

Media Studies 200: Intro to Media Studies

 Intended for 60 undergraduate students

 Spring 2026 at the University of Victoria

 M and Th, 10-11:20am | 1.5 units | prereq: AWR

 Taught by [Jentery Sayers](#) (he | him) | jentery@uvic.ca

 Office hours: M and Th, 11:45am-12:45pm, in CLE D331

 Teaching assistant (marking): Maya Wei Yan Linsley (she | any)

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Territory Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the Lək'ʷəŋən (Songhees and Xʷsepsəm / Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Lək'ʷəŋən and WSÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

In [this video](#), Yux'wey'lupton, Dr. Clarence "Butch" Dick of the Songhees Nation, welcomes visitors to the traditional lands of the Lək'ʷəŋən (Songhees and Xʷsepsəm / Esquimalt) and WSÁNEĆ Peoples in Lək'ʷəŋən and English. The updated acknowledgement was developed through UVic's continued dialogue and relationships with the local Nations, in recognition of their presence and governance structure in these territories.

The video supports the UVic community to engage more meaningfully with the territorial acknowledgement. It is intended to inspire reflection, learning and accountability—while acknowledging that this is one step in a much broader journey of ʔetalnəwəl / ÁTOL, NEUEL / Respecting the rights of one another and being in right relationship with all things. It is one part of our shared, ongoing commitment to understanding the responsibilities we hold as guests in these territories and to act in ways that uphold our relationships with the original stewards of these lands.

Description

This course “surveys the cultural and material roles media play around the world in the 21st century. Emphasis on building a common vocabulary for studying media as well as understanding how audio, images, video, and text mediate people’s relation to culture.” For more information, see “[MDIA200 - Media in the 21st Century](#)” in UVic’s academic calendar.

The course counts toward UVic’s new [Media Studies](#) certificate, which requires only 10.5 units of coursework.

Goals

I designed this course for you to:

- Build a vocabulary for understanding media. This means we’ll identify the particulars of audio, images, text, video, and interfaces as they pertain to content creation and media analysis.
- Practice techniques for engaging media. This means we’ll experiment with different critical approaches to media in the 21st century.
- Account for context and culture in the analysis of media across the globe. This means we’ll consider how, where, when, by whom, for whom, and under what assumptions media are made, interpreted, circulated, and preserved.
- Respond directly to classroom activities and lectures about media. This means you’ll complete fourteen exit tickets and three worksheets to demonstrate and apply what you’re learning.
- Reflect on your learning and communicate its applications to the study and production of media today. This reflection will assume the form of a portfolio, which will be your final project in this course.

I will assume you’ve no experience in Media Studies, and I will focus on critical approaches to media as they apply to media practice. I will not teach film or music. For that, I recommend [Film Studies](#) and the [School of Music](#). I also won’t teach professional communication or journalism. For that, I recommend [Professional Communication](#) and [Professional Writing](#), respectively.

About Us

My name is Jentery Sayers (he/him). I skip a syllable and say it in two: “JEN-tree.” You can call me Jentery, Doctor Sayers, or Professor Sayers.

I spend 8.16% of the day looking for my glasses, and I enjoy writing about games and media. I grew up in Richmond, Virginia and went to Virginia Commonwealth University for my BA and BS degrees. Then I moved to Seattle, where I received an MA and PhD in English from the University of Washington. I relocated to Victoria the summer I received my PhD,

and I currently direct UVic's Media Studies program. I like to play TTRPGs, drums, guitar, and basketball in my spare time. I also do my best to maintain a [portfolio](#) of my work.

You can email me at jentery@uvic.ca or find me in Clearihue D331. My office hours are Monday and Thursday, 11:45am-12:45pm, or by appointment, in CLE D331. I respond to emails Monday through Friday, 9am - 5pm, excluding holidays.

Hi! I'm Maya (she/any), your TA (marking) for the term. I'm an English MA student and grad from UVic's Honours English BA.

There was a time when I, too, spent 8.16% of the day looking for my glasses, but now I can't look for anything if they're not on my face. I partly attribute my rapidly deteriorating eyesight to the amount of time I've spent reading fanfiction on my phone. Alas, it will never get better, as my area of research is fan studies. Although I will not be attending MDIA 200 this term, I will be marking some of your worksheets. You can email me at mlinsley@uvic.ca.

