

ENG 4136: Basic Video Production; Spring 2019**Professor: Dr. Trevor Mowchun**

Class: TUR 2322—Thursday, periods 6-8 (12:50pm-3:50pm)

Screening: TUR 2322—Tuesday, periods 6-8 (12:50pm-3:50pm); projectionist: Cade Casse

Office hours (TUR 4336): Wednesday 1:15pm-3:00pm and Thursday 4:15pm-5:30pm, or by appointment.

Email: tmowchun@ufl.edu (please allow at least 24 hours for a response)

Office phone number: 352-294-2839

Media Assistant: Jessica Murray (TUR 4303)

Availability: Tuesday periods 9-10 (4:05pm-6pm), Wednesday periods 6-8 (12:50pm-3:50pm),

Thursday periods 9-10 (4:05pm-6pm), Friday periods 4-5 (10:40am-12:30pm)

Email: jrmurray94@ufl.edu

Basic Video Production: *Process and Expression*

This course is a meditation on the creative process and an exploration of the unique and inexhaustible ways that the cinematic medium activates such processes and leads the imagination into free uncharted territory. We will begin with a survey of various creative principles, methods, tools and general philosophies of “making” as expressed by artists, teachers, critics and theorists from diverse backgrounds, with particular attention paid to the insights of independent and experimental filmmakers. The goal of this “study phase” is to open a window into the inner workings of the creative process, analyze films from the perspective of their own making, and ultimately enrich, stimulate and guide creativity throughout the entire filmmaking process from concept to screen. Along the way we will be concerned with a view of cinema as a unique, evolving, visionary artform with great individual and social impact. Students will be introduced to the expressive and experimental potential of cinema through a variety of short exercises or “sketches” exploring the medium’s technological, aesthetic and hybrid facets (i.e. image, silence, sound, time, space, movement, montage, the frame, the face). These short films (approximately 1 minute each) will be compiled and arranged into two timelines to be submitted as film sketchbooks throughout the semester: the first installment requires minimal editing whereas the final installment should be more cohesive. Students will also be encouraged to keep a written notebook related to the activities of the film sketchbooks, documenting creative processes, inspirations, concepts and ideas, research findings, aesthetic and technological problems, etc., in addition to written responses to readings and screenings assigned in class. The final project will emerge from a rigorous process of selecting, organizing, revising and expanding material from the film sketches, resulting in an aesthetically unified and personal work of filmic expression.

Students will be provided with access to the English department’s production and post-production equipment. Students are also free to use their own film equipment with prior approval from the instructor.

Required books (available for purchase in the bookstore)

Robert D. Richardson, *First We Read, Then We Write: Emerson on the Creative Process* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2009).

Paul Klee, *On Modern Art*, trans. Paul Findlay (London: Faber & Faber, 1966).

Recommended: Sonja Schenk and Ben Long, *The Digital Filmmaking Handbook*, Fifth Edition (Boston, MA: Cengage Learning PTR, 2015).

Recommended: Blain Brown, *Cinematography, Theory and Practice: Image Making for Cinematographers and Directors*, Third Edition (New York and London: Routledge, 2016).

* All required articles, essays, and book chapters are available on Canvas. The readings will be informing much of our work, so it is crucial that you keep up with the reading, devoting the necessary time and energy to its understanding. The same holds for the films screened on Tuesday afternoon.

Online technical resources:

- Video Production Tips (from Penn State Media Commons):

<https://mediacommons.psu.edu/2017/02/01/video-production-tips/>

- Department camera manual—Canon Rebel T5i (information about video starts on page 173; page 176 discusses manual video settings): <http://gdip01.c-wss.com/gds/5/0300010905/07/eos-rebel5i-700d-im7-en.pdf>

- Film glossary (from New York Film Academy):

<https://www.nyfa.edu/student-resources/glossary/>

- Basic Adobe Premiere editing tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hls3Tp7JS8E>

Equipment, Technical Assistance, and Proficiency

The Department of English provides production and post-production equipment, including Adobe Premiere editing software, however you are free to use your own equipment with approval from me. A basic proficiency test administered by our media assistant will be required before checking out equipment for the first time, particularly the department's cameras.

