

## Essay 4 Guidelines

Handed out: 10/24/13 - Due: 11/14/13

### The Essay

At one point in Laura Kipnis's "Love's Labors," she writes:

Might we entertain the possibility that posing philosophical questions isn't restricted to university campuses and learned tomes, that maybe it's something everyone does in the course of everyday life—if not always in an entirely knowing fashion? If adultery is more of a critical practice than a critical theory, well, acting out is what happens when knowledge or consciousness about something is foreclosed. Why such knowledge is foreclosed is a question yet to be considered—though how much do any of us know about our desires and motivations, or the contexts that produce them? We can be pretty clueless. We say things like "Something just happened to me," as if that were an explanation. (*Ways of Reading*, 399)

Kipnis refers to adultery as a "critical practice" rather than a "critical theory," and—whether you agree with her—this provides a useful frame for thinking about a lot of other acts and practices. What other forms of critical practice might you observe, or have you observed in everyday life?

Compose a 2-3 minute digital video essay that centers on a critical practice of your choosing. Working as a social historian (someone who engages with the materials of "everyday life" to illustrate a past or present facet of life), conduct your own analysis of this divergent "critical practice" that you think reveals something about our society's "structuring contradictions." What does this practice teach us about our "prevailing systems of power" and/or "the weak links in social institutions"? You can work alone or in pairs.

Making use of the numerous affordances of digital composing (text, video, images, audio), you should offer a brief overview of this practice entwined with some claim about what it exposes and why.

This does not have to be a critical practice that you engage in, but it should be one that you have some familiarity with (possibly just from research) and that you think does some transgressive work.

This video should be uploaded to your Microsoft Box account ([pitt.box.com](http://pitt.box.com)) or to YouTube/Vimeo and a link should be posted to your Bb blog by 1 am on Thursday, November 14, 2013.

We will be having a class showcase of the videos on Thursday, November 14, so keep that in mind as you compose.

*(And a special thanks to Pitt instructors Erin Anderson, Trisha Campbell, and Steph Ceraso for ideas and materials!)*

### The Reflection

After you've finished composing your short video essay, I'd like you to reflect on your process, including your successes and setbacks.

Please write a 400-word (or more) reflection, addressing the following:

- How did you go about composing this essay?
- How did digital composing differ from your usual, alphabetic process of writing? What were the benefits? The drawbacks?
- What should viewers/listeners of this work know about this essay's creation and your intent?

Upload this to reflection to Bb (under "Essays & Reflections") by class time on Thursday, November 14, 2013.

## The Resources

The digital version of this assignment includes clickable links to these resources.

### Video

Vimeo.com / YouTube.com provide free accounts for storing and sharing video files online.

Archive.org is a non-profit "Internet Library" of free material, including audio and video files.

Keepvid.com / Videograbber.net are platforms for downloading streaming video from YouTube, Vimeo, and a number of other web media sites.

### Audio

Freesound.org is a collaborative database of Creative Commons licensed sounds. It focuses only on sounds, not songs, and anyone can contribute.

Freemusicarchive.org is a curated library of high-quality, legal audio to download, share, and reuse, depending on its licensing.

Jamendo.com is a community of free, legal, unlimited music published under a variety of Creative Commons licenses.

Listentoyoutube.com is a free online platform for capturing and downloading

### Equipment

Lynda.pitt.edu offers free tutorials for most video and audio editing software.

Version CS5 of **Adobe Premiere Pro** is available in the CL G-26 computer lab. Version CS6 is available on the Mac computers in campus computer labs.

**iMovie** is distributed free with Apple computers. Tutorials are available on the Apple website and on YouTube, among other sites.

**Windows Movie Maker** is distributed free with Windows computers. Tutorials are available on Microsoft's website and on YouTube, among other sites.

Most laptops and most cell phones have video and audio capturing capability.

However, if you need to rent a video camera for this assignment, you must fill out a form, have me sign it, and take it to the CIDDE offices. You can check out a camera for one week with my permission and "co-signing." (If you break it, you buy it.)

I've posted the form you'll need to take to CIDDE (Center for Instructional Development & Distance Education, B-23 Alumni Hall) to Bb under "Notebooks & Extras."

If you need to rent an audio recorder, you must fill out the same form, have me sign it, and take it to the CIDDE offices.

### Notes and Questions:

#### How to use Microsoft Box

- Log on to <http://pitt.box.com>
- Click "Continue" on the right side of the page.
- Log in using your Pitt username and password.
- Select "Upload" in the upper right hand corner.
- Choose your file.
- Click "Share" next to your file name.
- Change Access to "Open."
- Copy link.
- Post this link to your Bb Notebook by 1 am on Thursday, November 14.

If you're having difficulties, e-mail me at [LRH35@pitt.edu](mailto:LRH35@pitt.edu).