

ENG 4136: Video Production FALL 2015

Class: T 4 (10:40-11:30p), R 4-5 (10:40-12:35p) - Location: TUR 2334

Workshop/Screening: W 9-11 (4:05-7:05p) - Location: Rolfs 0115

Instructor: Lauren DeFilippo - Email: defilipp@ufl.edu

Office: Turlington 4332 - Office Hours: T: 3:15-4:15pm; R: 4:15-5:15pm or by appointment

THE COURSE: This beginning production course will combine practice and theory to introduce students to the fundamentals of nonfiction filmmaking. Learning how to shoot on Canon XH-A1 HD cameras and editing in Adobe Premiere, the class will explore the process of actualizing ideas in an audio-visual medium from the concept stage through post-production. You will acquire hands-on experience in directing, shooting, editing, and sound design as you move towards the creation of a five-minute (maximum) piece that will be screened publicly at the end of the semester.

In addition to production projects, we will also view films and discuss approaches that incorporate documentary, portraiture and/or performance. These screenings are mandatory and will inform the work you create. Class time will also consist of critiques of your creative work to emphasize the conceptual, aesthetic and technical aspects of production. A meaningful part of your final grade will depend on your participation in class discussions, critiques of your fellow classmates' work and your ability to collaborate as a filmmaker. The overarching goal of the course is to consider an array of perspectives, disciplines, influences and filmmaking tools present in nonfiction filmmaking, while also honing your creative skills and cultivating your artistic vision through intensive practice.

THE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance is mandatory: students are expected to attend every class session. In the case of illness or major conflict you should contact me before class. Students are allowed one lecture/workshop absence per semester. Each additional absence will result in a two-point deduction from a student's final grade for each occurrence. Students are allowed to be tardy once during the semester. Each additional tardiness will result in a one-point reduction from a student's final grade.

Failure to be in attendance for an in-class critique will automatically result in a 5PT penalty for you and *the members of your group

***Failure to attend our final public screening will result in a failing grade in this course.**

Participation is important: Active participation in discussions and group critique sessions is highly encouraged and valued. This class is very collaborative and as such students must communicate with one another through discussion and critique. **A major focus of the class will be developing your**

critique skills. We, as a class, will be striving for a mix of thoughtful critical and analytic insight with cooperation and generosity towards one another in mind.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

You must have a drive to edit off of and to **REGULARLY** back up your footage to. UF will also provide drives for back up purposes only. If you lose footage because of any personal irresponsibility in backing up, it will be reflected in your final grade.

You need to purchase:

- External hard drive to back up HD files, at least 500 GB – it must have a Firewire 800 port
- 8GB (or more) SD card
- SD card reader
- 5 mini DV tapes (available online)

Two Required Texts:

- **Directing the Documentary** by Michael Rabiger, Focal Press, 2015.

*(Note: the **sixth edition** of this text is now available, please be sure to purchase this edition)*

- **In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing, 2- Addition** by Walter Murch, Silman James Press, 2001.

- The rest of your readings will be posted electronically – denoted with (E) on the calendar

EQUIPMENT RESPONSIBILITIES & KEYS:

The production room is located in Turlington room 4303. All students enrolled in the class will have 24/7 access and will be given keys to the building and to an interior edit suite with a computer which you will edit on. **If you lose either of these keys, you will be charged \$50 for a replacement.**

You will also be checking out equipment throughout the semester. Media Assistant **Jason McNeal** will manage all equipment sign-ins & sign-outs, support all computer platforms and deal with any equipment problems, exchanges, repairs etc. He will provide a schedule and forms for requesting equipment for all projects and determine return dates in accordance with the syllabus and the course deadlines. You are fully responsible for all equipment that you have signed out, including any mishandling, damage or loss of gear.

PARTNERSHIPS:

Learning to collaborate and work in groups is one of the most important aspects of this class. All of you can make projects on your own; however from this point on (with a few exceptions) you will be doing projects with other people. Working with partners presents unique challenges, mostly enriching, but sometimes producing very negative feelings. I will do my best to help you through any partnership difficulties you may have, but ultimately the success of your partnership is your responsibility. Bottom line, **you may not change partners or do a project on your own in this class, and a failed partnership will result in a failing grade for all partners.**

GRADES:

All assignments must be turned in on time for full credit. All late projects will lose 10% for every class meeting they are overdue.

