

## ENG 4136 – FILM AND VIDEO PRODUCTION (sec. 04F8), Fall 2017

**Instructor Name: Cristina Ruiz-Poveda**

**Course meeting times & locations:** ROL 0115. Class T 5-6 and TR 6 / Screenings TR 9-11

**Office Location and Hours:** Tuesdays during period 7 and by appointment at TUR TBA

**Course website:** Canvas

**Instructor Email:** [cruizpoveda@ufl.edu](mailto:cruizpoveda@ufl.edu)

### **Course Description:**

This course explores the expressive potential of filmmaking through a combination of film studies and hands-on experience. On the one hand, in film screenings and discussions, we will examine the work of other filmmakers to learn about the aesthetic and technical foundations of film. On the other hand, you will put the potential of these cinematic elements to practice, by producing your own work. We will also read some theoretical writings on film to expand our understanding of cinematic form.

We will interrogate the nature of filmmaking both as a craft and as an art. Thus, this course will challenge you as a filmmaker by helping you develop your own personal style while maintaining professional production standards. Through a series of exercises, this class will give you structure and prompts to guide you in your exploration of film's creative potential. These assignments will culminate in a five-minute long film which will be screened publicly at the end of the semester. The guiding element of the course will be the dramatic and narrative use of the human voice in film, which you will explore with creative freedom in your own work.

### **Required Gear:**

The Department of English provides most of the equipment we will use throughout the semester, but in order to record, store, and regularly back up your own work you will need:

- 32 GB or more SD card for video recording
- 8 GB or more SD card for audio recording
- 500 GB drive
- SD card reader

### **Required Texts:**

- Schenk, Sonja and Long, Ben. *The Digital Filmmaking Handbook, 6<sup>th</sup> edition*. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning PTR, 2016.
- The instructor will provide other required materials through Canvas.
- Recommended: Lumet, Sidney. *Making Movies*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996.

### **Equipment and Lab Policies**

The production room is located in TUR 4303. 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.

You will also be checking out equipment throughout the semester. Our Media Assistant, Mitchel Worley, 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.

### **Assignments:**

- Participation and preparedness - 10%  
Students should be prepared to discuss the materials and actively participate in the critiques. Providing useful and constructive criticism about your peers' work constitutes a crucial element of the creative process. Absences, tardiness, and lack of preparedness will lower your participation grade (see Course Policies, below). You will take notes during the screenings on worksheets provided by the instructor.
- Equipment proficiency tests - 10%  
To ensure that you are familiar with the camera and the audio recorder before starting the production, you will be tested in person. You will not be able to check out materials until you pass this test.
- Director notes - 10 %  
You will write responses to the weekly screenings and readings with reflections about how formal and theoretical elements of film can be put to practice. These notes are not intended to be only a formal analysis of the films, but also a creative toolbox for you to use in your own work. You will also write a self-inquiry exercise to position yourself as a filmmaker and learn about your own creative process.
- Audio-visual challenges - 20 %  
Bi-weekly assignments focusing on each audiovisual element to help you identify and hone your style and give you ideas for the final film. Visual exploration (5%), audio landscape (10 %), acting and character construction (5%).
- Pitches and critiques- 10%  
Throughout the semester, you will pitch different stages of your idea to your peers in short, clear, and concise presentations. Your peers will give you feedback and you will also critique of your classmate's presentations.
- Script - 10%  
You will write the script of your short film. If your film is narrative, you will write the structure, the dialogues, and above all, the characters design. If your film is experimental, you will write the actions, describe the images, and explain the aesthetics of the film with words. If your film is a documentary, you will write the initial plan, the situations you will film, the subjects you will portray, and the tentative structure.
- Preproduction packet - 10 %  
To help you prepare for the filming, you will plan the mise-en-scene of the film, break down the script into shots, create a production breakdown, and include a mood board with aesthetic references to explain the style of your film.
- Final short film - 20%

Drawing from your previous assignments, you will produce a 5-minute film (documentary, non-fiction, or narrative\*) that uses the human voice with a strong narrative or dramatic purpose (for example, through voiceover, through the use of phone calls, through complete absence of words...). \*Traditional narrative films are discouraged to give you more room to experiment with the use of voice in your film. We will discuss this topic more in depth in class but keep in mind that a short film is not a feature film.