Our media assistant will be available in the equipment room (TUR 4303) to conduct basic proficiency tests and provide demonstrations of production and postproduction equipment, in addition to assisting with any technical questions you may have in person and via email. Please be aware that technical support is restricted to the department's onsite resources. Hours of availability are listed at the top of the syllabus.

In order to record, store, transfer and regularly back up your work you may need all or some of the following equipment:

- SD card for video recording (recommended: SanDisk 32GB Extreme Pro SDHC UHS-1 Memory Card)
- SD card for audio recording (recommended: SanDisk 16GB Ultra UHS-1 SDHC Memory Card class 10)
- External hard drive for project storage (recommended: WD 1TB My Passport USB 3.0 Secure Portable Hard Drive)

- SD card reader (recommended: Transcend RDF5 USB 3.0 SDHC / SDXC / microSDHC/SDXC Memory Card Reader) *The department's iMac computers have SD slots, as do the majority of laptops

Equipment and Lab Policies

The production room is located in TUR 4303 (code 0415*). Throughout the semester you will have 24/7 access and will be given keys to the building and to an interior editing room. If you lose either of these keys, you will be charged \$50 for a replacement. To sign out keys please consult with the technician during scheduled office hours in TUR 4303. Be sure to return your keys at the end of the semester.

When checking out equipment, the technician will manage all equipment sign-ins and sign-outs, support all computer platforms and deal with any equipment problems, exchanges, repairs etc. She 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.

SCHEDULE

* Screenings are subject to change

- Week 1 (January 8, 10): Introduction

Reading: Robert D. Richardson, *First We Read, Then We Write: Emerson on the Creative Process* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2009).

Screening (feature): *Lumiere and Company* (various directors, concept by Philippe Poulet, France, 1995)

- Week 2 (January 15, 17)

Reading (cont'd): Robert D. Richardson, *First We Read, Then We Write: Emerson on the Creative Process* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2009).

Screening (feature): *Adaptation* (Spike Jonze, USA, 2002)

- Week 3 (January 22, 24)

Reading: Alexander Mackendrick, "A Technique for Having Ideas" and "Slogans for the Screenwriter's Wall," in *On Film-making: An Introduction to the Craft of the Director*, ed. Paul Cronin (London and New York: Faber and Faber, 2004), pp. 36-43.

Reading: Steven D. Katz, "Chapter 3: Storyboards," in *Film Directing Shot by Shot: Visualizing from Concept to Screen* (Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions in conjunction with Focal Press, 1991), pp. 23-84.

Screening (feature): *Songs from the Second Floor* (Roy Andersson, Sweden, 2000)

- Week 4 (January 29, 31)

Reading: Joseph Cornell, "Miscellaneous Undated Entries," in *Joseph Cornell's Theater of the Mind: Selected Diaries, Letters, and Files*, ed. Mary Ann Caws (New York and London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), pp. 75-81.

Reading: Guy Davenport, "Micrographs," in *The Hunter Gracchus and Other Papers on Literature and Art* (New York: Counterpoint, 1997), pp. 297-304.

Reading: Tomas Tranströmer, "Paths (Stigar)," in *The Great Enigma: New Collected Poems*, trans. Robin Fulton (New York: New Directions, 2006), pp. 111-124.

Screening (feature): *Tarnation* (Jonathan Caouette, USA, 2003)

Screening (shorts): *München-Berlin Wanderung/Walking from Munich to Berlin* (Oskar Fischinger, Germany, 1927), *Notebook* (Marie Menken, USA, 1962), *Boston Fire* (Peter Hutton, USA, 1979), *Study of a River* (Peter Hutton, USA, 1997)

- Week 5 (February 5, 7)

Reading: Henry James, "Preface to the New York edition," in *The Portrait of a Lady*, ed. Geoffrey Moore (London: Penguin Books, 2003), pp. 41-55.

Reading: John Berger, "Drawing," in *Selected Essays*, ed. Geoff Dyer (New York: Vintage International, 2001), pp. 10-14.

Reading: James Agee, "Appendix III: Knoxville: Summer of 1915," in *A Death in the Family: A Restoration of the Author's Text*, ed. Michael A. Lofaro (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2007), pp. 565-568.

