



COMM 155 – Rhetoric of Vision and Sound

Tuesday / Thursday 2 – 3:20 PM, McEwen Hall G24

Dr. Christopher James Dahlie, PhD

Christopher.dahlie@fredonia.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday / Thursday 3:30 – 5:30 PM and by appointment

In addition to being an instructor in the Communication department, I am also a guitarist, keyboardist, saxophonist, and singer. Prior to my receiving my Doctorate of Philosophy at University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill in Communication Studies, I received a Bachelor of Science in Music Recording from the University of Southern California. I have worked as a recording and live audio engineer in New York City, Auckland (New Zealand), Los Angeles, and continue to be the head audio engineer for the 5,500-seat Chautauqua Amphitheater, a position I have held for twenty summers. My research focuses on the interfaces between technicians and technology in the cultural industries, and how the specific structures of these interfaces shape the experiences that serve as the commodities the cultural industries produce.

Going through and completion of this course, you have all been successful, or the cultural industries are a lot more happy to help you with any questions you have the creative process inherent therein.

This course fulfills Fredonia's general education requirement in category 8 – The Arts and Creative Thinking and Innovation - Arts themes.

A foundational course for communication majors. Explores the ways the elements of production (lighting, color, framing, sound) are used in media to shape the meaning of the content and communicate ideas and emotions.

Required Textbooks:

Visual Communication – Images with Messages, 7th Edition: Paul Martin Lester

Sonic Persuasion: Greg Goodale

Expanded course rationale:

Any rhetorical situation (Bitzer, 1968) involves:

- An exigence that can be defined as an issue to be resolved or at least advanced in resolution.
- An audience with a recognition of that problem, if not the means of expression to articulate it.
- A rhetor, or speaker, or artist, who while simultaneously focused and constrained by discourse can focus and constrain discourse on the issue in order to motivate the audience to think in a desired way.

You have all been in these situations. You have all witnessed exigencies. You have all been audience members. You have all been speakers trying to persuade an audience. This course is meant to expand your means of persuasion through the understanding and practice of various arts. While film and television will be the cumulative focus of the course, many of the component arts that go into those two forms will also be analyzed and perhaps even practiced!

It is imperative that students realize the power of media to manipulate the audience. This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of the basic techniques of media production and how the aesthetic choices made during production affect the viewer's interpretation. The best way to understand the creative process is to create media and reflect on the process and choices made during the production process. Therefore this course fulfills the requirements for the Creative Thinking and Innovation - Arts themes.

This is a dynamic class, which **may be modified** according to the needs and interests of the students, the availability of material and the needs of the instructor. Therefore the schedule of assignments is subject to change during the semester. Students are required to produce both creative work and critical analysis of existing work that reflect the concepts in the course.

6. Course Goals and Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to:

Skilled - develop intellectual and applied skills, literacies and knowledge

Students will be encouraged to develop expressive and creative abilities in music or the plastic, verbal, or visual arts and/or the ability to respond to those arts. Students will study the principles and components or values involved in the production and perception of works in a given medium, and, if possible, the changes in their conception and expression over time, or evidence that students will be encouraged to explore the role of intuition, experience, imagination, and intellect in the making and perception or understanding of a work of art

Connected - engage Community and Diversity: Local Stewardship, Global Citizenship
Be mindful of inclusiveness. Understand, evaluate, and communicate creatively—within and across technically and culturally diverse groups—in ways that responsibly confirm the value of all members. Explain types, functions, and relationships of verbal and nonverbal symbols in mediated communications. Evaluate and creatively consider communication locally, globally, and historically through perspectives relevant to their specific major. Develop the ability to respond to the arts. Understand and apply ethical principles to the practice of communication in research, interactions, and creative processes in diverse social, cultural, and professional spheres.

Responsible - activate Sustainability, Ethics, Leadership, and Professionalism.
Students will be introduced to new methods of research and creative activity brought about by electronic media and that students will learn the importance of applying critical thinking to the various sources obtained through electronic and other media;

Creative – demonstrate scholarship, artistry and innovation
Assignments will provide opportunities for students to judge, appreciate, and critique works of art, their own or others', as well as provide some indication of the manner in which comments, criticisms, and corrections of student presentations will be handled in the course. Methods of assessment may include tests, individual and group activities, classroom work, written and performance tests and critiques, portfolios, and teaching evaluations. Explore the roles of intellect and experience in the making and perceiving of a work of art. Develop an understanding of at least one principal form of artistic expression and the creative process inherent therein. Explore the roles of intuition and imagination in the making and perceiving of a work of art.