### Course Policies:

1. *Attendance:* This is a participation-driven course. Missing class will affect your grade negatively and it will deprive your classmates of your contribution to discussion.
  - Absence does not justify late submissions. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to remain informed and come to the next class prepared.
  - **You are allowed up to 2 absences** without penalty. Each additional absence will lower your final grade by a full letter (B- to C-, for instance).
  - **Five 50-min absences result on a failing grade.**
  - Justified absences only involve university-sponsored events, religious holidays, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena), or campus closure. These absences must be discussed with the instructor in advance.
  - **Being tardy** or leaving early **twice** will count as an absence. Unjustified absences will lower your participation grade.
  - **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> (Links to an external site.)
2. *Assignment Submission:* The instructor will provide instructions for the submission of each assignment, such as format specifics. **Label all the files** as follows: **LastName\_PROJECT**. For instance, if Kathryn Bigelow is submitting her final short film, her file will be called "Bigelow\_FINAL"
3. *Late Assignments:* Professional filmmakers work under pressure and with strict deadlines. Late submissions will not be accepted, unless one of the justified causes for absence is involved. Late work cannot be made up for a lower grade.
4. *Maintenance Responsibilities.* Make sure to back up all your work! Technical issues do not justify any late submission, so plan ahead and avoid leaving everything for the last minute. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
5. *Guns and weapons:* **The appearance of guns in your films is strictly forbidden** and will result in a failing grade for the assignment, regardless of whether the prop is a toy, a replica, or a real gun. Other weapons are strongly discouraged, but make sure to discuss this topic with your instructor.
6. *Classroom etiquette:*
  - The use of cell phones, computers, or other electronic gadgets is not allowed unless, of course, you are using the gear to work. Please silence your phones. **Texting in class will count as an absence.**

- UF policy prohibits students from eating in class. It is distracting and will make your classmates hungry!
  - Integrity, diversity, and critiques: Please keep in mind that UF students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds and that the films we will discuss might engage in controversial topics. You will need to engage each other's opinions respectfully and confront the films maturely. During the critiques, give your peers constructive criticism and make challenging suggestions to help them grow.
7. *Screening policy:*
    - To analyze films successfully you should be actively engaged during the viewing. Take notes during the screening to be prepared for class discussion and response essays. The instructor will provide worksheets for each screening that will be evaluated throughout the semester.
    - Keep in mind that some of the films might contain "adult" themes, explicit language, sexual scenes, or physical and verbal violence. If you suspect that any of the films contains scenes you cannot watch with a group, you may ask the instructor about watching the film on your own.
    - Use of cell-phones is NOT PERMITTED during the screenings either. **Cell phone use will result in being marked absent for the period.**
  8. *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://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.
  9. Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor.
  10. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
  11. *Grade Appeals.* In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
  12. *Course Evaluations.* Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages asking you to go online and evaluate this course: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>
  13. Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352) 392-1575, or contact them online: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>
  14. You can contact me via email or during my office hours. Please allow 24 hours to respond. If my office hours do not work for you, we can schedule an appointment.
  15. *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: <http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/institutional-equity-diversity/resources/harassment/>

## Tentative Course Schedule

Week 1	Introduction	Due
8/22	Course introduction <i>Screening: Short films by former students</i>	
8/24	<u>Read: "Chapter 1: Getting Started"</u> Introduction to the equipment: cameras and tripods	
Week 2	Audiovisual storytelling	Due
8/29	Cinema modes and short film narratives Putting emotions into images and actions <u>Read: "Visualization" in Film Directing, Shot by Shot, by Steven D. Katz</u> <u>Section "Writing visually" on Chapter 2</u>  <i>Screening: City Lights (Charles Chaplin, 1931)</i> <i>Focal Point (Alireza Khatami, 2008)</i>	
8/31	Introduction to the equipment: sound recording <u>Read: "Chapter 8: Production Sound"</u> Discussion of the films	
Week 3	Experimental films	Due
9/5	<u>Read: Excerpts from A Book of Surrealist Games" by Alastair Brotchie</u>  <i>Screening: Tungjuq (Feliz and Paul, 2011)</i> <i>Meshes of an Afternoon (Maya Deren, 1943)</i> <i>Un Chien Andalou (Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, 1929)</i> <i>The Experimental Short Films (Bill Viola)</i>	Camera proficiency test
9/7	Discussion of the films "Pure cinema" and abstraction	
Week 4	Sound and voice I	Due
9/12	Voice in film <b>Visit: Samuel Proctor Oral Histories Program</b> <u>Read: "Mood, Silence and Ghostly Words" by Rebeca Maseda</u>  <i>Screening: The Secret Life of Words (Isabel Coixet, 2005)</i>	Sound recording proficiency test  Challenge 1: visual exploration
9/14	Tutorial: sound edition <u>Read: "Chapter 15: Sound Editing"</u>	
Week 5	Sound and voice II	Due
9/19	Sound in film	

	<p><u>Read: "Listening to the Cinema" by Patricia White and Timothy Corrigan</u></p> <p><i>Screening: Suitcase of Love and Shame (Jane Gillooly, 2013)</i>  <i>Excerpts from Stranger than Fiction (Marc Foster, 2006)</i></p>	
9/21	<p>Experimental sound art  Discussion of the films</p>	

Week 6	Script writing I	Due
9/26	<p>How to (not) tell a story  <u>Read: Excerpts from "Story" by Robert McKee "Screenwriting" on Chapter 2</u></p> <p><i>Screening: La Ruta Natural (Álex Pastor, 2004)</i>  <i>La Breve Historia (Series of short films)</i>  <i>La Jetée (Chris Marker, 1962)</i></p>	Challenge 2: acoustic landscape
9/28	<p>Introduction to the equipment: lighting  Tricks and tips</p>	

