

Images or sounds collected from real-world examples become “paint on a palette” (74).

Lawrence Lessig, *Remix*

Make a **2-3 minute video** using pre-existing video source material. You have two main goals here. 1. Become familiar with the creative possibilities Adobe Premiere offers you, the various ways editing can transform and remake video footage. 2. Consider how remix can act as what Lev Manovich calls “view control” – how it can shift our perspective on events and information, calling attention to things that might otherwise be hard to see.

So, as you imagine the shape your remix might take, think about: What perspective will ground your video? Why might it be valuable? Is there a particular group of people you imagine it speaking to? How can you use editing to make visible new information, or a different way of viewing existing information? You don’t need answers to all of these questions before getting started (you probably shouldn’t have them, in fact), but you should have some reason for making your particular remix.

### ***Guidelines***

- At least half of your source video must be Creative Commons or Public Domain.
- You can’t use more than 10 seconds of unedited video anywhere in your remix.
- You can use as few or many pieces of source video as you like. (So, as long as it’s CC/PD, you could work from a single video.)
- You’re welcome to work from or incorporate pieces of the short you make in class today (1/13), or to pursue a different idea entirely.
- The remix is due **Sunday, 1/31 by 11:59PM**. You should upload it to your individual Box folder as an .mp4 file, titled in this way: CDM\_lastname\_video.mp4.

### ***Video Portfolio***

You’ll produce several documents alongside the video itself, which will also count toward your grade on this project. They are: a proposal, a reflection, and a Premiere tutorial.

The **proposal** is an initial plan of approach of **at least 300 words**. It’s due **Sunday, 1/17 by 11:59PM**, and should be posted to the blog tagged with “video proposal.” Feel free to use bullet points, pictures, or diagrams in addition to complete paragraphs. Here are some things to address in your proposal:

- What materials are you using? Link me to their sources.
- What would you like to do with them?
- What kind of reaction would you like to evoke in your viewers?
- What particular video editing techniques will you use? Do you know how to do them already? If not, what will you need to learn to complete this project?

The **reflection** is an account of how the project actually went, due **Sunday, 1/31 by 11:59PM**, and should be **500-600 words**. It should also include **3 screenshots** taken at

various stages of your composing process. Upload it to Box as a .doc or .docx file. Some guiding questions:

- How did you go about composing your remix? What moments are you making visible with screenshots, and why are they interesting or important to your finished product?
- How does your original vision differ from what you're turning in?
- What's your favorite part of your remix? Least favorite?
- Are there things you wish you'd done but didn't or couldn't? What are they? Why couldn't you do them?
- If you revise this video, what might you do?

You don't have to answer all of these questions, but you should give me a sense of the work that went into your remix and whether it accomplishes what you wanted it to.

The **tutorial** is a description of one trick you learned in Premiere over the course of making your remix. It should include step-by-step instructions and screenshots, and is due on the blog **before class Wednesday, 2/3**. Tag it "tutorial."

### ***Resources***

#### *Video Editing Software*

Adobe Premiere is available on all campus lab computers. The version in CL 435 (CS5) is older than the version on all other Pitt computers, so you'll be able to start projects in our classroom and then take them elsewhere. **You won't, however, be able to open projects you've worked on in Hillman on 435's computers.**

You can get a 30-day free trial of Premiere for your own computer here:

<http://www.adobe.com/products/premiere.html>

#### *Tutorials*

Adobe's official Premiere tutorials are here:

<https://helpx.adobe.com/premiere-pro/premiere-pro-cs5-cs55-tutorials.html>

As a student at Pitt, you have free access to Lynda, an online service that hosts a ton of useful technology tutorials. Go to <http://lynda.pitt.edu>, log in, and search for Premiere.

If you're having a specific problem, try searching Google or YouTube for "Premiere how to \_\_\_\_." If that doesn't work, email me and I'll see what I can figure out.

#### *Source Video*

I've linked to a number of Creative Commons and Public Domain video archives (and tools for downloading or copying commercial video) on our course site:

<http://www.klcameron.com/cdm/resources/>

CDM: Audio Assignment  
2/3/16

Make a **3-4** minute soundscape using footage you and your classmates record. You have two main goals here. 1. Learn how to produce and capture usable footage, taking advantage of the increasing ease of recording digital sound. 2. Explore sound's benefits and drawbacks as a medium, paying particular attention to how sound can convey a sense of place.

Here are some things to consider as you start composing: What places do the sounds you're working with belong in? How can you conjure place (and space) for a listener? How might you give a sense, for example, of which things are closer or farther away? What sort of progression or narrative can you develop over the course of 3-4 minutes? You don't need answers to all of these questions before getting started (you probably shouldn't have them, in fact), but you should have some sense of the soundscape you want to make.