Screening (feature): *The Long Day Closes* (Terence Davies, UK, 1992)

Screening (short): *My Childhood* (Bill Douglas, UK, 1972)

- Week 6 (February 12, 14)

Reading: Paul Klee, *On Modern Art*, trans. Paul Findlay (London: Faber & Faber, 1966).

Reading: Robert Walser, "A Painter," in *Robert Walser: Looking at Pictures*, trans. Susan Bernofsky (New York: Christine Burgin and New Directions, 2015), pp. 10-39.

Screening (feature): *Waking Life* (Richard Linklater, USA, 2001),

Screening (short): *Guernica* (Alain Resnais and Robert Hessens, France, 1959)

- Week 7 (February 19, 21)

Reading: Luis Buñuel, "The Cinema, Instrument of Poetry," in *The Shadow and its Shadow: Surrealist Writings on the Cinema*, 3rd edition, ed. and trans. Paul Hammond (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2000), pp. 112-116.

Reading: Edward Branigan, "Anthropomorphism: Camera Movement and the Human Body," in *Projecting a Camera: Language-Games in Film Theory* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 36-39, notes p. 235.

Reading: David Lynch, "I See Myself: *Eraserhead*," in *Lynch on Lynch*, ed. Chris Rodley (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), pp. 54-87.

Screening (feature): *Eraserhead* (David Lynch, USA, 1977)

Screening (shorts): *Un Chien Andalou* (Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, France, 1929), *Jean Taris, Swimming Champion* (Jean Vigo, France, 1931)

- Week 8 (February 26, 28)

Reading: Maya Deren, "Part 2: Film Production" ("Creating Movies with a New Dimension: Time," "Creative Cutting," "Planning by Eye," and "Adventures in Creative Film-Making"), in *Essential Deren: Collected Writings on Film by Maya Deren*, ed. Bruce R. McPherson (Kingston, NY: Documentext, 2005), pp. 129-185.

Screening (shorts): *Meshe of the Afternoon* (Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid, USA, 1943), *Witch's Cradle* (Maya Deren, USA, 1944), *At Land* (Maya Deren, USA, 1946), *A Study in Choreography for*

Camera (Maya Deren, USA, 1946), *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (Maya Deren, USA, 1946), *Meditation on Violence* (Maya Deren, USA, 1949), *The Very Eye of Night* (Maya Deren, USA, 1958)

- Week 9 (March 5, 7) *No classes: spring break

- Week 10 (March 12, 14)

Reading: John Cage, "Experimental Music," in *Silence: Lectures and Writings*, 50th anniversary edition (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2011), pp. 7-12.

Reading: Stan Brakhage, "Painting Film," in *Stan Brakhage: Correspondences*, in *Chicago Review* (47:4 Winter 2001, 48:1 Spring 2002), pp. 61-64.

Screening (feature): *Werckmeister Harmonies* (Béla Tarr, Hungary, 2000)

Screening (short): *Commingle Containers* (Stan Brakhage, USA, 1997)

- Week 11 (March 19, 21)

Reading: Stan Brakhage, "Notes on Anticipation," in *Essential Brakhage: Selected Writings on Filmmaking by Stan Brakhage*, ed. Bruce R. McPherson (Kingston, NY: Documentext, 2001), pp. 50-59.

Reading: Hollis Frampton, "Zorns Lemma: Script and Notations," in *On the Camera Arts and Consecutive Matters: The Writings of Hollis Frampton*, ed. Bruce Jenkins (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2009), pp. 192-202.

Screening (shorts): *Anticipation of the Night* (Stan Brakhage, USA, 1958), *The Stars are Beautiful* (Stan Brakhage, USA, 1974), *(nostalgia)* (Hollis Frampton, USA, 1971)

- Week 12 (March 26, 28)

Reading: Sergei Paradjanov, "Sayat-Nova," in *Seven Visions*, trans. Guy Bennet (Copenhagen and Los Angeles: Green Integer, 1998), pp. 97-138.

