



# OUR SYLLABUS

## COMA 120: Introduction to Media Studies

<p><b>Class Date/Time/Location:</b> MWF, 12:30 - 1:35 PM, in <a href="#">Ingram</a> 100</p>	<p><b>Instructor:</b> Dr. <a href="#">Marnie Ritchie</a>, Assistant Professor of Communication, <a href="mailto:mmritchie.com">mmritchie.com</a></p>
<p><b>Student Hours:</b> Tuesdays 1-3 PM in Ingram 129; also available over Zoom during this time and by appointment (email me to set up a time)</p>	<p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:ritchiem@plu.edu">ritchiem@plu.edu</a> Email is the best way to reach me. I do not correspond weekdays after 5 PM nor weekends, but I try to respond within 24 hours.</p>

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# ABOUT COMA 120

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## Masking

Masking is strongly recommended in our space! There are free ones in Ingram 101. Thank you!

## Course Description

This course combines the study of visual media theories and analysis with the processes of actual media production. The class examines contemporary and classical genres of creative media, such as television, narrative and non-narrative film, advertising, PR, marketing and promotional campaigns to explore meanings, values and the ways in which media have become major parts of human existence, experience and expression globally. Reflecting ongoing developments in media, the course also provides an overview of the languages of creative media, exploring topics such as: fundamentals of cinematography, editing, the soundtrack, directors, and the numerous and varied tasks involved with production, all culminating in student-generated creative works. (4 credits)

## Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate responsible civic engagement through the cultivation of film and media literacy
2. Demonstrate familiarity with historical and current developments of film and media industries
3. Demonstrate knowledge of conventions that inform storytelling, design, and aesthetics of film and media production
4. Create media products through the process of “critical making”

## Required Materials\*

- Articles and Book Chapters, posted in Sakai under Resources. There is no textbook for this course.
- A tool (laptop, tablet, notebook) to take notes in class

\*If you do not have a way to access these materials, please email me [ritchiem@plu.edu](mailto:ritchiem@plu.edu) ASAP.

# COURSE POLICIES

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## Attendance

To succeed in this course (to reach the learning goals), I believe it is important for everyone to participate in our discussions and complete assigned work. I've taken trainings with the Provost's Office at PLU about how clear attendance policies *can* be more inclusive for students (structure is better than no structure), so that's why we have one.

Our attendance policy:

- You are allowed two freebie absences that will not affect your grade - no note or explanation is necessary for these absences.
- Further absences beyond the two freebies will result in a 10% reduction of your participation grade.
- Three late arrivals or early departures of 10 minutes or more is equivalent to one absence.
- Eight or more absences results in automatic failure of the course.

Excused absences, for which you do not need to provide documentation, include physical sickness (including COVID), religious observation, caregiving obligations, emotional and mental health barriers to attendance, trauma and safety reasons, and family emergencies. Your grade will not automatically be reduced for missing a class day for these reasons. However, you **must email me** if that is the case. And since this is a discussion-based class, I *strongly* encourage you to attend.

Do not attend class if you believe you have been exposed to COVID. Should your health or other circumstances change, negatively impacting your ability to attend our class in person, please notify me and the [Office of Accessibility and Accommodation](#) as soon as possible.

## Self Care

Your personal well-being is essential and not just to your performance in college. Learning to manage stress is a process. Asking for help is a skill. If you need additional resources or feel that you might fall behind in work, I ask that you come speak with me earlier rather than later.

I encourage you to contact the Center for Student Success, which can connect you to resources on campus like the Counseling Center, Health Center, Campus Ministry, and Center for Gender Equity. The main hub of the CSS is located on the first floor of the Mortvedt Library building. You can contact them by email ([success@plu.edu](mailto:success@plu.edu)) or phone (253-535-8870)

## **Laptops, Tablets, Technology**

I allow laptops and tablets in class, and I put trust in you to use them responsibly.

