

**FST 496-001 / PSY 495-002: Cognition of Cinema**  
**Dale Cohen and Todd Berliner**  
**Assignments**

**Type and double space *everything*, except for your storyboards.**

**Reading Summaries**

At the very beginning of every class in which a reading is assigned, students must turn in a one-page summary, written in clear prose, of each assigned article or chapter. These summaries are perfunctory, designed merely to make sure that you are prepared to discuss the readings in class and understanding what you read. They are your only opportunities to score points for diligence and dutifulness. Summaries cannot be made up or turned in late (so be sure to arrive to class on time). If you miss a reading summary deadline, you get a zero on the assignment; however, we will drop your lowest score, even a zero. If you know you must miss a class, you may turn in the reading summary early (by one hour before class begins) to the box of either Professor Cohen or Professor Berliner.

**Storyboards**

In groups of two or three (with at least one film studies major and one psychology major), students will make a storyboard (using drawings or photographs) for a scene of the students' own design. Storyboards, which should be between 8 and 15 frames, must obey the principles of continuity editing outlined in the readings and in class discussion. The storyboard must, for instance, obey the 180-degree rule and the 30-degree rule. It must also include each of the following combinations of shots at some point:

- 1) A graphic match
- 2) An eyeline match
- 3) A match on action
- 4) A shot/reverse shot

Specify the type of shot combination below the frames in which each combination occurs.

Bring to class 20 copies of your storyboard.

**Investigation Reports**

Each student is to identify a question of interest about the cognition of cinema that can be researched both in the extant literature in psychology and film studies and through experimentation. For example, you may ask, "If the 180 degree rule is violated, will viewers be confused?" or "Why do viewers easily ignore size changes from shot to shot?" or "How do viewers interpret the relative passage of time when viewing a cut, a wipe, a fade out, a dissolve, or a fade out followed by a fade in?"

Each student will bring to class 22 copies of a one-page report explaining his or her question, why it is of interest, and what areas of psychology or film might help to answer to the question. The class will discuss each report for about 5 minutes. The writer of the report will listen to the discussion without participating, so be sure to write your reports in such a way that they require no further explanation.

### **Refined Investigation Reports and Literature Reviews**

- 1) Each student will refine his or her investigation report, based on feedback from the class, and hone it down to one focused paragraph, which will serve as a provisional “abstract summary” of the student’s research project.
- 2) Each student will write a comprehensive review of the literature on his or her topic of investigation. Reviews must include literature from the disciplines of both psychology and film studies.
- 3) Students must turn in with their reports a hard copy of every article they have reviewed.

### **Design-of-Stimulus Group Presentations**

In their investigative reports, students identified a question of interest. Drs. Berliner and Cohen will identify a subset of these questions to be researched. Groups of two or three students (with at least one film studies and one psychology major) will be assigned to conduct, as a group, a simple experiment to answer this question. Every experiment requires a sound methodology, some stimuli to show the subjects, and some form of response by the subjects. In class, your group will give a 5-10 minute presentation on the methodology of your experiment, including a description of your stimuli and the form of the response you will require of your subjects.

### **Data Collections**

Each student research group will conduct its experiment on participants found on campus. Drs. Berliner and Cohen will specify the number of participants required for each research group. Each research group must have all its data collected by the date indicated in the syllabus.

### **Detailed Outlines**

Each student will write a detailed outline for a final paper that spells out the conclusions of his or her experiment and incorporates the literature on the topic of study. Outlines should include the paper’s points (insights and analysis) as well as the evidence for the points. Co-authored outlines by members of the same group are acceptable.

### **Final Papers**

Each student will turn in *two* copies of a clearly written final paper on his or her research project that includes:

- 1) an “abstract summary,” at the very beginning of the paper, of the paper’s conclusions,
- 2) a detailed literature review,
- 3) a detailed description of the experiment conducted by the research group that includes an explanation of the experimental methods and the results of the experiment,
- 4) a discussion of the conclusions of the research.

Co-authored papers by members of the same group are acceptable.

### **Scholarly Group Presentations**

Each research group will give a 20 minute presentation, using visual aids, that:

- 1) gives a brief background on the existing findings on the topic of study,
- 2) describes in detail the methods of the group’s experiment and its results,
- 3) describes the conclusions of the research.

Each member of a group must be responsible for a portion of the oral presentation.