Materials

You do *not* need to purchase a textbook or any primary sources for this course, but you will need access to a computer, the internet (including [Brightspace](#)), a camera, and a microphone.

Handouts: I produce my own handouts for this course and circulate them as PDFs in Brightspace. They include concise overviews of key themes and terms to help you prepare for upcoming class sessions. You can think of them as an alternative to a Media Studies textbook.

Slide decks: I create HTML slide decks for most class sessions and link to them in Brightspace immediately before class begins. This way, you can access my slides during and after class.

Source materials: My slide decks and handouts contain source materials or links to them. We'll discuss these sources in class to apply what you're learning from the weekly handouts. Examples of primary sources we'll study this term include the browser game, [Hair Nah](#) (2017), by Momo Pixel; the comic, "[Translated, From the Japanese](#)" (2015), by Adrian Tomine; and the stop-motion animation, [Biidaaban \(The Dawn Comes\)](#) (2018), by Amanda Strong, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, and Bracken Hanuse Corlett.

Content warnings: I'll include content warnings for materials before I share or screen them in class.

Recordings: I do not plan to record our class sessions; however, you are welcome to record audio for private access, study, and note-taking.

Brightspace: I'll use the course Brightspace to:

- Circulate a class announcement each week to help you plan for what's next,

- Share weekly handouts, my slides, and any source materials we study in class,
- Point you to resources available online,
- Accept all of your assignments except the exit tickets (please don't submit anything to me by email), and
- Mark those assignments and provide feedback on them.

Assignments

There are no exams, quizzes, presentations, or group projects in this course.

I am asking you to complete five assignments this term.

- **Exit tickets:** 10% of your final grade (fourteen of them, each due by the end of class on the day prompted)
- **Worksheet 1:** 20% of your final grade (due by Thursday, January 29th at 10am)
- **Worksheet 2:** 20% of your final grade (due by Monday, February 23rd at 10am)
- **Worksheet 3:** 25% of your final grade (due by Thursday, March 26th at 10am)
- **Portfolio:** 25% of your final grade (due by Monday, April 13th at 10am)

Exit tickets: At the end of twenty different class sessions, I will ask you to use a notecard (which I will provide) to respond to two prompts. These prompts will ask you to share what you're learning from class sessions, what you hope to learn, and what questions you have. You will submit your responses (on the notecard) to me by the end of class. You should submit a total of fourteen exit tickets (meaning you don't need to submit one at the end of every class), and we will track your submissions in Brightspace. See the schedule below for sessions *without* an exit ticket.

Worksheets: The worksheets will ask you to apply what you're learning in class through a combination of media (audio, images, text, and video), and I will encourage you to use class time to take notes and draft your responses to them. I will circulate each worksheet well before it's due, and I'll review each prompt in class to ensure it's clear. The worksheets and their grading rubrics are posted online (see links above). You should download them, complete them in your word processor of choice (e.g., Word, Docs, Pages), and submit them via Brightspace.

Portfolio: You'll conclude MDIA 200 by producing a portfolio that documents what you learned in this course, reflects on that learning, and communicates its significance to someone in particular (e.g., a professor, student, friend, or family member).

Brightspace: Please use Brightspace to submit your worksheets and portfolio. You do not need to purchase any software to use Brightspace, but you will need your UVic NetLink ID, access to the internet, and a computer. I cannot accept assignments (including exit tickets) by email.

Feedback: Maya and I will provide brief and focused feedback on worksheets according to their grading rubrics. Please email me (Jentery, not Maya) or schedule an appointment (F2F

or Zoom) to discuss the feedback. Again, I respond to emails Monday through Friday, 9am - 5pm, excluding holidays. Thanks in advance for your patience.

Workload

The most important thing to know about this course is that *I'll opt for care in every instance*. If the workload becomes too much or we're juggling more than we should, then we'll cut material. I planned for the maximum in advance, under the assumption we won't get to everything. And that's totally fine.