## **Add/Drop**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, and similar topics.

## **Academic Integrity**

All graded work must be the original work of the student claiming credit for it, with proper credit given to outside sources via citations. Students who use unoriginal work or permit another student to use their work will not receive a grade for that work in the course. Students who are uncertain as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult with me. For more information, please see PLU's statement on [academic integrity](#).

## **Accommodations**

If you need academic accommodations because of a documented disability, have emergency medical information to share with me, or need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. If you have questions concerning the services available for students who need reasonable accommodations, contact the Office of Accessibility and Accommodation at 253-535-7073 or [oa@plu.edu](mailto:oa@plu.edu).

## **Religious Accommodations**

I will make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations for all students who, because of religious observances, may have conflicts with scheduled assignments or required attendance in courses. Please review the course schedule at the beginning of the semester to determine any such potential conflicts and let me know about the need for a religious accommodation. If you could do so at least three weeks in advance of the date when the conflict occurs, that would be ideal. While I am happy to provide such accommodations, I understand that asking a faculty member for assistance can be intimidating; if that's the case, you can contact PLU's University Pastor Jen Rude ([rudejl@plu.edu](mailto:rudejl@plu.edu) or 253-535-7465) for support in making this request.

## **Pronoun Use**

We will use one another's personally designated pronouns. Do not assume anyone's gender in the course. Normalize designating pronouns. Some of our readings use "she and/or he" to the exclusion of a more

inclusive “they.” I encourage you in your reading to note these exclusions and normalize using gender neutral language in your writing and language.

## **Title IX**

I am a mandatory reporter under Title IX. This means that if you disclose sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, sexual assault, or gender-based discrimination to me related to the Pacific Lutheran University community, I must report it to Campus Safety, Students Rights and Responsibilities, Human Resources, and/or a member of the University Dispute Resolution Committee.

If you would like to confidentially submit a disclosure, meaning one that does not activate Mandatory Reporting, you can do so via the following resources:

- [Advocacy Services in Center for Gender Equity](#) (253-538-6304)
- [PLU Health Center](#) (253-535-7337)
- [PLU Counseling Center](#) (253-535-7206)
- [PLU University Pastor](#) (253-535-7464)

## **Inclusive Learning Environment**

Pacific Lutheran University is a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). We mark this so that we can name and challenge whiteness in our class’s collective imaginary.

It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course and that students’ learning needs be addressed both in and out of class. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity across all dimensions, including gender, sexuality, disability, age, socio-economic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students.

We will strive to make this class an inclusive space, which means we will actively contest exclusionary practices. Here are a few best practices for ensuring our space is actively more just: avoid words with exclusionary histories; do not minimize marginalized identities’ negative feelings and need to process; take responsibility for the impact of our beliefs. If you are unsure what might constitute an exclusionary impact in class, let’s chat in Student Hours.

## **Respectful Learning Environment**

The University holds as basic the integrity and well-being of every person in the community. I am committed to providing a living, learning and working environment that is fair, consistent, caring, and supportive of intellectual and personal growth. Further, PLU is committed to protecting the rights of its community members to engage in dialogue and express ideas in an environment that is free from

harassment, discrimination, and exploitation. This freedom of expression does not, however, entail the freedom to threaten, stalk, intimidate, harass, or abuse.

Students are therefore expected to treat every individual with respect. The University prohibits any activities that cause or threaten physical or mental harm, suffering or exhaustion, that demean the dignity of any individual, and/or that interfere with one's academic progress, living environment, or employment responsibilities.

## **Land Acknowledgement**

We are on the traditional lands of the Nisqually, Puyallup, Squaxin Island, and Steilacoom peoples. We acknowledge and respect the traditional caretakers of this land. We recognize the insufficiency of a land acknowledgement and will work in our class to bring postcolonial media lenses into our units.

# ASSIGNMENTS

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## Soft Deadlines

Critical Makes 1 and 2 have soft deadlines, so you can turn them in up until the final day of class.

