

2X2

2x2 Description and Syllabus

Thursdays 3:30-6:00

Room 447

Form follows format. The first movies were filmed plays; it took decades for the vocabulary of film & a new kind of storytelling to emerge. Now film is viewable on handheld devices: phones, palms, ipods, MP3 players—and people are watching movies meant for the big screen and a communal experience (theater) or short format forms, such as commercials and music videos, meant for TV and whose purpose is selling stuff.

Will a new art form emerge? Will there be a new vocabulary? Will visuals become less important? Sound more important? Can you be moved to action, to tears, to laughter in a short time and small space? Can you possibly feel immersed?

Who knows?

2X2 is an experiment—a creative storytelling/narrative course to explore a potential new art form, specifically designed to be seen on a small (+/- 2 inch) screen for a short time (+/- 2 minute). The emphasis in this class is on narrative, not interaction; experimentation, not trying to create the next LOLcats.

We explore narrative possibilities in both non-fiction (e.g. essay forms, mini-docs,) and fiction (e.g. stories, poetry, performance). In some assignments, students work with ‘other people’s stories’; in others they create their own. and stories created by students.

The point is not just short short-story telling, but the nature of the ‘venue’ for the story: the theater is a handheld, the theater can be anywhere. Will the relationship between sound and visuals change? Books have been the primary handheld medium for centuries—what will our relationship be to this new medium? And what questions do you have? Predictions? Areas you’d like to explore

Everyone will get a nano for use in the class. And you will also need your cellphone... which, I assume in this day at this school and at your ages, are all capable of texting.

The class follows a traditional ‘creative writing’ format. I will give you a prompt to spark your imagination, provide some limitations/challenges, and lots of room for you to explore aspects that interest you. Each week there are two assignments. One for your nano, one for your phone.

The syllabus is fluid, may change in a single bound when experimentation takes us somewhere interesting. The specific assignments are not listed here, because surprise is of the essence.

- 1) Weekly 2x2: A specific exercise, given at the end of each class, which has 2 aspects: a topic/theme (e.g. confess to an emotional crime, TK), and a form restriction (e.g. use no words). In each class, students present their work for critique.
- 2) Txt.bk: A writing assignment. I will give you an exercise (e.g. a haiku) to write on your cellphone in 120 characters or less.

You will upload your 2x2's to the class blog and then it will be distributed as a podcast on itunes.

You will send your txt.bk entry to our site at textmarks.
We will go over all this in class.

Each week you will get your assignments to the class by 9 p.m. Wednesday night. You are expected to read and view them all and be ready to discuss in class.

Over the course of the semester we will also talk about how 2x2's might be presented in a public setting and experiment with some 2x2 exhibit design in the last few weeks. Then we will stage a film festival of sorts for outside reviewers in the last class. You will select one or two of your 2x2's to take to a more finished stage.

Grading

Everyone always wants to know about grading. Second years are still on the old system, first years on the Pass-Fail. I assume you will all get A's/ Pass You must be a pretty motivated group. The way to lose your A is to come late to class repeatedly, to not come to class without telling me ahead of time why, to not be prepared, to not participate, and to not finish your project.

Class participation is important. It counts for 50% of your grade.

I will write you a fairly extensive comment at the end of the semester.

Lateness

I really hate lateness. I know there are other professors who lay down draconian punishments for lateness. I won't do that, but I think it is the rudest thing you can do to colleagues, friends or anyone. It means you consider your time more

valuable than mine, for example. There are always emergencies, but there is no excuse for not letting someone know. My cell phone is 917 684 0969. Office phone is 212 998 1997. I am giving you my number, as a courtesy to you for emergencies. Please don't overuse it. Let me know if you are going to be late...and oversleeping doesn't count as a reason. If you have a job that forces you to be consistently late to this class, maybe you should find one that does not conflict.

Absences

Let me know if you have to be absent. Repeated absences will lower your grade. Three unexcused absences, you fail the course.

Individual Sessions

I like to have a short individual meeting with each of you in the first week early just to get to know you better, find out your particular interest. In addition, I will meet with you any time you want to—office hours are everyday afternoons except when I am teaching (tues/thurs 3:30-6) email me to set up an appointment nancy.hechinger@nyu.edu .

Laptops

As a rule, no laptops in class. It's OK when you want to take notes when the class is talking about your work. Otherwise, there really isn't a need for them. Lids down definitely when a colleague is presenting. I know I shouldn't have to say that, but...