

Project Year

Spring 2009

Project Title

A Database of Film and Media History and Aesthetics Part 2

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Audience:

Students taking courses in the Film and Media Studies program

Pedagogical Issue:

The solution to the pedagogical issues which were addressed with the first part of this project (producing DVDs with film clips to facilitate the teaching of the introduction to the study of film course) truly transformed the teaching of the course. After sharing the faculty member shared her experience with colleagues, they were eager to participate in expanding the database to include clips for their own classes. Most are unable to make their own clips because they don't know the technology or they simply don't have the time, or both.

Solution:

The development of a user-friendly database of clips would be indispensable for teaching and would vastly improve students' ability to absorb and learn visual material. Once the fellows have further expanded and developed the project they began this past year, their plan to provide an instruction manual will allow all of us to have the tools to continue growing the database on our own.

As the Film and Media Studies program expands its courses and increases the number of its instructors, there is even greater need to expand and improve the ease with which we use visual material. In addition, as more faculty across the university increase their use of film and other visual material in the classroom, this database will become an indispensable component of teaching in the 21st century

Technologies Used:

FileMakerPro, digital audio and video

Project Abstract:

In the introductory core and upper-level courses for cinema majors and minors, undergraduates must learn to master not only the vocabulary of film—editing, cinematography, mise-en-scene, frame composition—but also must learn to use this vocabulary to actively and critically read the moving image. The majority of lectures are given over to the careful study of clips from historically and aesthetically significant films; thus students view and analyze a multitude of film clips, often from several films, during every class period. Viewing and reading these images is the essence of these courses. But the task of searching through each DVD or VHS, as well as switching from one DVD to the next, is extremely time-consuming and breaks the flow of the lecture, a serious impediment to effective teaching. Existing technology can solve this problem. Using a variety of software, we propose to capture, edit, and create a

set of tailor-made clips for addressing the didactic objectives of multiple film and media courses, greatly facilitating the seamless presentation of course materials. These courses are offered every year and are requirements for film and media majors. Because the clips will include a wide range of classic films from American and international cinemas, as well as other media, the data-base will not only facilitate the teaching of multiple core courses, but will also provide a rich resource for professors teaching more specialized film and media courses at Hopkins. The further development of a user-friendly database will guarantee easy accessibility by multiple users and the development of a manual with standardized formatting criteria will ensure the continued growth of this project in the future.