## How to Submit Assignments

Unless otherwise specified, work should be submitted through Sakai under Assignments.

## Discussion

Point Value: 200 points

Your perspective is important to the critical discussions that we will have.

How I assess discussion:

- 180-200 points: Creative insights and questions, risked contributing in class/small groups on a regular basis (2-3 times a week), consistent evidence of preparedness, generous openness to other perspectives, excellent insights and questions, took an active role in their own success, evidence of listening to peers (references to peers' comments on hypothes.is and/or in class comments)
- 160-179: Adequate class participation, reliable evidence of preparedness, curiosity concerning other perspectives, was present
- 140-159: Present in class, adequate preparedness, acknowledgment of differing perspectives
- 120-159: Unpreparedness that disrupted others' learning, no acknowledgement of differing perspectives
- 0-119: Student interfered with peers' learning, disrespectful of class atmosphere, consistent unpreparedness

## Close Readings

Point Value: 150 points (16 readings total; please complete 15, one exemption)

This class asks you to engage in "close readings" of the assigned readings using hypothes.is on Sakai. To do the close readings, click the Close Readings tab in the left-hand menu on Sakai.

Each close reading should have the following components:

1. TWO substantive comments on the reading. These can be a critical question, a reflection on why a sentence stuck out to you, a reference to other relevant sources, and/or a critique of something the author wrote.
2. AND ONE reply to a peer. This can be a specific compliment, a question, and/or a complication. If no one has responded to the reading yet, please make a third comment.

## **Peer Review**

Point Value: 100 total (two times, 50 points each)

This class asks you to engage in two peer reviews, since honest and thorough feedback (critique) is part of media production. More information will be provided in class.

## **Critical Make 1: News Source Audit (Team)**

Point Value: 150 points

See Sakai > Assignments > “News Source Audit” for more information.

In assigned teams, you will choose *one* media outlet and research that organization’s editorial and reporting standards--its processes of information verification and fact-checking that it uses to ensure reliability, accessibility, transparency, and fairness in their reporting. Your group will conduct a content analysis of a news outlet by choosing FIVE (5) articles from the hard news sections (US local/regional news, World news, politics, etc.--no sports, entertainment, or arts) to assess according to a checklist of best journalist practices. We will look at examples. Each team will have an opportunity to present their audit findings to the class.

## **Critical Make 2: Culture Jamming (Individual)**

Point Value: 200 points

See Sakai > Assignments > “Culture Jam” for more information.

Culture jamming is a movement that critiques corporate and capitalist encroachment on social life. Each student will create a visual culture jam that digitally alters the branding of a corporation, company, organization, or public agency to make a social statement about it. We will go over what culture jamming is, look at successful examples, and learn how to digitally alter images. Each student will have an opportunity to present their culture jam to the class.

### Critical Make 3: Film Scene Annotation (Individual)

Point Value: 200 points

See Sakai > Assignments > “Film Scene Annotation” for more information.

Film creators use aesthetic choices such as editing, framing, lighting, perspective, sound track, and color theory to affect audiences. This project requires each student to conduct a close reading of a specific scene from a film of your choice. It is recommended that you choose a short but *significant* scene (between 20 seconds to 1.5 minutes). Your close reading will look at every aesthetic choice made in the scene. You can “group” significant and similar frames together OR break it down shot-by-shot. Your goal is to determine what psychological effects (intended or unintended) the aesthetic choices have on the audience. You will annotate the scene by marking it with text, arrows, highlights, etc. to draw attention to the aesthetic cues and features within the scene. We will have time in class to explain how to complete this assignment, and we will look at examples.