I suggest dedicating *3 to 5 hours* to MDIA 200 each week in addition to our weekly meetings on Monday and Thursday. Of course, 3 to 5 hours per week is only a guideline. You may find that you need more or less time depending on the activity, your preferences, and your familiarity with the materials and work involved.

Schedule

Here's the schedule for the term. It's subject to change. In fact, I'm 99.12% certain it will change. I will use a Brightspace announcement to notify you at least two weeks in advance of those changes, and I will never use schedule changes to increase your workload (e.g., add an assignment or reading).

All materials (including the handouts) for this course are available via Brightspace. Please study them before the date they're assigned. This way, we can make the most of our time together in class.

All meetings are scheduled to occur in person (face-to-face). I will assume you are attending each class meeting. If you are unable to attend, then please email me in advance and coordinate with a peer to get notes and the like from the session(s) you'll miss. My slides for each session will be available in Brightspace.

You are welcome to record audio of the following sessions for private access, study, and note-taking.

M Jan. 5: Hello!

We'll introduce ourselves, and I'll provide an overview of the course.

After class, please read:

1. The course outline, including the schedule and policies, and
2. The "Content Industry" handout.

no exit ticket today

Please email me if you're on the waitlist for this course and have questions or concerns.

MODULE 1: Communication (four sessions)

This module begins on Thursday, January 8th and ends on Monday, January 19th.

Th Jan. 8: Acts and Senses of Communication

Before class, please read the following handouts:

1. "Acts of Communication" and
2. "Senses of Communication."

Please email me if you have any trouble accessing my slide decks in Brightspace.

M Jan. 12: Means and Levels of Communication

Before class, please read the following handouts:

1. "Means of Communication" and
2. "Levels of Communication."

Please email me if you have any questions or concerns about Worksheet 1 or the exit tickets.

Th Jan. 15: Forms and Models of Communication

Before class, please read the following handouts:

1. "Forms of Communication" and
2. "Models of Communication."

January 18th is the last day for a 100% reduction of tuition fees for standard second-term courses.

M Jan. 19: Noise and Miscommunication

Before class, please read the "Noise and Miscommunication" handout.

Today is the last session covered by Worksheet 1, which is due by Thursday, January 29th at 10am.

MODULE 2: Media (six sessions)

This module begins on Thursday, January 22nd and ends on Monday, February 9th.

Th Jan. 22: Understanding Media

Before class, please read the following handouts:

1. "Understanding Media" and
2. "Paradigms of Media."

M Jan. 26: Images

Before class, please read the following handouts:

1. "Images" and
2. "Comics."

Th Jan. 29: Text

Before class, please read the "Text" handout.

Worksheet 1 is due today by 10am.

January 31st is the last day to pay second-term fees without penalty.

M Feb. 2: Audio

Before class, please read the "Audio" handout.

Please email me if you have any questions or concerns about Worksheet 2.

Th Feb. 5: Video

Before class, please read the "Video" handout.

February 8th is the last day for a 50% reduction of tuition fees for standard courses.

M Feb. 9: Interfaces

Before class, please read the "Interfaces" handout.

Please email me if you have any questions or concerns about the feedback (global or individual) we provided on Worksheet 1.

Today is the last session covered by Worksheet 2, which is due by Monday, February 23rd at 10am.

MODULE 3: Approaches (eleven sessions)

This module begins on Thursday, February 12th and ends on Monday, March 30th.

Th Feb. 12: Media Effects

Before class, please read the "Media Effects" handout.

M Feb. 16 and Th. Feb 19: Reading Break

We wish you a rejuvenating reading break!

M Feb. 23: Ownership Effects

Before class, please read the "Ownership Effects" handout.

Worksheet 2 is due today by 10am.

Th Feb. 26: Communities and Cultures

Before class, please read the “Culture” handout.

February 28th is the last day to withdraw from second-term courses without penalty of failure.

M Mar. 2: Media Aesthetics

Before class, please read the “Media Aesthetics” handout.

Please email me if you have any questions or concerns about Worksheet 3.

Th Mar. 5: Meaning and Semiotics

Before class, please read the “Meaning and Semiotics” handout.

