University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

Curriculum Proposal Form #3

## New Course

**Effective Term:**

**Subject Area - Course Number:** **Film 356**

(See Note #1 below)

**Course Title:** (Limited to 65 characters) Text and Image

**25-Character Abbreviation:** Text and Image

**Sponsor(s):** Janine Tobeck

**Department(s):** Languages & Literatures

**College(s):**

# **Consultation took place**: NA Yes (list departments and attach consultation sheet)

Departments: please see Film Studies proposal

**Programs Affected:** L&L: English Professional Writing and Publishing, Film Studies

**Is paperwork complete for those programs?** (Use "Form 2" for Catalog & Academic Report updates)

NA  Yes  will be at future meeting

**Prerequisites:** ENGLISH 102, ENGLISH 105, OR ENGLISH 162

**Grade Basis:**  Conventional Letter  S/NC or Pass/Fail

**Course will be offered:**  Part of Load  Above Load

On Campus  Off Campus - Location

**College:** **Dept/Area(s):** Languages & Literatures

**Instructor:** Janine Tobeck

**Check if the Course is to Meet Any of the Following:**

Technological Literacy Requirement  Writing Requirement

Diversity  General Education Option: GH

**Credit/Contact Hours:** (per semester)

Total lab hours:       Total lecture hours: 48

Number of credits: 3 Total contact hours: 48

**Can course be taken more than once for credit? (Repeatability)**  No  Yes

**Note:** This course serves the proposed Film Studies minor. It also serves as an elective for the Professional Writing and Publishing major along with General Education goals at the intermediate level.

**Course justification:** This course will serve the proposed Film Studies minor as well as fulfill an elective in the Professional Writing and Publishing major in Languages and Literatures. It also has the potential to serve BA candidates in the College of Letters & Science, and may appeal to some Arts & Communication majors, especially in MAGD. The course will engage students in a theoretical and practical study of how text and image interact to create “story” in contemporary visual communication. The core of the course is built on the cases of sequential art (a.k.a. graphic novels or comics) and interactive fiction (here instanced in video games), two genres that represent a kind of “next generation” of cinema’s influence. Scholars and practitioners of these genres have worked to use what we have learned from literature and film both to legitimate them as fields of study and to teach others how to create them. As such, the conversations building around them help expose our assumptions about the relationships between image and text, inviting us to explore how the new media reflect, use, challenge, and reinforce culturally embedded understandings about how to connect to an audience for a given communication purpose. Course readings will draw from theoretical and instructional texts and both academic and popular audience responses, immersing students in a contextual study of visual communication while considering its potential applications in fields ranging from the arts to organizational communication. Assignments will encourage students to explore multiple formats for presenting their work.

Among Professional Writing and Publishing majors, who will almost certainly need to work with both text and image, the course will encourage analysis of principles that underpin successful technique. For English majors in general, the course offers an opportunity to draw connections between their knowledge of literary traditions and forms and their lived environment. For potential Film Studies minors, the course will provide a wide-angle lens on how audience expectations guide and shape artistic and editorial decisions in visual media.

**Budgetary impact:** The course will be taught by existing faculty members. Please see the Film Studies Minor proposal below (p. 8) for the estimated expense of shifting faculty teaching loads.

**Course description:** This course is a theoretical and practical study of how text and image interact to create “story” in visual communication, focusing especially on sequential art (a.k.a. graphic novels or comics) and interactive fiction (e.g. video games).

**Relationship to program learning objectives:** Film 356 will serve the proposed Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for the Film Studies minor.



**Specific Course objectives for Film 356: Text and Image**

While this course will not treat film directly, it focuses on genres that emerged from and employ filmic theory and technique. It thus provides a different approach to closely related objectives.

—improve ability to generate and express nuanced interpretations of visual communication (SLO 1)

—deepen understanding of how new media are historically and culturally situated (SLO 2)

—evaluate ways in which visual communication appropriates and constructs cultural value (SLO 5)

—engage in questions about the classification and study of genres (SLO 6)

**Relationship to English (including Professional Writing emphasis) learning objectives:**

*Text and Image* also serves learning outcomes in English. The Languages and Literatures department emphasizes critical thinking as a function of reading texts closely and constructing written interpretive arguments. *Text and Image* is structured to provide instruction in close reading, written analysis, and research.