# GRADES

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## Grade Breakdown

Assignment	Point Value
Critical Make 1 & Presentation	150
Critical Make 2 & Presentation	200
Critical Make 3	200
Discussion/Participation	200
Close Readings	150
Peer Review	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,000</b>

## Grading Scale

Grade	Numeric Value
A	94
A-	90
B+	87
B	84
B-	80
C+	76

C	71
C-	68
D+	65
D	62
D-	59
E	0

### **CITATIONAL ETHICS**

I thank Dr. Kate Hoyt for assignments and the same basic layout from her “Media Studies” syllabus.



# COURSE SCHEDULE

## COMA 120: Introduction to Media Studies

Please note: the course schedule is subject to change at instructor's discretion. Any changes will be announced over email and reflected in this "live" schedule.

COURSE INTRODUCTION			
Date	Topic	Readings To Do Before Class	Assignments Due at Start of Class
W 02/08	Introduction to the Course	Look over the <a href="#">Course Syllabus</a> and Course Schedule (the document you are in)	Introduce yourself in our Slidedeck
F 02/10	What is Media Studies? Learning Community Agreement	---	We'll talk about how we want our class to be like this semester. Come with a sense of best practices that you think make for the most productive semester.  Access the Keywords for Media Studies handout <a href="#">here</a> .
UNIT 1: NEWS MEDIA			
Date	Topic	Readings To Do Before Class	Assignments Due at Start of Class

M 02/13	News Literacy and the First Amendment  Introduction of News Audit Team Assignment	<b><u>“What is News Literacy?”</u></b> by <b>Seth Ashley</b> (Content Warning: There is a discussion of violences caused by misinformation on pages 6-8)	<b>Close Reading 1 on Sakai</b>
W 02/15	Team Work Day	---	<b>Please come prepared to work with your teammates in class.</b>
F 02/17	Intersectional Journalism	<b><u>“Opening the Gates: Defining a Model of Intersectional Journalism”</u></b> by <b>Chelsea Peterson-Salahuddin</b> (CW: Opens with police brutality)	<b>Close Reading 2</b>  Listen to <b><u>“The Tragedy that Keeps Happening,”</u></b> <i>On the Media WNYC with Brooke Gladstone, 2022 (10 min)</i> (CW: About how media cover mass shootings; please do not listen unless you are in an okay place mentally)
M 02/20	<b>No Class: PLU-Recognized Holiday</b>		
W 02/22	Social Media and Content Moderation	<b><u>“Content Moderation is Changing the Way we Speak,”</u></b> <b>Christianna Silva, Mashable</b> (CW: Mention of crude words)  <b><u>“Former TikTok Moderators Sue Over Emotional Toll,”</u></b> <b>Bobby Allyn, NPR</b> (CW: Mention of violent acts, pornography)	<b>Close Readings 3 &amp; 4</b>

F 02/24	Interactive Journalism, Journalistic Ethics, and Bias in News Media	---	---
M 02/27	Critical Disinformation Studies	<p><b><u><a href="#">“Critical Disinformation Studies,”</a></u></b> Rachel Kuo and Alice Marwick</p> <p>(CW: Mention of racism, sexism, xenophobia, religious discrimination, and other forms of oppression; discussion of stereotypes throughout; mention of Rohingya genocide)</p>	<b>Close Reading 5</b>
W 03/01	<b>No Class: Sorry, y’all</b>		
F 03/03	Team Work Day	---	<b>Please come prepared to work with your teammates in class.</b>
M 03/06	Team Presentation Day	---	<p><b>Come ready to present with your team. Everyone should come to presentation days so we have a full audience!</b></p> <p><b>Please put your presentation, if you have one, in this <a href="#">Google Drive folder</a> so we can pull them up easily at the start of class.</b></p> <p><b>ALL Critical Make 1’s (News Audits) Due Before Class through the Assignments Tab on Sakai. Only one person in the team needs to submit it.</b></p>