M Mar. 9: Rhetoric and Persuasion

Before class, please read the “Rhetoric and Persuasion” handout.

Please email me if you have any questions or concerns about the feedback (global or individual) we provided on Worksheet 2.

Th Mar. 12: Representation and Intersectionality

Before class, please read the “Representation” handout.

M Mar. 16: Narrative and Genre

Before class, please read the “Narrative” handout.

Please email me if you have any questions or concerns about the Portfolio.

Th Mar. 19: Fandom

Before class, please read the “Fandom” handout.

Today is the last session covered by Worksheet 3, which is due by Thursday, March 26th at 10am.

M Mar. 23: Conferences (no class)

I will hold optional student conferences. Please contact me to schedule an appointment if you would like to discuss your work in this course. I'm happy to chat!

no exit ticket today

Th Mar. 26: Preservation

Before class, please read the “Preservation” handout.

Worksheet 3 is due today by 10am.

M Mar. 30: Before You Make a Thing

Before class, please read the “Before You Make a Thing” handout.

no exit ticket today

Th Apr. 2: Last Session!

We'll wrap up the class, discuss what you learned, and reflect on what worked and what could be improved.

no exit ticket today

Please email me if you have any questions or concerns about the feedback (global or individual) we provided on Worksheet 3.

UVic is closed on April 3rd and 6th, and the exam period begins on April 7th.

M Apr. 13: Portfolio

Please submit your portfolio by 10am today. I hope you've had a wonderful summer!

Resources

Here are some resources for the course and your studies at UVic.

UVic Learn Anywhere

[UVic Learn Anywhere](#) is where you can find articles, tip sheets, and video tutorials to develop the learning skills you need for academic success at UVic.

UVic Libraries

Everyone at the [University of Victoria Libraries](#) is committed to the success of UVic's students and faculty. The library's foundational role in acquiring and preserving research resources is critical in the complex digital environment of 21st-century scholarship. Their expert staff are increasingly working within disciplines, across disciplines, and beyond traditional boundaries, as they navigate this exciting landscape with students, faculty, and researchers. They welcome the wider public into their physical spaces and actively seek partnerships with local and regional organizations to support and enhance the rich arts, culture, and learning opportunities in UVic's communities.

Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement (IACE)

The [Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement](#) serves as a hub for cultural, academic, and community connections. Whether you are a student seeking guidance, a community looking to collaborate, or an individual interested in learning more about Indigenous initiatives at UVic, IACE is here to support you on your journey. They work closely with Indigenous students, staff, faculty, Elders, and community to create opportunities for meaningful engagement, ensuring that Indigenous perspectives and voices are woven into the fabric of their work.

Academic Skills Centre

The [Academic Skills Centre](#) offers online and in-person one-on-one tutorials, workshops, and more. As a priority, they actively coach students on academic integrity, including preventing accidental plagiarism. Their free services are available to all UVic students. They are here to support students with time management and planning for a successful semester. They also coach students on reading, writing, speaking, understanding academic expectations, and other aspects of academic communication. They can support you in creating academic posters, blogposts, PowerPoint slides, and e-portfolios.

Community-Engaged Learning (CEL)

[Community-Engaged Learning](#) is a rewarding way to apply your studies to real-life projects in the community. This type of learning is a partnership between UVic students, faculty, campus partners, and the community beyond campus. It's a way to gain meaningful hands-on experience that supports and honours the community and strengthens your academic experience.

Academic Concessions and Accommodations

If your academic courses are affected by illness, accident, or family affliction, you may wish to request an [academic concession](#). Are you a student with a learning disability, ADHD, mental health issue, or long-term recurring physical or sensory disability? Do you have chronic health issues? If you do, UVic provides academic accommodations to address barriers to your education.

Student Wellness

Their [team of practitioners](#) offers a variety of services to support students' mental, physical, and spiritual health. You can make a same-day or pre-booked appointment with a counsellor, nurse, physician, or spiritual care provider.

Ombudsperson

The [ombuds office](#) is an independent, impartial, and confidential resource for undergraduate and graduate students and other members of the University of Victoria community. The ombudsperson helps resolve student problems or disputes fairly.