Attendance and Participation: 10PTS

Camera Proficiency: 2.5PTS

Audio Proficiency: 2.5PTS

MEDIA PROJECTS:

Paper Film: 5PTS

Local Story Pitch: 5PTS

Study of a Space: 10PTS

In Camera Film: 10PTS

Final Film Pitch: 5PTS

Final Film (includes assessment of Dailies and all cuts): 25PTS

WRITTEN PROJECTS

5 Film Responses: 10PTS (Each 2PTS)

Pre production packet: 10PTS

Journal: 5PTS

GRADING SCALE

94% or higher = A 90%-93% = A-

88%-89% = B+ 84%-87% = B
80%-83% = B- 78%-79% = C+
74%-77% = C 70%-73% = C-
65%-69% = D 64% or below = E

CALENDAR:

Tues Aug 25: Class intros

Wed Aug 26: Watch **David Holzman's Diary**, dir. Jim McBride, 1968

For Thurs Read: "Authenticity" from *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning*, Louise Spence and Vinicius Navarro. (E)

Thurs Aug. 27: The Documentary Conceit; Watch **La Jetee**, dir. Chris Marker.

1962

For Tues Read: Rabiger Ch. 2 "The Nature of Documentary" and Ch. 4 "Constructing Reality"

Tues Sep 1: XH-A1 camera intro

Wed Sep 2: **Paper Film DUE; in class crit**

For Wed Read:

- Rabiger Ch. 12 "Camera"

- Cinematography hand out (E)

Thurs Sep 3: Cinematography; Observation and Place

For Tues Read: Rabiger Ch. 3 "Documentary History" and Ch. 10 "Capturing Sound"

Tues Sep 8: Documentary history and direct cinema origins

Wed Sep 9: Watch **High School**, dir Frederick Wiseman, 1968

Thurs Sep 10: Sound gear intro, using sound in film; **Camera proficiencies**

For Tues Read:

- "The Voice of Documentary" by Bill Nichols from *New Challenges in Documentary* (E)

- Rabiger Ch. 5 "Story Elements and Film Grammar"

Tues Sep 15: Bill Nichols types classification of documentaries

Wed Sep 16: Watch **Chronicle of a Summer**, dirs. Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin, 1961

For Thurs Read:

- "Cinema Verite, direct cinema, 1958-1970" from *A New History of Documentary Film*, Betsy A. Mclane (E)

- Interview with Jean Rouch (E)

Thurs Sep. 17: Direct cinema vs. cinema verite; **Audio proficiencies**

For Tues Read:

- "Three Modes of Listening" by Michel Chion (E)

- "Sounds" from *Crafting Truth* (E)

Tues Sep. 22: Sound Design

Wed Sep 23: **Study of a Space DUE (paper due to me and sound presentation in class)**

For Thurs Read:

- Rabiger Ch. 6 "Developing Story Ideas" and Ch. 8 "Developing and Pitching a Short Documentary"

- Read sample treatment (E)

Thurs Sep 24: More on observation and sound design; watch **Uku Ukai** (dir Audrius Stonys, 2006); clips from **Lonely Boy** (dirs Roman Kroiter and Wolf Koenig, 1962); Giving a pitch and writing a treatment; **partners assigned for final film**

For Tues Read:

- Rabiger Ch. 11 "Lighting"

- Lighting hand out (E)

Tues Sep. 29: Lighting Workshop

Wed Sep. 30: **In-Camera Film DUE; in class crit**

For Thurs Read: Rabiger Ch. 31 "Conducting and Shooting Interviews"

- Errol Morris on interviewing (E)

Thurs Oct 1: Interviewing techniques and strategies; watch Errol Morris clips

For Mon Read: **In The Blink of An Eye**, 2- Edition by Walter Murch

Tues Oct 6: Discussion of *In the Blink of An Eye*

Wed. Oct 7: **News story pitch DUE; in class crit**

For Thurs Read: Rabiger Ch. 14 “Creating the First Assembly”

***Complete Editing Tutorials Prior to Class On Thurs

Thurs Oct 8: Adobe Premiere and more on editing; Narration in nonfiction

For Tues Read:

- Rabiger Ch. 13 “Directing” and 18 “Dramatic Development, Time and Story Structure”

Tues Oct 13 : Roles in the field; prepping for shooting

Wed Oct 14: **Pitches for final film DUE in class; in class crit**

*****Pre-production packets DUE via email to me by Thursday, Oct 15 at 7am**

Thurs Oct 15: Individual meetings with me to be approved for shooting – schedule TBA

For Tues Read:

- “Finding and Keeping” (E)

OCTOBER 16 – OCTOBER 26 is SHOOT WEEK – Plan ahead to devote yourself to shooting this week.

Tues. Oct 20: Found Footage Filmmaking

Wed Oct 21: No Screening or Crit – Shoot!