W 03/08	Team Presentation Day	---	<p>Come ready to present with your team. Everyone should come to presentation days so we have a full audience!</p> <p>Please put your presentation, if you have one, in this <a href="#">Google Drive folder</a> so we can pull them up easily at the start of class.</p>
F 03/10	Team Presentation Day	---	<p>Come ready to present with your team. Everyone should come to presentation days so we have a full audience!</p> <p>Please put your presentation, if you have one, in this <a href="#">Google Drive folder</a> so we can pull them up easily at the start of class.</p>
<b>UNIT 2: ADVERTISING AND IMAGES</b>			
Date	Topic	Readings To Do Before Class	Assignments Due at Start of Class
M 03/13	Culture Jamming Introduce Culture Jam Assignment	“ <a href="#">Introduction: Culture Jamming</a> ” by Marilyn Delaure & Moritz Fink	<p>Close Reading 6</p> <p>If you haven't yet contributed to our summary of Unit 1, you're invited to <a href="#">here</a>. Also see: <a href="#">Unit 1 summary handout</a>.</p>
W 03/15	Graphic Design Workshop	---	<p>Bring a laptop/device to class if you have one. (Computer Lab in Ingram</p>

			115A will also be accessible.)
F 03/17	The Colonial Histories of Advertising	<p><a href="#">“Soft-Soaping Empire”</a> by Anne McClintock  (Content Warning: Discussion of racist advertising; n-word on p. 516)</p>	Close Reading 7
M 03/20	Prototypical Whiteness	<p><a href="#">“Teaching the Camera to See My Skin”</a> by Syreeta McFadden  (CW: Discussion of racism)</p>	<p>Close Reading 8</p> <p>Watch: <a href="#">“Color Film Was Built for White People. Here’s What It Did to Dark Skin,”</a> Vox (2015)  (CW: Discussion of racism)</p>
W 03/22	Gender, Advertising, and Images  Peer Review	<p><a href="#">“Hawaiians on Tour: Hula Circuits through the American Empire”</a> by Adria L. Imada  (CW: Discussion of colonialism and racial segregation)</p>	Close Reading 9
F 03/24	<p><b>No Class: Very few people attend the class on the Friday before break 😊</b></p> <p><b>Dr. Ritchie will be in her office (Ingram 129) during class time if you have any questions about Critical Make 2</b></p>		
M 03/27 - F 03/31	<p><b>No Class: Spring Break</b></p>		
M 04/03	Presentations of Culture Jams	---	<p>Come prepared to present. Everyone should come to presentation days so we have a full audience!</p> <p>If you are using a slidedeck (optional), please put it in <a href="#">this folder</a> before class.</p>

			<b>All Critical Make 2s (Culture Jam) Due by Start of Class Through Sakai</b>
W 04/05	Presentations of Culture Jams	---	<b>Come prepared to present. Everyone should come to presentation days so we have a full audience!</b>  If you are using a slidedeck (optional), please put it in <a href="#">this folder</a> before class.
F 04/07	<b>No Class: PLU-Recognized Holiday</b>		
M 04/10	Presentations of Culture Jams  [University photographer Sy Bean in class to take photos for university for 20-30 min]	---	<b>Come prepared to present. Everyone should come to presentation days so we have a full audience!</b>  If you are using a slidedeck (optional), please put it in <a href="#">this folder</a> before class.
W 04/12	Presentations of Culture Jams	---	<b>Come prepared to present. Everyone should come to presentation days so we have a full audience!</b>  If you are using a slidedeck (optional), please put it in <a href="#">this folder</a> before class.
F 04/14 & M 04/17	<b>No Class: Professor at wedding</b>		
<b>UNIT 3: TELEVISION AND FILM</b>			

