team plans to film around Tacoma or PLU and capture the faces of those you film, you must get a written waiver from Risk Management (more on this later).

Special Rule

All members of the team must attend the first filming session.

Schedule (see syllabus)

February 20	Team Contract Due (in print over email, ritchiem@plu.edu)
March 8	Team Meeting Day: Film Narrative
March 11	Team Meeting Day: Storyboarding
April	Filming should begin this month
April 5	Storyboard Due in class
May 13	Draft of Emotion Picture Due / In-Class Screening
May 15	Team Meeting Day: Work with Crew to Finalize Film
May 17	Final Draft of Emotion Picture Due
May 22	Team Evaluation Essay Due
May 24	Film Review Due
May 27	Filmmaker Response Due

M. Ritchie

Roles

Teams will be split up according to roles; each team will designate a director, producer, writer, cinematographer, camera person, and film editor. This assignment teaches media production: working as a team to create a cultural product.

Director: offers an overall vision for the emotion picture, translates the screenplay into film, communicates feedback to all teammates, delegates tasks

Producer: edits the script, coordinates film production, ensures smooth work flow between team members

Writer: crafts the script for the film

Cinematographer: visualizes and outlines the scenes to shoot (the shot, the frame)

Camera Person: films the scenes in concert with desires of cinematographer, producer, and director

Film Editor (Visual and Sound/Audio): edits the video and sound/audio clips to ensure narrative structure and quality

If you have more than six team members, you can appoint someone in a newly crafted role (something not listed) or designate two people in one role.

Contract

You will collectively create and sign a team contract. The contract should include (at minimum) the following sections:

- Team name
- Clearly defined roles and expectations for fulfilling these roles
- How you will communicate (when, with what technology, reasonable response rate)
- Set time you will meet, location, and how often
- Method of running meetings (how you will stay on task, how long they will be)
- Methods for decisions and conflict
 - How you will come to consensus (agreement)
 - Who will check whose work (peer review)
 - How you will avoid groupthink (going with the first answer offered without deliberation)
 - How you will mediate conflict (task-related and interpersonal)
- Quorum: the minimum number of members needed to hold a meeting
- Absence policy: what is an acceptable excused absence from a teammate
- Mechanism to enforce the contract's procedures
- How you will grade each other in written evaluation (each person writes a separate one)
- Under what conditions you can revise the contract (by a vote?, etc.)
- Space for signatures

Assessment

10% of a student's grade for the film (25 points out of 250) will be determined by that students' teammates in a written evaluation (worth 50 points). The rest will be determined by the final film product (225 points). The final emotion picture will be assessed on the basis of teamwork, creativity of expression, production value, narrative organization (each 50), and failure (25 free).