Week 7	Script writing II	Due
10/3	<p>Character design / dealing with real subjects  <u>Read: "Writing Dialogue" by Edmond Levy</u></p> <p><i>Screening: Folklift Driver Klaus (Stephan Prehn and Jörg Wagner, 2000)</i>  <i>7:35 (Nacho Vigalondo, 2003)</i></p>	
10/5	<p>Discussion of the films  Writing dialogues</p>	

Week 8	Production design	Due
10/10	<p>Pitch and critiques  <u>Read "Production Design" on Chapter 5</u></p> <p><i>Screening: ¿Te Vas? (Cristina Molino, 2010)</i>  <i>Soft (Simon Ellis, 2011)</i>  <i>Voice Over (Martín Rosete, 2013)</i></p>	First pitch: premise and basic character design
10/12	<p>Production design activity  Discussion of the films</p>	

Week 9	Acting	Due
10/17	<p>Directing actors  <u>Read: "Directing actors for the Screen" by Tom Kingdon</u></p> <p><i>Screening: The Last Laugh (Friedrich W. Murnau, 1924)</i></p>	

	<i>Listen to me Marlon (Stevan Riley, 2015)</i>	
10/19	Acting activity Discussion of the films	

Week 10	Documentaries	Due
10/24	Dealing with reality <u>Read: "Documentary" by Mike Wayne</u>  <i>Screening: Drive-In Jesus (Lauren DeFilippo, 2017)</i> <i>29 Places I Once Called Home (Shannon Silva, 2015)</i> <i>Films by former students</i>	Challenge 3: Acting and character design
10/26	Pre-producing a documentary	

Week 11	Preproduction	Due
10/31	Preproduction and storyboarding <u>Read: "Scheduling" on Chapter 2 and "Chapter 5: Planning your Shoot"</u>  <i>Screening: Script presentations and critiques</i>	Script and pitch
11/2	Funding and producing your film Casting calls	

Week 12	Directing your film	Due
11/7	The challenges of directing <u>Read: "Chapter 9: Directing"</u>  <i>Screening: Living in Oblivion (Tom DiCillo, 1995)</i>	
11/9	Conversations with directors	

Week 13	Editing	Due
11/14	Editing notions <u>Read: "Chapter 13: Preparing to Edit" and "Chapter 14: Editing"</u>  <i>Screening: Man with a Movie Camera (Dziga Vertov, 1929)</i>	Preproduction packet
11/16	Introduction to the equipment: editing software Discussion of the film	

Week 14	Production week	Due
11/21	Production <u>Read: "The Director" by Sidney Lumet</u>  <i>No screening: Editing Lab</i>	

11/23	<i>No class - Thanks Giving</i>	
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Week 15	Critique week	Due
11/28	Rough cuts and critiques <u>Read: Ten Lessons on Filmmaking by David Lynch</u>  <i>Screening: Rough cuts and critiques</i>	Rough cuts due
11/30	Rough cuts and critiques	

Week 16	Film Screening	Due
11/5	Preparing for the screening  <i>Screening: Fine cuts and critiques</i>	Fine cuts Director notes

**Public film screening at The Woolly: Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup> (to be confirmed)**

**Grade Scale and Rubric:**

**A:** You fulfilled the guidelines of the assignments properly, and your work shows originality and creativity. Your papers demonstrate that you took extra steps to compose your writing by integrating ideas studied in class. A range papers must be free of typos and grammatical errors. You read the assigned materials, write interesting and well-thought responses, and engage in productive class discussion.

**B:** You fulfilled the guidelines of the assignments. Your work has a few minor grammar or spelling errors, but is complete and well organized. Your papers incorporate critical concepts studied in class, but it is slightly ineffective due to formal errors or to weak arguments. You read the materials, write correct responses, and participate in class.

**C:** You fulfilled the guidelines of the assignments but your work needs significant revision. Your papers are logical in content, but your writing is wrong. You sometimes fail to read the materials, write basic responses, and you participate in class with superficial contributions.

**D:** You neglected basic requirements of the assignments and completed them at a poor quality level. Your papers need significant revision. The content is incomplete and the organization unclear. You do not address concepts studied in class in depth. You barely do the readings, your responses are very poor or inexistent, and you do not participate in class.

**E:** An E is usually reserved for people who do not do the work or do not come to class. However, students will earn an E if their work clearly shows little effort, if they do not communicate with the instructor about their work or absences, and if they don't read the materials.

A 93-100      B 83-86      C 73-76      D 63-66

A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62
B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	E	0-59

For information about UF grading policies, visit:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx> (Links to an external site.)

**Final Grade Appeals:** Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Department of English Program Assistant. Appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower grade.