Screening (feature): *Sayat-Nova/The Color of Pomegranates* (Sergei Paradjanov, USSR, 1969)

- Week 13 (April 2, 4)

Reading: John Perreault, "Literal Light," in *Light in Art*, ed. Thomas B. Hess and John Ashbery (New York: Collier Books, 1971), pp. 125-136.

Reading: John Alton, "Visual Music," in *Painting with Light* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 158-163.

Screening (feature): *The Scarlet Empress* (Joseph Von Sternberg, USA, 1934)

Screening (shorts): *Light* (Jordan Belson, USA, 1974), *Angel's Gate* (Bill Viola, USA, 1992)

- Week 14 (April 9, 11)

Reading: Sergei Eisenstein, "Appendix B: Notes from a Director's Laboratory," in *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, ed. and trans. Jay Leyda (New York: Harcourt Brace, Jovanovich, 1977), pp. 261-265.

Reading: Sergei Eisenstein, "Appendix 2: Montage of Attractions, An Essay," in *The Film Sense*, ed. and trans. Jay Leyda (New York: Harcourt Brace, Jovanovich, 1975), pp. 230-233.

Reading: Sergei Eisenstein, "Appendix 6: First Outline of *Que Viva Mexico!*," in *The Film Sense*, ed. and trans. Jay Leyda (New York: Harcourt Brace, Jovanovich, 1975), pp. 251-255.

Screening (feature): *Walkabout* (Nicolas Roeg, UK/Australia, 1971)

Screening (short): *Sentimental Romance* (Grigoriy Aleksandrov and Sergei Eisenstein, France, 1930)

- Week 15 (April 16, 18)

Reading: Donald Barthelme, “Not Knowing,” in *Not Knowing: The Essays and Interviews of Donald Barthelme*, ed. Kim Herzinger (New York: Random House, 1997), pp. 11-24.

Screening (feature): *Inherent Vice* (Paul Thomas Anderson, USA, 2014)

- Week 16 (April 23): Conclusions

Screening: *32 Short Films About Glenn Gould* (François Girard, Canada, 1993)

COURSEWORK

* Submission of written material: I require hardcopies of all written assignments, submitted in class and on time. If you are unable to submit your work in class, please provide a reason and email me a PDF file on the due date. Use 1.5 or double spacing.

* Submission of film material: I recommend using a free file sharing service called WeTransfer instead of flash drives. On WeTransfer you can upload files upwards of 2GB, which should be more than sufficient. If your files exceed the maximum size be sure to compress them. Send your files to my email address: tmowchun@ufl.edu. Once you successfully transfer your files using this service, I will receive a link with the time of submission and you will receive a confirmation email once they have been downloaded. Please ensure your files are labelled with your name and project title, if applicable.

Research (annotated bibliography/filmography, 4-6 assigned texts/films)

The art of filmmaking can only attain the ideal degree of depth and direction through an exploratory and openminded process of reading, viewing, thinking, self-questioning and conversation. Choose a combination of 4-6 readings/films from class which you find interesting, inspiring and helpful as you begin developing your own creative methods, and then compose a paragraph annotation on each one (250-500 words). Your commentary can include interpretations of quotes from readings or details from film scenes, critiques of film theory/directorial decisions, comparisons between the theory and practice of filmmakers discussed in class, possible linkages with your own preliminary artistic intuitions, etc. If you are drawn more to the readings be sure to include at least one film; vice versa if you prefer to respond to the films. The best research will strive for a balance between readings (i.e. ideas) and films (i.e. images and sounds).

Cinematic sketchbook (part 1)

Begin exploring the expressive and experimental potential of cinema through a variety of short moving image “sketches” (between 4-6, approximately 1 minute each). You need not work with sound at this early stage and at least 2 of your sketches must be silent. If you choose to work with sound it must be synchronized with the image track. Do not include music or sound effects unless they are emitted from the filming locations themselves. Examples of film sketches will be screened throughout the semester and possible creative directions you may take with your sketches will be forthcoming. You may submit these sketches individually or compile them into a single timeline. Titles for the sketches are optional.