For Thurs Read: Rabiger Ch. 21 “Values, Ethics and Choices” (it’s short)

Thurs Oct 22: Watch Craig Baldwin clips; Applying to festivals

For Tues Read:

- Rabiger Ch. 14 “Creating the First Assembly”

Tues Oct 27: Performance in nonfiction

Wed Oct 28: **Dallies DUE; in class crit**

For Thurs Read:

- “The Image Mirrored,” by Jay Ruby (E)

Thurs Oct 29: Reflexivity in nonfiction

Tues Nov 3: Reflexivity and first person filmmaking cont.

Wed Nov 4: Watch **Sherman's March**, dir. Ross McElwee, 1985

For Thurs Read:

- Ross McElwee interview (E)

- Sensory Ethnography (E)

. Thur Nov 5: Discussion of *Sherman's March* + Sensory Ethnography intro

For Tues Read:

- Rabiger Ch. 15 "Editing for Refinement"

Tues Nov 10: Sensory Ethnography discussion and clips

Wed Nov 11: NO CLASS – UF Holiday

Thurs Nov 12: **Rough Cuts DUE; in class crit**

For Tues Read: Rabiger Ch. 16 "Editing from Fine Cut to Festival"

- "Filming at the Margins: The Documentaries of Hara Kazuo" by Jeffrey and Kenneth Ruoff: (E)

Tues Nov 17: Participatory Filmmaking and Kazuo Hara; Clips from **Goodbye CP** dir. Kazuo Hara, 1973 and **Extreme Private Eros** dir. Kazuo Hara, 1974

Wed Nov 18: **Watch The Act of Killing**, dir. Joshua Oppenheimer, 2012 and Shannon Silva shorts/clips

For next Tues Read:

- Interview with Joshua Oppenheimer (E)

Thurs Nov. 19: **Guest Crit DUE – Special guest TBA**

*****FRIDAY NOV 20: Master Class with filmmaker Shannon Silva 11:45-1:40pm. You are required to attend this additional class**

SCREENING:

Shannon Silva--Film Screening

The Woolly, 20 N Main Street - November 20, 2015 at 7:00pm

29 Places I Once Called Home (2006)

It's a Girl Thing: Tween Queens and the Commodification of Girlhood (2012)

Observational Narrative (2015)

Tues Nov. 24: Discussion of *The Act of Killing* and Josh Oppenheimer (response papers not due until Tuesday before class for *The Act of Killing*) + color correction

Wed Nov 25: NO CLASS – UF holiday

Thurs Nov 26: NO CLASS – UF holiday

Tues Dec 1: Hybrid films + applying to festivals

Wed Dec 2: Watch ***Close Up*** dir. Abbas Kiarostami, 1990

Thurs Dec 3: **Fine Cuts DUE; in class crit**

Tues Dec 7: Discussion of *Close Up* (response papers not due until Tues before class for *Close Up*) and Evaluations – please bring laptop

Wed Dec 8: **Final Crit with me in 4303**

Thurs Dec 9: NO CLASS – Reading day

Friday December 10 – Public screening at 7pm

**Sat Dec 11: Journals due to me by 12pm

ASSIGNMENTS:

Paper Film

Using **12-15** “found” images from catalogues, magazines or the internet create a “film” on paper that tells a visual story. Use a range of “camera” perspectives. No text, sfx or music is allowed – let the images speak for themselves. Pictures should be full-page so that we can discuss composition, i.e. don’t cut out specific images within the page. An image may not be used more than once. The assembled images should create a visual flow that either tells a story or reveals a new perspective on a person, place or activity. Use a range of camera perspectives. You may present your reel of images

using Powerpoint, iMovie or any other editing software you have available. You **MUST** bring it to class in a form that you can project.

Study of a Space

Scout around for a space (either interior or exterior) that interests you, one that is convenient, visually compelling, accessible, empty of people at times, and reasonably well illuminated. Pick a space that is easily identified as a single, whole space. Try to find an environment that offers a lot of possibilities for texture, contrast, color, and form. Think of this production exercise as an opportunity to investigate interesting aspects of the surrounding area that you might otherwise not explore (in other words, please do not use your dorm room!).

Make at least two separate research trips to your selected space at two different times of day (with noticeably different light). Plan to spend **at least an hour** in the space during each research trip, exploring possible images, camera angles, depth relationships, and framings in the space. Think about patterns of light and shadow, interesting compositions, and how to evoke a sense of the space as a whole.

