

Personal/ Sociological/ Political Synergy Assignment
Experimental Media in the Eternal City
Prof. Claudia Esslinger

For this assignment you will make a three-minute video/ experimental film that juxtaposes two themes in a very experimental way: one arising from personal facts and the other from socio-political information you have learned in Rome.

The first theme will be about your identity in some way. It could be about your gender, race or ethnic heritage, religious or ethical persuasions and history, etc. It could be a secret you've never told or some unusual fact about your family, but it doesn't have to be extremely personal. It can be objective or subjective in style or viewpoint.

The second should come from a fact/ story/ myth/ theory that you have either discovered in Rome, your other classes or have learned more about by your time here. By exploring this next to your personal issue, it will make both issues have more multidimensional meanings. It should not just be a rubber stamp of your personal topic (too similar). The criteria for choosing the subject(s) should be a combination of your own interests and previous research and the possibility of gathering visual/ aural information about that subject while in Rome.

As you put together the options you should use a critical (in the best sense of the word) rather than a sentimental eye. You should privilege the experimental form over the literal information. The goal is to present information, images, impressions to the viewer and to let them draw their own conclusions, rather than preaching or teaching to them. This doesn't mean the piece can't be subjective, but it should also be evaluated, deconstructed or parodied. You can show a point of view, but be transparent about the voice and authority of the author. The structure should make sense of the two themes, either as a dichotomy, or sequential, alternating, co-existent, layered or split-screen presentations. It might make sense to have two voices, two ways of having text or have the text and image come from each theme separately. It does not have to have any text or narration unless you want that and it shouldn't have dialog since that is too close to mainstream media.

Examples:

In "Stranger comes to town" Janet Goss uses interviews with American immigrants juxtaposed to Warcraft avatars and reworks the safety video used at airports. She makes the avatars mouth movements lip synch with the interviews.

In "the House that Ruth Built" Vanalyn Green juxtaposes baseball with sexual attraction and uses game boards as part of her imagery. Also common in this theme is the use of phrases from baseball as euphemisms for sexual relationships: getting to first base, etc. warning: this over used and common and therefore is OUT, (strike three).

In 97/07, Seong Chong layers images of ordinary objects with bar codes, which implies the commodification of everything. (only this piece doesn't really use text or tell a story)

In *Georgeous Operation*, Jeanette Thomas uses an absurd first-person story to talk about obstacles. It could be said that her piece explores the idea of not being able to see the "speck in your neighbor's eye because of the moat (log) in your own".

Process:

1. Make lists of ten topics you have personal stake in that make sense from your history and who you are.
2. List ten topics that are readily researchable/ recordable here or for you.
3. List ten seductive images or compelling visual points of view that you would like to record.
5. Play chance games to experiment with combinations of these elements.
6. Start shooting or researching, write, make storyboard, shot list in the order that works for you.
7. About half way through gathering go look for other elements that you will need to complete it.
8. gather sounds that either reinforce or complicate the project.
- 9.. Edit/ Revise, Edit/ Revise, Edit/ Revise, Edit/ Revise, Edit/ Revise, Edit/ Revise, Edit/ Revise,

Samples of Art Project Topics:***Possible Second Theme Topics/Prompts: (you'll have your own)***

- The history of obelisks in Rome
- Tracing the history of the Jews and Rome, from the Arch of Titus to the Jewish Ghetto
- Myth of Romulus and Remus (twins, fratricide, etc)
- Vichy collaborators and resisters in WWII
- What does populist government mean in Italy, from Mussolini to Berlusconi to Salvini (does the Vittoriano relate to this?)
- What has been the history of migration in/ through Rome/Italy? how does it relate to global south to north migrations? why is this true?
- Abundant water fountains in Rome, facts and metaphors, leaking, flowing, uses?
- Passaggiata as metaphor.
- Tiny Vatican as State within larger culture
- Multiple sacking of Rome (1527 is one)
- Definitions of Baroque: what would making a contemporary Baroque Video look like?
- Ancient Roman belief in Omens, auspice

cobblestones like teeth falling out.

People ate donkey foals, stuffed doormice, stewed larks. There were words you could not say. Witchcraft was real. Asses' milk relieved facial wrinkles; veal fat, mixed with lamp soot, prevented baldness. Craping your gums with a tooth taken from a man who died a violent death was believed to relieve soreness. Pregnant women who wanted their children to be good looking were urged to look at good-looking things." Anthony Doerr