Written conceptualization of final cinematic sketchbook

Your cinematic sketches are the raw material from which you will compose the final sketchbook. Before embarking upon a synthesis and revision of your preliminary sketches, it is crucial to develop

your ideas, methods, plans, intentions, and inspirations in written form (3-5 pages). Do not force your sketches to fit into a pattern or narrative foreign to the spirit in which they were conceived. Instead, describe the process by which you plan on arranging, reworking and elaborating your sketches into an aesthetically and/or thematically coherent film notebook. Describe new sketches to be included in the final notebook and your reasons for including them. The same goes for sketches you wish to cut. You are also encouraged to explain your approach to sound (which always includes silence) and text (i.e. the presence or absence of titles for the sketches and your approach to image-word relations).

Oral presentation of final cinematic sketchbook

Give a brief 5-10 minute presentation of your final film project based on your conceptualization. The presentations should include a description of your artistic vision, main themes, structure, style, influences, etc., illustrated by a clip from your film not to exceed 2 minutes. If you are making a cinematic sketchbook then you may screen 1-2 of your sketches, explaining how they exemplify the work as a whole. After each presentation, one student from the class will respond to the work with 1-2 questions or comments. If there are no volunteers I will assign a respondent. All criticisms should be constructive and positive in tone.

Technology: I recommend using the classroom technology to screen your clip as it may not be possible to connect your laptop computer to the system. Bring your clip on a USB stick and a backup copy via WeTransfer. Make the most of this rare opportunity to present your work on a big screen.

Cinematic sketchbook (final)

Using, revising and adding to your preliminary sketches, create a film sketchbook between 4-8 minutes long. I strongly urge you to avoid lengthier films unless it is justified in your written conceptualization. Keep in mind that your final film should not ramble like a diary or display the raw, unfiltered aspects of stream of consciousness poetics. Stick to your script at first and change your plan only when your film begins to find a life of its own. Be sure to give your film a title and include credits.

Participation (including 1 scheduled production meeting)

There are other ways to participate in this course in addition to in-class discussions. You can meet with me during office hours or present a course-specific research notebook at the end of semester.

* You are encouraged to keep a written notebook related to the activities of your filmmaking for the purpose of documenting creative processes, inspirations, concepts and ideas, research findings, aesthetic and technological problems, etc. Your notebook will not be evaluated though you may present it to me at the end of semester as part of your participation grade.

Evaluation and Due Dates:

- Research (annotated bibliography/filmography, 4-6 entries at 250-500 words each): 15% (Due in class, Thursday February 7)
- Cinematic sketchbook: part 1 (4-6 sketches, approximately 1 minute each): 25% (Due Friday March 1 by midnight, via WeTransfer)
- Written conceptualization of final film (3-5 pages): 15% (Due in class, Thursday March 21)
- Oral presentation of final film (5-10 minutes, TBA): 5%

- Final cinematic sketchbook (4-8 minutes): 30% (Due Friday April 26 by midnight, via WeTransfer)
- Participation (including 1 scheduled production meeting, TBA): 10%

Policies and Services

* I will respond to emails from Monday to Friday, usually within a day or two, though please be patient when waiting for a response. While email communication may seem indispensable nowadays, you may find it more productive and interesting to come meet with me during office hours to discuss the course material. Indeed there is no substitute for a one-on-one conversation when providing feedback to students in the process of developing and crystallizing ideas into a state of maturity. If you are unable to meet during scheduled office hours then feel free to make an appointment.

* Regular attendance for classes and screenings is mandatory. If you have to miss a class for any reason, then please let me know ahead of time. A maximum of 2 absences will be permitted with advance notice and a reasonable excuse. Communication with the instructor is crucial to avoid misunderstandings related to absences. These policies are consistent with the UF's attendance policies. For more information on these policies, please visit:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

* I respectfully ask all students to refrain from using cell phones and internet during class and screenings.

* Please do not record any class lecture without permission from me.

* Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism. Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the Student Honor Code:

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

* Students with disabilities who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://drc.dso.ufl.edu/>).

* For information on UF Grading policies:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

* For counseling or urgent help you may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center at 352-392-1575, or contact them online: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/services/individual/>

* UF's policy on Harassment: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty:

<https://hr.ufl.edu/forms-policies/policies-managers/sexual-harassment/>