### ***Guidelines***

- You or your classmates must record at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of your sound material. You must use at least one piece of audio a classmate has recorded and one piece that you yourself have recorded.
- You must layer at least four pieces of audio at least once in your soundscape.
- You must in some way convey a sense of place.
- The soundscape is due **Sunday, 2/28 by 11:59PM**. You should upload it to your individual Box folder as an .mp3 file, titled in this way: CDM\_lastname\_soundscape.mp3.

### ***Audio Portfolio***

You'll produce several things alongside the soundscape itself, which will also count toward your grade on this project. They are: a preview, a reflection, and a sound tutorial.

The **preview** is a description of one piece of audio you've recorded and how you plan to use it in your soundscape. It should be **at least 300 words**, and is due **Sunday, 2/21 by 11:59PM**. Post it to the blog, tagged with "audio preview," and embed the audio piece you're describing.

The **reflection** is an account of how the project actually went, due **Sunday, 2/28 by 11:59PM**, and should be **500-600 words**. It should also include **3 screenshots** taken at various stages of your composing process (with one showing your moment of 4 layered audio tracks). Upload it to Box as a .doc or .docx file. Some guiding questions:

- What place anchors your soundscape, and how do you communicate it to your listener?
- How did you go about composing your soundscape? What moments are you making visible with screenshots, and why are they interesting or important to your finished product?
- How does your original vision differ from what you're turning in?
- What's your favorite part of your soundscape? Least favorite?
- Are there things you wish you'd done but didn't or couldn't? What are they? Why couldn't you do them?
- If you revise your piece, what might you do?

You don't have to answer all of these questions, but you should give me a sense of the work that went into your soundscape and whether it accomplishes what you wanted it to.

The **tutorial** is a description of one sound-related trick or skill you learned over the course of this project. It should include step-by-step instructions and screenshots (or be in video format), and is due on the blog **before class Wednesday, 3/2**. Tag it "tutorial."

### **Resources**

#### *Audio Recording Technology*

Your phone and computer likely have built-in microphones, but they may not be sensitive enough to record with the quality you'd like. You can rent a limited number digital recorders and USB microphones from English's Digital Media Lab on a weekly basis. Full information here: <http://www.english.pitt.edu/digital-media/digital-production-equipment>

You can also rent sound production equipment from CIDDE. Available equipment listed here: <http://www.cidde.pitt.edu/classroom-services/available-technology/>

You need instructor permission to rent from the DML or CIDDE, so be sure to figure out what you need and inform me well before you actually plan to record.

#### *Audio Editing Software*

Audacity – a free, open-source audio editing program – is available on all campus computers. It runs on all operating systems, so you can also download it onto your own computer from here: <http://www.audacityteam.org/download/>

If you have experience with a different audio editing program like Adobe Audition/Soundbooth or GarageBand, you're welcome to complete this project using them. I will only be providing technical support for Audacity, however.

#### *Tutorials*

Audacity has an extensive user guide, including tutorials, available here: <http://manual.audacityteam.org/o/index.html#using>

As a student at Pitt, you have free access to Lynda, an online service that hosts a ton of useful technology tutorials. Go to <http://lynda.pitt.edu>, log in, and search for Audacity.

If you're having a specific problem, try searching Google or YouTube for "Audacity how to \_\_\_\_." If that doesn't work, email me and I'll see what I can figure out.

#### *See Also*

Links to further resources (including lists of recording tips, audio archives, and a tool for making your own beats) are available on our course site: <http://www.klcameron.com/cdm/resources/>

CDM: Media Design Project  
2/24/16

This assignment asks you to design a media project relevant to life here in Pittsburgh. You'll start by picking an issue of local interest, and then imagine a way to intervene in that issue through the skills you're developing with digital media. Your intervention might take a number of forms, from educating people about existing problems to proposing creative solutions to them. Whatever you do, though, it should be grounded somehow in the city of Pittsburgh and work to engage the people who live here.

I'm asking you to draw up blueprints for a project rather than actually completing it, so feel free to think expansively. You will, however, be graded on the following 3 things:

### **1. A small media component**

This can take any form as long as digital media enter into its production or circulation. So, you might make a social media account or a website about your issue, an informational video or an audio interview. You shouldn't feel restricted to the digital forms we've worked with in class, but don't try to do something very complicated that no one in your group has experience with.

### **2. A plan for scaling up**

If you had an entire semester (or longer) to work on this project, what could it become? What would your next steps be? What tools, training, and/or budget would you need to complete them? What would your ultimate goal for your project be, and how would you evaluate its success? This plan should be at least 600 words, and can include images, diagrams, timelines, and anything else that is helpful to you.

