

Drew Morton  
[DMorton@tamut.edu](mailto:DMorton@tamut.edu)

## **Videographic Criticism for Dummies: Tips for Making Video Essays and a Couple Sample Assignments**

### **PROBLEMS IN THE PRODUCTION PROCESS**

1. Self-consciousness and/or a fear of new technology.
2. Keeping aural and visual elements in a balance. Remember: You're using both tracks to articulate your argument!
3. Making an intellectual argument both concise and accessible (more like a conference paper or classroom lecture in tone, less like a journal article).
4. Save often.
5. Revise and share your drafts with friends and colleagues (both academics and production faculty!).

### **PRODUCTION TIPS**

1. Start with a completed project (probably needs to be a project with a visual emphasis).
2. Revise the prose (if it's an article or book chapter) for "broadcast." Basically, how would you explain a theoretical concept to your mother?
3. Remember that on screen text can carry the load and that you should not have a piece dominated by voice over.
4. Storyboard (Think about what scenes/visuals you can pair with your argument and diagram it out before editing).
5. Come up with a logical system for cataloging your digital assets (you will have multiple video clips, JPEGs, and drafts - find a method so you do not confuse them).

### **SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Pick a film analysis term (ex. zoom, pan, three-point lighting) and define it in a 90 second video essay.
2. Find a review of a film you enjoy and adapt it as a script, storyboard, and video essay (adapted from Ben Sampson's analysis of the Roger Ebert review/Matt Zoller Seitz adaptation of *Stormy Monday*).

3. Find a scene in the same movie that you'd like to analyze. Without using voice over, find a way to communicate an analysis of the scene visually.