Instructional Methods and Activities

Lectures are used to introduce the concepts. Screenings of clips, entire films, still images, sound recordings and web pages are used to illustrate the topics and act as a springboard for discussion. There will be a discussion following each lecture/screening to foster students' critical thinking skills in analyzing what is the media producer trying to elicit from the audience and does he/she succeed. Students will be expected to compare and contrast the audio/visual material and to analyze in depth both the technical aspects and content/themes of the media. They will also be expected to incorporate concepts from the readings and to draw upon knowledge gained in other classes. **It is essential for students to come to class having done the readings and prepared to talk.**

Activities include:

- **Lecture**
- **Discussion – video clips**
- **Close analysis of still images, video and audio clips**
- **Groups' projects and presentations**
- **Individual written analysis of specific media -**
- **Critiquing other students' work**
- **Individual production of creative work – problem based, cooperative**

- **Small group discussions – inquiry based**
- **Examinations and quizzes – jeopardy review games, multiple choice, true false and written essays**
- **Examinations and quizzes**

Precis

Your participation will also be assessed by précis of the required reading. This will be uploaded to OnCourse. Your précis will be graded in total at the end of the course, meaning that unless you ask you may not get feedback on them. These assignments are both motivation for reading the textbook and also ways for me to witness your writing and research ability. The best way to do well on them is to do the assigned reading with plenty of time, and ask me questions about it if you have any. Your précis on a reading is due the day the reading is scheduled for. Meaning if we read chapter 2 on a Tuesday, you need to have your précis uploaded to OnCourse BEFORE CLASS STARTS on that Tuesday.

Open Forum Participation – fulfills FF Connected - Engage Community and Diversity: Local Stewardship, Global Citizenship

Through OnCourse open forums and/or VoiceThread, you will regularly post links, comments, debate, news, stories, videos, music, YouTube clips, etc., that you come across in daily life and post 300-500 word musings on them. The idea is to connect the random bits of popular culture that come through our lives in fleeting moments and capture them to discuss with and relate to the class. Feel free to develop your posts as either written, audio or video responses. These posts will add additional examples for in-class discussion and debate.

These posts will be assessed at four points each. Two points will come from posting, the other two points from briefly responding to someone else's post. You will typically post before Friday morning, and have the weekend to respond to other classmates' posts, with your responses due Monday morning.

Creative Assignments x 2 - fulfills FF Creative – demonstrate scholarship, artistry and innovation

Students will produce individual creative work: a narrative script, which reflects the concepts presented in class or readings. Some of the scripts will be chosen for group project development. Also an individual DVD cover, or poster, or music, or press release, will be created to reflect the final group project.

Critical Analysis Assignment - fulfills FF Skilled - Develop intellectual and applied skills, literacies and knowledge

Students will analyze a film clip or still image based on the concepts discussed in the readings and lectures. An adequate assignment will include: identifying the formal element, giving a specific example, and explaining the effect the specific example has on

the audience. Good and excellent assignments will incorporate the ideas from the assigned readings.

Group Production Assignment x 2 – fulfills FF Responsible - activate Sustainability, Ethics, Leadership, and Professionalism.

In small groups, (3-4) students create pre-production material from narrative script winners for inclusion into a pre-production notebook. Script breakdown, storyboards, shot lists, cast, crew, prop lists, costumes, make-up, release forms are minimum materials required. In addition, each student will identify and explain the choices made in production using the appropriate technical language and their intentions behind those choices. Students should incorporate the concepts from the readings and lectures in their analysis. The written report should also discuss their personal contribution to the project and an analysis of the collaborative process. 70% of the grade for this assignment is based on the project itself and 30% is based on the individual write-up.

The final project is a group project that is a short, silent narrative work that reflects basic understanding of how to tell a story that can influence the audience. It can be a video work, but I am also open to theatrical work.

Oral Presentation – fulfills FF Responsible - activate Sustainability, Ethics, Leadership, and Professionalism

Each student will pitch his/her narrative script ideas to the class/producers. Several scripts will be chosen for the development of the group projects.

Midterm and Final Exams

The midterm and final exam will consist of essay and multiple choice/short answer questions and written, analytical paper.

