Major Revision Proposal

Moving-Image Production

Submitted by Ryan Friedman, Director of Film Studies

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We propose to make a revision to the pre-major requirement of the Moving-Image Production (MIP) major. Currently, students are required to take Art 2555 (Photography 1), plus MIP 2201 and 2202 (Filmmaking Foundations 1 and 2), in order to complete the pre-major requirement. We would like to make both Art 2555 and Art 2000 (Encountering Contemporary Art) acceptable options for fulfilling the third, pre-major course requirement.

The proposed change is motivated by several concerns. First of all, we feel that Art 2555 poses a de facto enrollment barrier to prospective MIP majors, because it requires the purchase of a DSLR camera, something that is likely to be financially burdensome for many students. Although the type of camera required for Art 2555 is capable of recording video, it is, further, not ideally suited to the kinds of work that students will be doing in their MIP courses. Moreover, our longstanding goal has been to provide students with high-quality equipment; part of our recruitment pitch for a competitive filmmaking program like ours is that students participating in it will not have to supply their own gear. We just acquired our first set of “prosumer”-grade video cameras, which students enrolled in MIP 2201 and 2202 will be able to check out from the Film Studies office, for use on class projects.

Art 2000 suggests itself as the most attractive alternative to Art 2555 because the course helps students situate work in film and video in relation to broader movements in the contemporary art world. Increasingly, gallery artists are crossing over to work in feature films (e.g., Steve McQueen, Sam Taylor-Wood), while film is being exhibited, more and more, in museums and galleries. Given that some students will come to the major with a very narrow sense of cinema, Art 2000 could afford a very productive expansion of their understanding and could provide an important bridge to the programming at the Wexner Center (with which MIP requires them to engage). The course also has the potential to broaden the MIP curriculum, since the basic technical skills introduced in Art 2555 will also be covered in MIP 2201, making the course, in part, redundant. From a scheduling standpoint, the Art 2000 option will also provide obvious benefits. Art 2555 meets for six hours a week, whereas Art 2000 meets for only three hours. This added flexibility will be especially beneficial to MIP pre-majors, given that the foundations courses that they are required to take are already time-intensive and tricky for students to fit into their class schedules.

The members of the Moving-Image Production Advisory Committee (MIPAC), the faculty committee that oversees the major, have reached a strong consensus that this modification will be beneficial for students. And the MIP faculty who have been involved with the initial planning conversations long opposed the idea of making 2555 the sole required Art course, due to the camera-purchase requirement. The proposed change will not affect our assessment plan for the major.

The leadership of the Department of Art has strongly supported this modification. Because offering students the option to take either course adheres to the original plan to make a 2000-level Art course mandatory in the major, Chair Rebecca Harvey indicated in conversations last year that she was willing to defer to the faculty’s judgment about which class would make most pedagogical and practical sense. Moreover, from a pragmatic standpoint, it is easier for the Art department to accommodate additional demand in 2000 than in 2555: sections of Photography 1 are capped at thirty-five students, whereas Encountering Contemporary Art currently has a 160-student cap. The Interim Chair of Art, Michael Mercil, has granted concurrence on this project (see his email, attached). The Chairs of the other departments and programs involved in the creation of the MIP major, Janet Parrot (Theatre), Mary Anne Beecher (Design), and Maria Plazzi (ACCAD) have also communicated their support.