

Assignment #1

Opening Titles

In this assignment, you will create a set of titles for the title sequence of an actual or fictitious film of your own devising. You will put text and images together into a 20-second piece that uses precise cuts, panning, zooming, and other visual-editing effects, timed to sound and/or music.

- **The premise** of your film can be entirely original, or can be adapted from a published book, short story, or other non-visual narrative. It may be something in between.
- Whether original or adapted, **the composition** of your title sequence should be informed by a critical understanding of the characters, plot-generating conflicts, settings, themes, and tone which make a film concept.

This 20-second title sequence should be "narrative" in one of two senses—or perhaps a combination of these:

- 1. A plot-driven narrative approach:** "this, then this, then this..," portraying something that happens to a character
- 2. A montage-driven narrative approach** to arouse tension, anticipation, curiosity, or a sense of discovery: "this, plus this, plus this," and produces something that happens to the viewer.

Two Models of Title Sequences to Avoid

1. Avoid simply telling a backstory.

Instead, your title sequence should introduce your series/movie's essential tensions, themes, and tone using a combination of narrative and montage.) See the *Gilligan's Island* title sequence as an example of a simple backstory.

2. Avoid the common style of title sequences that survey the characters or actors without any narrative intent.

Non-narrative title sequences are common and perfectly successful, but won't serve well as models for this particular assignment. As an example, see the title sequence for "Arrested Development," which begins with eight seconds of voiceover narrative—the premise of the show—but which, for the most part, is a visual list of characters/actors. Common in TV.

Commentary (One paragraph)

If your concept is an adaptation of an existing work, describe the original source of the story and characters in a way that makes clear the effectiveness and appropriateness of your title sequence. Explain the ways that you adapted the original story's plot, characters, situations, and themes to make it work as the concept for your piece.

Compare shots or edits in your sequence to specific techniques and effects in at least three sample sequences discussed in class

Criteria

- Show concept, analysis, and use of essential conflicts and tension
- Choice and use of Visual Style
- Camera Work
- Use of After Effects (if applicable)
- Verbal/Visual integration (title, credits)
- Use of Narrative (story and/or montage)
- Use of mise-en-scene, locale, setting, and backgrounds
- Use of sound
- Commentary