On your trips to the space also take sound gear and record sound from your selected site. Attend to the *textures, tones, and rhythms of the sonic environment*, and consider movement, distance, and trajectory of your sound recording. You can compose it as a single long take, work through in-recording edits, or bring recordings into Premiere and compose. Think about how to make this sound than more than “walla.” What sounds are specific to this place? How can you create a mood? A story? A sense of environment? **You will play this sound recording – which should not exceed 5 minutes – in class.**

Also, write a 2-3 page essay about this PLACE to turn into me. This is an observational assignment and should be based on what you see, hear and experience. Write in a prose style using complete sentences. You may use small amounts of dialogue [over heard] if its appropriate but don't allow dialogue to dominate the writing. Do not interview anybody. This is a writing exercise designed as 'pre-production' research. Think of this as a short story, a piece of non-fiction that will be adapted for the screen. It is not a screenplay and should NOT be formatted as one. This is a **WRITING** assignment— drafts should be proofread for spelling and grammar!

In-Camera Edited Film

This exercise introduces you to the essentials of storytelling, photography, and silent filmmaking. Create a **2-3 minute** narrative with three characters (maximum) in outdoor locations.

Shot chronologically and projected without prior editorial changes, this in-camera-edited film requires that you concentrate primarily on pre-production and production. By eliminating traditional editing, this form of filmmaking lightens your technical challenges, providing you with a simple and manageable introduction to filmmaking.

The video must contain at least one each of the following shots (combinations are allowed):

1. smooth pan, beginning and ending with a static shot
2. smooth tilt, beginning and ending with a static shot
3. hand-held shot (maximum of two) when the tripod impedes the shot
4. shot in which you follow movement, attempting to keep the subject carefully framed
5. range of wide shots, medium shots, and close-ups

Local Story Pitch

Throughout the semester you should be thinking of topics for your final film. This will require you to be more attuned than ever to your surroundings in Gainesville and to local news and media sources. It's a good idea to start a journal or list of these ideas. Choose one of these ideas and make a **3-5 minute** pitch to the class. This is not a film you have to make (and honestly, by this point in the semester you should have settled on another idea), but it should still be of legitimate interest to you, i.e. a film you could see yourself making one day. The purpose of this exercise is to develop your pitch skills and to understand what is required of a pitch before you and your partner pitch your final film the following week.

Pitch and Pre-Production Packet

Each filmmaking team will pitch their final film idea to the class. Each group will have a **maximum of 5 minutes** to pitch. Using the feedback from me and the class, and continuing to develop the project conceptually yourself, groups will turn in a pre-production packet which includes a well written and thoroughly researched treatment. It also includes --

Packet Checklist:

1. Working title and logline
2. 2 paragraph synopsis
3. 3-5 page treatment
4. Storyboard or shot list (with audio and video columns)
5. Short subject bios and contact information
6. Production schedule
7. Location survey (at least check one major location in your movie and include still pictures)
8. Proposed interview questions

Final Film

This is your magnum opus. Drawing upon the technical and conceptual skills developed in the other exercises and working in creative pairs of two students, teams will select a subject, community, or site within the **Gainesville** area for your final film, which can take the form of a documentary, an experimental work, a nonfiction narrative film, or any unique and exciting hybrid form of your own creation. You and your partner will write, shoot, direct and edit the piece that in its final form will be 5 minutes max, complete with title and credits. You may shoot no more than 90 minutes of videotape per group. Research, conceptualization, directing, writing, shooting, and editing responsibilities must be shared equally by both partners.

Note: With my permission, you may also choose a subject lies outside the local area, provided you have sufficient access.

Short Written Responses (x5)

We will be watching feature length films sporadically throughout the semester (six in total). **For five out of six** of these films you will turn in a **short 2-3 paragraph** response. The first 1-2 paragraphs should explore ONE particular scene that stood out examining why and in what ways it resonated with you. You should absolutely not summarize the scene. The final paragraph should detail ONE aesthetic or technical choice used by the filmmaker that you found interesting. You should use these distinctive choices as inspirational tactics you may decide to experiment with in your final film. These responses are due before the start of our next class meeting (printed out or via email).

Journal

Each student must keep a production journal that chronicles the process of creating their final film – from idea gestation through pre-production, production, and post. You must also include a journal entry about your experience at our final public screening. **The due date for the journal is Saturday December 11 at 12pm** to me via email.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

STUDENT EVALUATION OF COURSE AND INSTRUCTOR

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available.

UF HONOR CODE

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel.

HELP WITH COPING

The UF Counseling and Wellness Center is a terrific, free resource for any student who could use help managing stress or coping with life. The center, at 3190 Radio Road on campus, is open for appointments and emergency walk-ins from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. To make an appointment or receive after-hours assistance, call 352-392-1575.

COURSE EVALUTIONS

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

And Finally...

Enjoy yourselves. This class can be a lot of work and even very stressful. The best antidote is to be working on a project that is MEANINGFUL to you personally. Don't get lost thinking of your last project, your next project or the great job you'll get after graduation. Think only of THIS project, breathe life into it, and give it your all. That is the key to success.