Corresponding program-wide English SLOs:

1. **read closely** read texts closely for nuances of language, content, and form
2. **write effectively** produce clear and coherent prose demonstrating effective use of grammar and style
3. **construct arguments**   execute well-structured, thesis-driven interpretations based on textual evidence
4. **conduct research** develop extended arguments that take account of existing scholarly conversations
5. **analyze conventions**   analyze texts using an understanding of generic conventions and literary devices.

*Text and Image* will also engage English Professional Writing and Publishing majors in three of its specific submajor objectives:

8. **analyze discourse** used in diverse contexts with attention to audience, purpose, and formal convention

9. **use technology** employed by professional writers in a variety of media

11. **write and edit** documents to a professional standard in multiple formats.

**Relationship to LEAP objectives:**

*Text and Image* serves LEAP objectives as well. With its focus on the appropriation and construction of culturally significant material, the course promotes “knowledge of human cultures.” In the LEAP category of “Intellectual and Practical Skills,” Film 356 relies on “inquiry and analysis,” “critical thinking,” and “written and oral communication.” Through analysis of cultural transmission, the course provides an opportunity for students to improve their “intercultural knowledge,” allowing them to develop “skills for lifelong learning.”

**Relationship to General Education goals:**

1. Think critically and analytically integrate and synthesize knowledge, and draw conclusions from complex material
2. Make sound ethical and value judgments based on… an understanding of shared cultural heritage…
3. Understand and appreciate the culture diversity of the U.S. and other countries…
4. Acquire a base of knowledge common to educated persons and the capacity to expand that base over their lifetime
5. Communicate effectively in written, oral, and symbolic form
6. Understand the nature and physical world, the process by which scientific concepts are developed and modified
7. Appreciate the fine and performing arts.
8. Develop the mathematical and quantitative skills necessary of calculation, analysis and problem solving.
9. Understand the principles essential for continual mental and physical well-being.

As the description here suggests, Film 356 will promote many of the above general education goals, especially numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7.

* Analysis of relationships between text and image demands critical thinking and knowledge synthesis (1).
* Analysis of how visual communication reflects cultural moments, both assuming and challenging situated value systems, enhances students’ ability to make ethical judgments based on a “shared cultural heritage” (2).
* As a lens for culture, the critical study of visual communication opens an important avenue for appreciating diversity (3).
* Expanding their techniques for comprehending visual rhetoric will enhance students’ abilities to adapt and contribute to an evolving cultural throughout their lifetimes (4).
* Students in Film 356 will gain practice in both written and oral communication (5).
* Students will be exposed to a range of artifacts from new media—aesthetic and technical productions that, increasingly, expand the boundaries of “the fine and performing arts”—allowing students to refine their aesthetic judgment (7).

**Tentative Course Syllabus:**

**Film 356: Text and Image**

Janine Tobeck

Laurentide 3260 **•** Phone: 472-5039 **•** Hours: tba

**Course Description:** This course examines the ways in which text and image interact to make meaning in multiple forms of visual communication. Our investigations will unite around the core concept of *story*, which we’ll see used variously in fields like literature, film, video game development, and marketing. Analyzing the similarities and differences between those uses can help us identify some of the shared theories and practices through which we shape (and are shaped by) our cultural environment. Although the potential field of study here is vast, the course will focus primarily on two emerging genres: sequential art (a.k.a. graphic novels or comics) and interactive fiction (here instanced in video games). Reactions to the rise of these genres range from unflinching enthusiasm to pronouncements of the death of culture. But as they continue to gain momentum as “serious” objects of study, scholars and practitioners alike have called on what we know about literature and film both to analyze them and to teach others how to create them. As such, the conversations building around them help expose our assumptions about the relationships between image and text and how we imagine an audience. This in turn invites us to explore how the new media reflect, use, challenge, and reinforce culturally embedded understandings about how to connect to an audience for a given communication purpose. At the end of the course, we will turn back to some less “artistic” forms of communication, to trace and test the relevance of our conclusions to our understanding and creation of them.

The primary goals of the course are that you will:

• Develop skills in analyzing the relationship between text and image, and how practitioners use their expectations about audience behavior to guide their creative and editorial choices;

• Become fluent in discussing, explaining, and presenting theories of how text and image interact to make meaning; and

• Gain a nuanced understanding of how new media reflect, use, challenge, and reinforce traditional literary and cultural values.