### **3. A presentation**

On Wednesday, 4/13 you'll present your projects to the class. Talk us through what your chosen issue is, why it's important, and what your intervention is. Show us your media component, and give us a sense of what your project could look like at a larger scale. You'll have 15-20 minutes to talk as a group, with additional time for the class to ask questions.

CDM: Text Assignment  
3/16/16

For this project, you'll use Twine to create a text-based game (or choose-your-own-adventure story). You have two main goals here. 1. Explore the possibilities of digital text, which can be non-linear, respond to reader input, and incorporate elements of design. 2. Spend some time thinking carefully about your sentences, attending to what makes writing more or less effective.

Here are some things to consider as you start composing: What sort of story do you want to tell, and how can you invite a reader to participate in it? Do you want your reader to control their own destiny, or are you leading them inevitably somewhere? What color scheme, font, and effects might enhance your story? What style of writing – formal or conversational, sparse or detailed – will best help you achieve your goals?

### ***Guidelines***

I'll be looking for these three things when I'm grading:

- Writing – quality and creativity of sentences
- Story structure – branches, loops, conditions, variables
- Design – color, font, sound and text effects, images

Since this is the third major assignment for the class, I'm not giving specific length parameters or a checklist of required elements. You should spend roughly the same amount of time on this project as you have on the others, but you're free to focus on the parts of this you find most interesting. So, if you're an aspiring writer, you can devote more time to your sentences; if you love design, you can put more emphasis on color, layout, and effects. I should be able to see where you've put your time and effort, though, and you should give some consideration to all three areas.

Your Twine game is due **Sunday 4/3 by 11:59PM**. You should post both the Twine file (.tws) and the built/exported file (.html) in your individual box folder.

### ***Text Portfolio***

You'll produce several things alongside the Twine game itself, which will also count toward your grade on this project. They are: a preview, a playthrough, and a reflection.

The **preview** is a description of something you're working on and how it fits into your larger game. This can be a diagram of your story, a section of text, a cool effect you've found or created – anything you're planning on using in your project. The preview should be **at least 300 words**, and is due **Sunday, 3/27 by 11:59PM**. Post it to the blog, tagged with "text preview."

The **playthrough** is a description of and response to playing a classmate's game-in-progress. On 3/30, you'll exchange game drafts with a partner and provide them with feedback that they and I will see. The goal here is to help your partner realize what is and isn't working in their game, and to give suggestions about how to fix any problems. The playthrough should be **at least 300 words**, and is due **Wednesday, 3/30 by 11:59PM**, emailed to me and to your partner.

The **reflection** is an account of how the project actually went, due **Sunday, 4/3 by 11:59PM**, and should be **500-600 words**. It should also include **3 screenshots** taken at various stages of your composing process. Upload it to Box as a .doc or .docx file. Some guiding questions:

- Where are you asking a reader to make a choice? What's the significance of those choices?
- How would you describe your writing style? Your design choices? Are they related?
- How did you go about composing your game? What moments are you making visible with screenshots, and why are they interesting or important to your finished product?
- How does your original vision differ from what you're turning in?
- What's your favorite part of your game? Least favorite?
- Are there things you wish you'd done but didn't or couldn't? What might you do if you revise your game?

You don't have to answer all of these questions, but you should give me a sense of the work that went into your Twine game and whether it accomplishes what you wanted it to.

CDM: Final Project  
4/5/16

This is the last project you'll complete in Composing Digital Media. I want your interests to drive what you do here, so there are no guidelines in terms of medium, style, or story. You can, in other words, do whatever you're most excited about. There are only two requirements:

- Your project must in some way combine skills or topics from two units of the class. I mean this broadly, so that the first section of class, for example, would include working with video, remixing, working with digital archives, using Creative Commons materials, and so on.
- Your project must be a substantive one, on which you spend at least the same amount of time as the other major assignments from this class. As this is the final, it can also be bigger, but it doesn't have to be.

You can revise one of your existing projects, but if you do you need to make very significant changes and additions. You can also start something completely new.

There are three parts to this project: a proposal, a media component, and a reflection. Taken together, they're worth 25% of your final grade.

The **proposal** is a preliminary plan for your final project. Here, outline what medium you're working with, what you want to do with it, and how you're going to go about accomplishing your goals. You don't have to have all the details figured out in this space, but you should have a working idea of your project. The proposal should be **at least 300 words**, and is due **Sunday, 4/10 by 11:59PM**. Post it to the class blog, tagged "final project proposal."

The **media component** and **reflection** are due **Sunday 4/24, by 11:59PM** – the Sunday after our last class meeting. Upload them to your individual box folder. Think of this reflection as both an account of how you made your final project and a place to take stock of your larger body of work in the course. What did you get out of this class? What might be useful to you as you continue your college career and move beyond it? You're also welcome to offer any other comments on the course that you'd like me to read, or any suggestions for what might work better next time. The reflection should be **at least 600 words**.