Student Groups

The following advocacy groups may be relevant to your life as a student here at UVic:

- [The Native Students Union](#),
- [The Students of Colour Collective](#),
- [The Society for Students with a Disability \(SSD\)](#),
- [The Gender Empowerment Centre \(GEM\)](#), and
- [UVSS Pride Collective](#).

Policies

Here are the policies for this course alongside several UVic policies. Please let me know if anything is unclear, ignorant, or mistaken. I'll correct it.

[Media Studies Certificate](#)

This course counts toward UVic's [Media Studies certificate](#). In fact, it's required for the certificate.

[Office Hours and Contacting Me](#)

The best way to communicate with me is by email (jentery@uvic.ca) or during office hours, which are Monday and Thursday, 11:45am-12:45pm, in CLE D331. I can also make an appointment to meet with you in person or via Zoom.

I respond to email between 9am and 5pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

[Assessment and Feedback](#)

You must submit two of the three worksheets as well as the portfolio to pass this course. Failure to complete these three assignments will result in a failing N grade (calculated as a 0 for your GPA).

Maya and I will use UVic's [official grading system](#) to produce rubrics to assess your work. I will not post marks publicly or outside my office, and I do not use plagiarism or AI detection software.

All assignments except for the exit tickets should be submitted via Brightspace. I cannot accept the exit tickets, worksheets, or portfolio via email. Each exit ticket is due by the end of class (11:20am) on the day it's prompted.

Maya and I will use Brightspace to provide feedback on your work. If you ever want additional feedback, then feel free to ask me. I can provide it in person, via Zoom, or by email.

Throughout the term, I'll request feedback from you on how the course is going. I'll also ask you to complete learning experience surveys at the end of the term.

Late Submissions and Extensions

I've a 24-hour grace period (no questions asked, no email required, and no penalties) for every worksheet in this course. A late penalty of five points per business day will apply after 24 hours. Weekends and holidays do not count as business days.

I cannot accept an exit ticket after the class session it was assigned, I will not accept worksheets more than two weeks after they are due, and I cannot accept the portfolio after Thursday, April 16th at 10am.

Please email me if you need an extension for any assignment (before it is due), and we can discuss possibilities on a case-by-case basis.

Attendance and Participation

There is no participation or attendance mark in this course; however, every class session will rely heavily on discussion and interaction. I will assume you are attending each class meeting. If you are unable to attend a particular meeting, then please email me in advance and coordinate with a peer to get notes and the like from the session(s) you'll miss.

You do not need to provide me with documentation for an absence.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

I aim to create an inclusive learning environment that attends to difference and honours each of you, including your experiences at the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, power, and class. I want to be a resource for you, and I continue to learn about EDI. If something is said in class (by anyone, including me) that makes you feel uncomfortable, then don't hesitate to talk with me. If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your university records, then let me know, and I'll correct the documents provided to me. If your performance in the class is being impeded by your experiences outside of class, then keep me posted, and we'll make adjustments. I also welcome any suggestions to improve the quality of the course, and I will make available mechanisms for anonymous feedback since you may prefer them.

Information for All Students

This [page](#) contains a list of important UVic policies.

Creating a Respectful, Inclusive, and Productive Learning Environment

UVic is committed to promoting critical academic discourse while providing a respectful and productive learning environment across all modalities of learning and teaching. All members of the university community have the right to experience, and the responsibility to help create, such an environment. In any course, the instructor has the primary responsibility for creating a respectful, inclusive and productive learning environment in a manner consistent with other university policies and regulations. Instructors or students who have unresolved questions or concerns about a particular learning environment

should bring them to the Chair or Director of the unit concerned (or Dean, in the case of undepartmentalized faculties).

Accessibility

UVic commits to addressing and removing barriers that hinder full and equal participation of people with disabilities. UVic's [Accessibility Plan](#) includes guiding principles and existing resources. It summarizes consultations, barriers, and priorities for the next three years to address those barriers.

Equity Action Plan

The [Equity Action Plan](#)'s goals provide UVic with strategic direction to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion, and to create the conditions in which everyone feels a sense of belonging: as connected and respected parts of the university community.

Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response

UVic's [Sexualized Violence Resource Office](#) in Equity and Human Rights (EQHR) offers information on how to start the conversation about consent, where to get support on and off campus, and the options available under UVic's Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response Policy.

Accommodation of Religious Observance

UVic recognizes its obligation to make reasonable accommodation for students whose observance of holy days might conflict with the academic requirements of a course or program. Students are permitted to absent themselves from classes, seminars, or workshops for the purposes of religious or spiritual observance. In the case of compulsory classes or course events, students will normally be required to provide reasonable notice to their instructors of their intended absence from the class or event for reasons of religious or spiritual observance. In consultation with the student, the instructor will determine an appropriate means of accommodation. The instructor may choose to reschedule classes or provide individual assistance. Where a student's participation in a class event is subject to grading, every reasonable effort will be made to allow the student to make up for the missed class through alternative assignments or in subsequent classes. Students who require a rescheduled examination must give reasonable notice to their instructors. If a final exam cannot be rescheduled within the regular exam period, students may request an academic concession.

Student Conduct

UVic is committed to promoting a safe, respectful and supportive learning, living, and working environment. As part of the university community, each student is responsible for their personal conduct as it affects the university community, university activities, and the university's property. The [Office of Student Life](#) works directly with the university community to review and help resolve non-academic student conduct concerns. They administer the university's Resolution of Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations policy and serve as a supportive resource to the university community.

Non-Academic Student Conduct

UVic's [Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations policy \(AC1300\)](#) clarifies what non-academic student misconduct is; details how the university responds to non-academic misconduct allegations; outlines the review and investigation processes; describes possible outcomes and ensures that when misconduct is found to have occurred, any sanctions that are applied are fair and consistent; and, explains how to appeal a decision that has been made under the policy.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. It is expected that students, faculty members, and staff at the University of Victoria, as members of an intellectual community, will adhere to these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research, and service. Any action that contravenes this standard, including misrepresentation, falsification, or deception, undermines the intention and worth of scholarly work and violates the fundamental academic rights of members of our community. This policy is designed to ensure that the university's standards are upheld in a fair and transparent fashion.

Students are responsible for the entire content and form of their work. Nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit students from developing their academic skills through the exchange of ideas and the utilization of resources available at the university to support learning (e.g., The Centre for Academic Communication). Students who are in doubt as to what constitutes a violation of academic integrity in a particular instance should consult their course instructor.

Copyright

All course materials, including my slides, handouts, and lectures, are made available for educational purposes and the exclusive use of students in this course. The material is protected under copyright law even if it is not marked as such, and the syllabus is licensed [CC BY-NC 4.0](#). Any further use or distribution of materials to others requires written permission, except under fair dealing or another exception in the Copyright Act. Violations may result in disciplinary action under the [Resolution of Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations policy \(AC1300\)](#).

Generative AI

UVic encourages innovative teaching practices and supports instructors who may like to adopt new pedagogical approaches and learning technologies. Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is a form of machine learning with the capabilities to produce text, images, video, music, code, etc. UVic does not have a general ban on the use of GenAI tools, including ChatGPT. Instead, UVic embraces the appropriate and ethical use of GenAI in learning and teaching. The university recognizes potential concerns associated with the use of GenAI, including potential biases in the algorithms and the possibility that GenAI might be used in ways that violate academic integrity principles and intellectual property rights. Faculty and instructors are best positioned to make decisions about the use of GenAI in

their courses. UVic offers [guidelines](#) to support faculty, instructors, and students in the responsible, effective, and ethical use of artificial intelligence tools. These guidelines also support principles of academic integrity and help to prepare students for a future where the use of GenAI continues to evolve.

Basic Needs

I want you to thrive in this course and everywhere else. Please let me know as early as possible if you have any concerns or if you require any supports to succeed. I'll do my best to help. If, for instance, you need to cover gaps in care, then please don't hesitate to bring your children to class meetings. Babies who are nursing are welcome, as I do not want you to choose between feeding your child and continuing your education.

Some material in this outline was informed by the Media Texthack Team's [Media Studies 101](#) project.

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