In recent scholarly discourse, the implementation of film into secondary or university courses has instigated debates regarding the usefulness of new media in relation to shifting pedagogical styles. As audiences (and by implication, students) change with the influx of visual imagery, many instructors believe that pedagogical styles need to become more pliable in relation to new media. Kecia McBride’s Visual Media and the Humanities brings together contributors from diverse university environments (Ivy League to community colleges) to discuss the importance of teaching students to be critical and self-reflective when reading texts and images in humanities courses that use new media, including film, internet, videoconferencing, and digitalized texts.

McBride’s collection includes several articles that explore the impact of new modes of visual representation on pedagogical styles while emphasizing the importance of teaching students to incite reflective responses as they read images and texts. In “Where can I get a camera?”, Documentary Film, Visual Literacy, and the Teaching of Writing,” Dale Jacobs claims that visual literacy has been underestimated in the school environment, pointing to his earliest encounter with visual imagery and literacy through Sesame Street episodes which taught him the basic structure of visual literacy. He claims, “The unfortunate situation is that what I learned in front of that television set on those countless mornings – the rudiments of visual literacy, or how to read and make meaning from moving visual images – is often discounted or devalued in the school environment” (156). Although contemporary Americans are bombarded with visual imagery from childhood on, Diane Negra and Walter Metz point out, “Americans are used to articulating codes of pleasure but not codes of meaning in their texts” (229). Negra and Metz present an example of using media in introductory college courses to combat the American public’s lack of critical analysis when confronted with visual images in television and film. James W. Miles II claims that the higher a student advances in academia (into secondary classes or college courses), the more the “silent codex,” or written final product, is emphasized through book reports, essays, and the written discourse (75). He argues that such practices may not hold their value as rhetorical demands evolve in society. The articles included in this book do not argue for the abandonment of all traditional pedagogical methods, but rather for a malleability of teaching conventions as time changes the emphasis on visual images in society.

Research in the twenty first century is changing rapidly, and nowhere is it more apparent than through the use of the Internet. Thomas Crochunis’ article, “Visualizing Feminist Theater History on the Web,” discusses how web-based working groups can offer scholarly support in areas of limited and ongoing scholarship for students and scholars. In “Simulation Machines, Media Boundaries, and the Re-expansion of Composition,” James W. Miles II points to recent advancements in voice recognition technology and Internet communication to predict that student writing will become radically more conversational in the future. He suggests that educators use this change in technology and style to alter pedagogy in composition courses by comparing written and spoken essays in class.

Contributors introduce topics such as culture, history, argument, foreign language, technology, and web-based groups. When cultural or historical issues become distanced from students in the classroom, visual images may be capable of influencing learning or instigating discussions in new ways. In “The World in a Frame: Introducing Culture through Film,” Gerald Duchovnay approaches teaching a capstone university course that initiates students into cultural issues. He provides a resourceful example demonstrating how students can be introduced to cultural differences through film, guest lecturers, and supplementary materials. The article outlines...
a sample course focus, textbooks, films, and assignments that would be beneficial to anyone wanting to broach cultural issues in the classroom.

While recognizing the changing emphasis on visual literacy in contemporary society, many of the articles provide analysis of specific films and their usefulness in classroom pedagogy. Maria Bachman, for example, demonstrates how she uses *Pleasantville* in conjunction with Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave” to teach students that higher knowledge consists of educators guiding students to unearth their own questioning abilities. Likewise, in “An Imitation of Life: Deconstructing Racial Stereotypes in Popular Culture,” Stephanie Thompson outlines her approach to initiating classroom discussion on the “perpetuation of racist ideology” by utilizing Fannie Hurst’s novel *Imitation of Life* with two film adaptations (1934 and 1959) to demonstrate the evolving racial issues in Western society (205) in her introduction to composition and women’s studies course.

From classic films to contemporary films, Internet groups to web-based writing styles, McBride’s collection embraces various approaches to using new media to teach in an academic environment that relies heavily on visual literacy. Anyone interested in accessible scholarly approaches aimed at utilizing new media as a learning tool in diverse classroom settings will find this collection of course outlines, discussion of implementation, and pedagogical examples of contemporary classroom issues to be an invaluable resource.