Grade Breakdown

Precis	10% of final grade
Open Forum participation	10% of final grade
Script – 3 minutes max	5% of final grade
Pitching presentation	5% of final grade
Pre-production notebook for group project	10% of final grade
Poster, DVD project, Press release or music	10% of final grade
Group Final project	30% of final grade
Midterm exam	10% of final grade
Final exam	10% of final grade

9. Recommended reading bibliography

Allen, Robert C., and Douglas Gomery, *Film History: Theory and Practice*. New York: Random House. 1985.

Altman, Rick. *Sound Theory Sound Practice*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Andrew, J. Dudley. *Concepts in Film Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.

Andrew, J. Dudley. *Major Film Theories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976.

Bazin, Andre. *What is Cinema?* Trans. Hugh Gray. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.

Bordwell, David, and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction* New York: McGraw Hill, 2001.

Brownlow, Kevin. *The Parade's Gone By*. Berkeley: University of California Press 1968.

Corrigan, Timothy. *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*. Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1989.

Douglas, John S., and Glenn P. Harnden. *The Art of Technique: An Aesthetic Approach to film and Video Production*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1996.

Eisenstein, Sergei. *Film Form*. Trans. Jay Leyda. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977.

Eisenstein, Sergei. *Film Sense*. Trans. Jay Leyda. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975.

Gianetti, Louis. *Understanding Movies*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1999.

Kalinak, Kathryn. *Settling the Score: Music and the Classical Hollywood Film*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992.

McKee, Robert. *Story: Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting*. Regan/Harper Collins, 2010

Kolker, Robert. *Film, Form, and Culture*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1999.

Lack, Russell. *TwentyFour Frames Under: A Buried History of Film Music*. London: Quartet Books. 1997.

Monaco, James. *How To Read a Film: The Art, Technology, Language, History and Theory of Film and Media*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Thompson, Kristin, *Storytelling in the New Hollywood: Understanding Classical Narrative Techniques*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Thompson, Kristin, and David Bordwell. *Film History: An Introduction*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1994.

Weis, Elisabeth and John Belton ed. *Film Sound: Theory and Practice*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.

Key Journals

American Cinematographer	Film Quarterly
American Film	Jump Cut
Cineaste	Screen
Film Comment	Sight and Sound
Film and History	Variety

CLASS POLICIES

Disclaimer

In line with the course objectives, class material will be selected to help foster challenging discussions in class and beyond. They have been chosen assuming that you are not only legally adults, but that you understand higher education to involve encounters with ideas and arguments that may question your own beliefs and assumptions. Some of the class material may startle you or challenge you. Some of the material might be considered controversial or even offensive. All reactions will be welcomed in class and respected, and they will be received in the spirit of extending discussion rather than forestalling it.

E-Mail and Office Hours

Any email you wish to send me should be done through the Quickmail section of OnCourse, on the right of the course front page, so that it tracks in our course site. Any email you send me must be sent in the expectation that it will take at least 24-48 hours, or an entire weekend, to get a response. This is particularly important to remember if you have questions as assignment deadlines come up. I plan on holding office hours from 3:30 – 5:30 Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, and by appointment, in my office on the third floor of McEwen Hall.

In-Class Electronics

I am quite liberal regarding the use of electronics, provided they do not get in the way of our collective learning. If that line is crossed, electronics will be restricted. The instructor reserves the absolute right to impose whatever restrictions they deem necessary regarding electronics in class as the semester progresses. If you show common sense and courtesy regarding electronics as aids to our learning environment, there should not be a problem here.

Grades and Grade Tracking

Outstanding work compared to your peers gets A's. Good work against your peers gets B's. Decent work against your peers gets C's. Poor work against your peers gets D's. Failure to follow the base directions of an assignment or demonstrate knowledge of course material gets F's.

Grades will be posted on OnCourse. No grades will be discussed over email, in accordance with SUNY policy. Any question regarding grades must be discussed in person during office hours or during a scheduled appointment.

Late Assignment Policy

Late work is not the end of the world, but late assignments are highly discouraged. I will a full letter grade from your assignment grade each twenty-four hour period they are late following the time when they are due as posted on OnCourse. Don't wait until the last minute to do your work and upload your files. If you do, you will be rushed, your work will suffer, and you won't have time to deal with the *inevitable* computer issues (e.g., my computer crashed, printer ran out of ink, not enough batteries, etc.)

Attendance

The only absences SUNY Fredonia instructors are required to excuse are those for University activities by a recognized student organization/team and those involving holidays of faith traditions depending on the faith of the student. Notice of plans to be absent for either of these two reasons must be given in advance.

ALL other reasons for absence are subject to the approval of the instructor. This includes illness and family emergencies. Things occasionally happen that prevent us from getting places on time. Do your best to attend class, on time, as often as possible.