**Required Texts:**

Gary Hustwit, dir., *Helvetica* (avail. In D2L)

Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics* (purchase or borrow)

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (purchase or borrow)

Dwayne McDuffie, *ICON: A Hero’s Welcome* (purchase or borrow)

Additional readings/study materials available through D2L or on campus

**Grading:**

Participation (includes attendance and informal assignments) 25%

Photo Essay: Signage or Comparative Book/Poster Design 10%

Textual analysis 20%

Audience response analysis 15%

Final Project 30%

**Note**: you will negotiate a plan for your final project with me during Week 12 of the course. The format is largely open: e.g., conventional academic research paper or artifact analysis, filmed scene from a book, concept and promotional package for a video game, etc.

**Special Needs:**

If you require any special accommodations to participate fully in this course, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can make necessary arrangements.

**University Policy Statement:**

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater is dedicated to a safe, supportive and    non-discriminatory learning environment.  It is the responsibility of all undergraduate and graduate students to familiarize themselves with University policies regarding [Special Accommodations](http://www.uww.edu/StdRsces/csd/academic_index.php), [Academic Misconduct](http://www.uww.edu/Catalog/02-04/Legal/legal1.html#Misconduct), [Religious Beliefs Accommodation](http://www.uww.edu/Catalog/02-04/Legal/legal5.html), [Discrimination](http://www.uww.edu/Catalog/02-04/Legal/legal6.html) and [Absence for University Sponsored Events](http://www.uww.edu/Catalog/02-04/Legal/legal1.html#Misconduct) (for details please refer to the Schedule of Classes; the [Rights and Responsibilities](http://www.uww.edu/Catalog/02-04/Legal/Legal1.html)section of the [Undergraduate Catalog](http://www.uww.edu/Catalog); [the Academic Requirements](http://www.uww.edu/gradstudies/catalog0608/Gradpolicies.php#academicinformation) and Policies and the [Facilities and Services](http://www.uww.edu/gradstudies/catalog0608/Gradpolicies.php#facilitiesandservices) sections of the [Graduate Catalog](http://www.uww.edu/gradstudies/catalog0608/gradcat0608.php); and the “[Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures](http://www.uww.edu/stdhdbk/uwsystem.html) (UWS Chapter 14); and the “[Student Nonacademic Disciplinary Procedures](http://www.uww.edu/stdhdbk/uwsystem.html)" (UWS Chapter 17).

**Tentative Course Schedule**

**UNIT I: Setting Parameters**

Week 1: Defining our field

*reading:* Sels. from Abbott, Herman, Tumminello, Crawford, Sachs

Week 2: Identifying questions and problems

*reading:* Sels. from McLuhan, Stephens, Johnson, Ryan

Week 3: Studying genre

*reading:* Dille & Platten, “The Influences of Storytelling in a Digital Universe;” Duncan & Smith, “Comic Books and Ideology;” Sels. from Branigan, Harrigan, Wardrip-Fruin

Week 4: Warm-up case: Typography (the image *of* text)

*reading: Helvetica*

**UNIT II: Reading Sequential Art**

Week 5: Methods/terminology

*reading:* McCloud, *Understanding Comics*; Sels. from Varnum

*assignment due*: Photo Essay: Signage or Comparative Book/Poster Design

Week 6: The graphic novel

*reading*: Bechdel, *Fun Home*

Week 7: Reactions/new questions

*reading*: Bechdel, cont.; Sels. from Chute, McCloud (*Reinventing Comics* and *Making Comics*)

Week 8: Sequential comics

*reading:* McDuffie, *ICON*

Week 9: Reactions/practices

*reading:* McDuffie, cont.; Sels. from Chute, Duncan & Smith

Sels. from Abel, Eisner

**UNIT III: Reading (?) Interactive Fiction**

Week 10: Methods/terminology

*reading:* Sels. from Bissell, Harrigan, Herman, Wardrip-Fruin & Monfort

*assignments*: Textual analysis due

Week 11: Games: text/image evolution

*reading: Adventure*; *Mass Effect*

Week 12: Reactions/[final project development]

*assignments*: Final project proposal

Week 13: Practices/new questions

*reading:* Sels. from Crawford, Dille

*assignments*: Audience response analysis due

**UNIT III: Text and Image in the “Real” World**

Week 14: Practices and applications

*reading:* Sels. from Tufte, student selections

Week 15: Practices and applications

*reading:* Student selections

Week 16: Final project submission

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