Date	Topic	Readings To Do Before Class	Assignments Due at Start of Class
W 04/19	No Class: Professor trapped in Texas. 🤖		
F 04/21	History of Television in US  Cultural Studies	“ <a href="#">Cultural Studies, Multiculturalism, and Media Culture</a> ” by Douglass Kellner	<p>If you haven't yet done so, contribute to our Summary for Unit 2 <a href="#">here</a>. Also see: <a href="#">Unit 2 summary handout</a>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Close Reading 10</p> <p>Please <a href="#">vote</a> on the first episode we should watch together. Please only do one vote a day.</p> <p>Access the Keywords for American Cultural Studies handout <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
M 04/24	Tropes	<p>“<a href="#">Gay Best Friend</a>,” <i>TVTropes</i> (Please read through the examples in folders)</p> <p>(Optional): “<a href="#">Is There a Future for Cinema's Gay Best Friend?</a>” Emily Maskell, Letterboxd, June 2022</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Close Reading 11</p> <p>Watch: “<a href="#">This is What Happens When Writers Rooms Aren't Diverse</a>,” <i>Slate</i>, 2015</p> <p>Please <a href="#">vote</a> on the first episode we should watch together. Please only do one vote a day. Voting ends T 04/25 at midnight.</p>
W 04/26	In-Class Screening of a TV Episode of Our Choice (First episode of <i>New Girl</i> )	---	---

	In-Class Application of Cultural Studies		
F 04/28	<p>Histories of Film in US</p> <p>Psychoanalysis</p> <p>Introduce Film Scene Annotation (Critical Make 3)</p>	---	---
M 05/01	<p>Workshop Day:</p> <p>WeVideo &amp; Google Slides Video Creator</p>	---	<p><b>Bring a laptop/device to class if you have one. (Computer Lab in Ingram 115A will also be accessible)</b></p>
W 05/03	<p>Mise-en-scène</p> <p>[Dr. Heather Mathews visiting class to observe prof]</p>	<p><b>“<a href="#">Mise-en-scène</a>” by David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, and Jeff Smith</b></p>	<p><b>Close Reading 12</b></p> <p>(Optional) Check out <a href="#">this video</a> about the best uses of color of all time by Cinefix</p> <p>(Optional) Take a look at this brief Vox article/video: “<a href="#">It’s Not You - Movies Are Getting Darker</a>,” Edward Vega</p> <p>(Optional) Check out <a href="#">this timeline of color in film</a></p>
F 05/05	<p>Cinematography</p>	<p><b>“<a href="#">Cinematography</a>” by David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, and Jeff Smith</b></p>	<p><b>Close Reading 13</b></p> <p>(Optional) Check out <a href="#">this fun little video</a> about the “best” cinematographers of all time by Cinefix; <a href="#">it’s subjective</a>, obviously, but interesting!</p>

M 05/08	Editing	“ <a href="#">Editing</a> ” by David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, and Jeff Smith	<b>Close Reading 14</b> (Optional) Check out short videos “ <a href="#">Thank You for Not Cutting</a> ,” Fandor
W 05/10	Sound	“ <a href="#">Sound</a> ” by David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, and Jeff Smith	<b>Close Reading 15</b> Watch: “ <a href="#">Why We All Need Subtitles Now</a> ,” Vox (10 min)
F 05/12	Work Day in Class Peer Review	---	Bring a laptop/device to class if you have one. (Computer Lab in Ingram 115A will also be accessible)
M 05/15	In-Class Screening: <i>Psycho</i> (1960)	---	---
W 05/17	In-Class Screening: <i>Psycho</i> (1960)	---	---
F 05/19	Course Wrap-Up See <a href="#">our Kahoot! here</a> . We did well! 😊	---	<b>Soft Deadlines for Critical Makes 1 and 2.</b>  You’re invited to contribute to <a href="#">our final reflection on the big questions</a> we brainstormed at the start of semester  Also see: <a href="#">Unit 3 summary here</a> .

T 05/23	No class: just a deadline.	<b>Critical Make 3 (Film Scene Annotation) Due: Please put your MP4 or MOV in <a href="#">this Google Drive folder</a> by the end of the day. Please name it something distinct.</b>
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FYI: There is no midterm or final for this course.