Any absence beyond two unexcused absences can incur a full letter grade penalty on your overall course grade. This means six unexcused absences can result in your failure of the course regardless of the quality of your work on assignments or exams. If your work is less than A level, you have even less margin on attendance.

Honor Code and Plagiarism

From the SUNY Fredonia online catalog:

To plagiarize is “to steal and pass off as one’s own the ideas or words of another” (Webster’s *Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*). Examples of plagiarism include presenting the ideas of another in one’s own words without crediting the source, copying sentences, paragraphs, or pages from a source without explicit reference to the pages from which the words were taken, and, of course, presenting another’s entire work as one’s own. If a student is not certain whether a particular practice may be considered plagiaristic, it is his/her responsibility to consult the instructor for whom he/she is writing the paper, exercise, or examination. The State University of New York at Fredonia strongly condemns plagiarism and takes severe action against those who plagiarize.

More importantly, I take strong action against those who plagiarize. I will turn in a suspected work to my chair immediately. I will participate in any and all hearings on the matter. I take this seriously enough to have participated in several UNC honor court cases that I initiated. If you feel something might be plagiarism, ask me about it. Don’t do it in my course. Ever.

SUNY FREDONIA RESOURCES

(1) ITS Service Center offers multimedia support for students. They can be reached by phone: 716-673-3407 and on-campus: W203 Thompson Hall.

(2) The Learning Center provides free, confidential, nonbiased, collaborative tutoring services as a way of enabling students to succeed in their course work. The goal of tutoring is to help you with your assignment in a way that will help you become more successful in all of your classes. Learning Center: Carnahan-Jackson Center, Reed Library, Fourth Floor. Phone: 716-673-3550.

(3) Reasonable accommodations are available to students with documented disabilities at SUNY Fredonia. Students who may require instructional and/or examination accommodations should contact **the Office of Disability Support Services for Students (DSS)**, located on the 4th Floor of the Reed Library (716-673-3270 or disability.services@fredonia.edu). The DSS coordinator will review documentation and determine accommodations on a case-by-case basis. DSS will notify the professor with an accommodation letter that verifies that the student has registered with the DSS office and describes any accommodations approved for the student. After the student has met with the DSS coordinator, she or he should contact the professor to discuss any needed accommodations. It is at that point that the professor will make accommodations. Here's DSS's website: <https://www.fredonia.edu/academics/disability-support-services>

(4) Additional resource information can be found on the Enrollment & Student Services page: <https://www.fredonia.edu/about/offices/enrollment-and-student-services>, click on the + next to services and select the service you'd like to learn more about.

Weather advisory statement. On-campus courses will not meet. Check OnCourse and Fredonia email for any changes to the schedule, assignments and deadlines. Online courses will continue to run.

Copyright statement. The materials provided by the instructor in this course are for the use of students enrolled in the course. All materials in the course are covered under this statement. Copyrighted course materials may not be further disseminated.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

Communication does not exist outside of relationships. With this in mind, the faculty of the SUNY Fredonia Department of Communication believes that all communicators, whether in the classroom, on the air, or within created works, have a responsibility to themselves and their audience.

The faculty believes that it is our responsibility to provide perspective and structure as students make choices about their work, and consequently, about themselves and who they are as adults and scholars. We encourage students to make the effort to consider the consequences of their choices for themselves, for others, and for those relationships.

The faculty encourages projects and behaviors that are undertaken with thoughtful respect and consideration for others. We support and encourage work that is both ethical and enriching to the students' community and to personal and professional relationships. All students should review the Department of Communication Ethical and Professional Standards at <http://www.fredonia.edu/departments/communication/standards.asp>

You can reach the department secretary, Ms. Carol Smith, M-F from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Ms. Smith's phone number is 716-673-3410 and the office is located in McEwen Hall, Room 324.

Department of Communication Ethical and Professional Standards

The Department of Communication at SUNY Fredonia advocates the following standards of behavior for all students. *

1. **Academic honesty** is expected.
2. **Attendance** is expected at all class-related meetings.
3. **Punctuality** is expected for all class- and department-related meetings.
4. **Courteous classroom behaviors** should be enacted at all times.
5. A **respectful classroom environment** should be maintained for classmates and instructors, regardless of differing viewpoints.
6. All **university/department equipment or properties** should be used with care and respect.
7. The campus **sustainability policy** should be supported by using department and other resources responsibly.
8. **Cell phones** should be turned off during all class meetings.
9. **Laptops** are a potential distraction in the classroom and in some classes may be allowed only to accommodate students with documented disabilities.
10. **Email communications** should use standard professional formatting.
11. A minimum of 3 hours of **study time** should be devoted for each in-class or credit hour.

*Students should adhere to individual instructors' more specific policies. Additional information on the SUNY Fredonia policies regarding Student Rights and Responsibilities can be found at <http://www.fredonia.edu/catalog/4405.htm>.

Examples/Explanations:

1. **Academic honesty** – Compliance with strict standards of academic honesty is expected. Academic misconduct/plagiarism will not be tolerated and may be grounds for failure of a course and suspension or dismissal from the university. Note that **plagiarism** is the failure to correctly cite/reference any words or ideas which are not originally your own; you should always reference the sources of your information. Plagiarism also includes the using of others' (or sharing your own) essays, quizzes, etc., as well as the use of pre-written, purchased, or down-loaded materials. Please review the SUNY Fredonia Academic Integrity Policy at <http://www.fredonia.edu/catalog/4442.htm>.
2. **Attendance** – Regular attendance is expected for all class-related meetings. Notifying professors in advance, as required by some faculty, does not constitute an “excused absence.”
3. **Punctuality** – Punctuality is expected for all class-related meetings, as well as meetings with faculty or staff. Students having a scheduling dilemma that makes punctuality to a class difficult should reconsider their registration for that course.
4. **Courteous classroom behaviors** – Considerate and respectful conduct should be enacted at all times. By way of example, this includes:
 - Having **considerate attentiveness** to others, including listening rather than talking while others (professors and classmates) are engaged in discussion; talking is distracting and disrespectful to the speaker and to other students.
 - Avoiding **side-work or distractions during class meetings**. The focus during a class meeting should be on the class meeting; engaging in other activities (such as texting or doing other reading) diminishes the ability to be fully involved in class interactions. It will therefore negatively impact credit for participation.

- Not **packing up materials** before the end of class meetings.
 - Refraining from **putting feet on chairs** or other furniture/materials in the classroom.
5. **Respectful classroom environment** – Your enrollment in any course indicates your agreement that all discussions and interactions will be conducted with thought, maturity, and respect for others’ rights to differing values and views. Discussion of differing beliefs is encouraged and should be conducted in a manner that maintains a climate conducive to the thinking and learning of all members of the class. Students are encouraged to exercise personal responsibility and self-discipline as they engage in the rigors of discovery and scholarship.
 6. **University/Department equipment or properties** – Equipment belongs to the State of New York and SUNY Fredonia: access to the equipment is a privilege. Students using this material are responsible, ethically and otherwise, for returning equipment in the same condition that it was in when it was checked out.
 7. **Sustainability policy** – The Department of Communication is a Sustainability Partner on the SUNY Fredonia campus. In keeping with SUNY Fredonia's Go Green Initiatives to use resources more thoughtfully, students are encouraged to be mindful about paper and other resource usage. Please use double-sided printing for all hard copies. Moreover, you are encouraged to print selectively from course E-reserves, share with classmates, and recycle all printed materials that cannot be passed on to future students.
 8. **Cell phones** – Receiving telephone calls and sending or receiving text messages are distracting from classroom goals. Cell phones and other interactive devices must be turned OFF—not set to silent/vibrate—and stored in students’ bags before the beginning of classes.
 9. **Laptops** – Research shows that laptops are a distraction in the classroom.* In general, all electronic devices should be turned off unless otherwise instructed by a course professor or as needed to accommodate specific disabilities.
 10. **Email communications** – Emails written to any faculty or staff, or to any community member as a representative of SUNY Fredonia, should use standard professional formatting. This includes a clear subject heading, a courteous greeting, proper spelling and grammar, respectful content, and an identifying “signature.”
 11. **Study time** – The Department of Communication enforces rigorous academic standards, which maintain the high quality and success of our graduates. Students should expect to devote a minimum of 3 hours of study/preparation time for each in-class/credit hour.

*References:

- Bitzer, L. F. (1968). The Rhetorical Situation. *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 1(1), 1–15.
- Bugeja, M. (2007). Distractions in the Wireless Classroom. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 53(21), pp. C1-C4.
- Fried, C. B. (2008). In-class laptop use and its effects on student learning. *Computers & Education*, 50(3), pp. 906-914.
- Fink III, J. L. (2009). Why We Banned Use of Laptops and "Scribe Notes" in Our Classroom. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 74(6), pp. 1-2.