

COM 332 TELEVISION PRODUCTION

FALL 2009

(a.k.a. Intro to Video Production)

Tues 6:00 pm - 7:45 pm Helmke Library B52

Thur 6:00 pm - 8:45 pm Helmke Library B52

Instructor: Mary J. Daniel
Office: Neff 230 M
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Email: danielm@ipfw.edu

Office Hours:

Thurs 1:30–2:30 (by appointment)

Friday 3:30–4:30 (drop in) 4:30-5:30 (by appointment).

Other times may be available, by appointment.

Prerequisites: COM 248 or 251.

The instructor may modify the material or schedule specified in this outline. Any required changes will be announced both in class and by email.

Purpose

This course is an introduction to digital video production. It assumes no prior experience with video production technology. Students investigate the principles and processes of digital video production through a combination of project work, technical workshops, screenings, discussions and critiques. They learn the fundamentals of camerawork, lighting, sound recording and digital editing with Final Cut Pro software, and are introduced to a range of independent video practices, including documentary, dramatic, personal, community-based, and experimental. They gain experience shooting on location and in the studio, and have the opportunity to take an initial idea and see it through the different phases of development and production to completion. Students are required to work in collaboration with others as well as independently, and are encouraged to explore alternative as well as classical strategies and approaches.

Goals

To give students an introductory understanding of the aesthetics, theory and practice of contemporary video production, and of physical principles of video production technologies. To allow them to develop creative and practical video production skills, including visual writing skills and basic technical skills in digital cinematography, sound recording, lighting, and digital editing.

Learning Objectives

On successful completion of the course, students will have acquired an introductory knowledge of typical video production workflows, different kinds of video cameras and formats, compositional principles of motion picture photography, and simple lighting and audio recording strategies. They will have had the opportunity to develop a working familiarity with 3-chip mini DV camcorders, and to become reasonably proficient with Final Cut Pro digital editing software. They will have learnt how to recognize and resolve creative, logistical, and technical problems, and how to initiate, develop, and implement a short video project. They will have gained, in the process, concept development skills, written, oral, and visual communication skills, technical research skills, problem-solving skills, and collaboration skills.

Requirements

Required Text: Ascher & Pincus, *The Filmmaker's Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide for the Digital Age*, 3rd (2008) ed. London: Plume, 2007.

Recommended Texts: *Focal Easy Guide to Final Cut Pro 6*. Oxford: Focal Press, 2008.

Additional readings (short articles, technical manuals) will be recommended and occasionally assigned throughout the course of the term.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Required:

- A portable storage device (eg. 2-4 gig USB flash drive or 2-3 blank DVDs) for backing-up project files, exchanging exercise media.
- 6 additional blank DVDs, 2 with jewel cases, for screening and submitting finished exercises and projects.
- Five 60-minute mini DV/DVC tapes (no memory chip). Available at Circuit City, Walgreens, and Best Buy, or online (case of 5 for 11.00 + shipping). **Recommended tape:** Sony Mini DV tape, 60 Min. Premium MiniDV Tape available online at: http://www.tapeandmedia.com/mini_dv_tape_sony_premium.asp

Recommended:

A Fire-wire drive, 40 Gigs (or more).

Additional mini-DV tapes and DVDs (needs will vary, depending on the kind of project).

A set of good quality headphones, with 'mini' jack.

ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

The assignments for this course include written journal exercises, in-class technical exercises, 2 creative video projects, and a take-home technical research project. Students are expected to present their work to their classmates for discussions and critiques, to offer constructive criticism of their classmates' work, and to respond effectively to feedback they receive. Students are expected to do a considerable amount of production project work between scheduled classes.

Technical Exercises.

Students will be asked to undertake, at times in collaboration with other students, in-class technical exercises. Although their work on these exercises will not be independently evaluated, their efforts and contributions to group exercises will be taken into consideration when evaluating their level of participation in the course. Technical Exercises are designed to be undertaken primarily in class time, but may require additional work outside of class for preparation or completion.

Journal Exercises

Several short (10-20 min) writing and observation exercises will be assigned from time to time throughout the first half of term. Students are expected to complete assigned journal exercises by the relevant class time, as part of their preparation for class discussions. Failure to do so will be reflected in their participation grade. They are also expected to submit a hard copy of the assigned journal exercises, plus two additional samples of independently initiated journal writing, for evaluation by the 10th week of classes. The Journal Assignment will be evaluated on the basis of effort, initiative, and originality: writing technique will not be evaluated.

Creative Production Projects

Students will work on one collaborative production project, and one production project that they can elect to pursue either independently or in collaboration with others. These will be evaluated on the basis of the concept (its clarity, originality, and relevance to the problems of the assignment), refinement of the concept (the ability to develop, improve upon ideas, and to resolve their problems), technical skills and abilities (with an emphasis on the appropriateness of techniques, given the concept), and professionalism of presentation (work ethic; ability to meet interim deadlines and follow submission guidelines; ability to communicate the rationale for their choices). Although some class time may be reserved for work and/or feedback on Production Projects, students are expected to undertake most of their work on these outside of class time.

More detailed descriptions of the nature, goals and evaluation criteria of each assignment will be provided as it is assigned.

Weight:

Journal Assignment:	15 %
Project 1:	20 %
Project 2:	30 %
Technical Research Assign	15 %
Class Participation:	20%

Grading System

A+	95-100%	exceptional work
A	90- 95 %	excellent work
A-	85-89 %	excellent work, for the most part
B+	80-85 %	very good work
B	75-79 %	good work
B-	70-74 %	good work, for the most part
C+	65-69 %	competent work
C	60-64 %	fairly competent work
D+	55-59 %	passing
D	50-54 %	marginally passing
F	below 50%	failing

Project work will be evaluated following class-time presentations. A critique of the work will be given verbally at the time of the class screening, and a grade assigned and communicated in writing to the student within 2 weeks. With the exception of the Journal Assignment, written evaluations and comments will only be provided on request.

Course Communication

You must use your IPFW email account in this class, and have access to Blackboard (IPFW's online course software). If you have not yet activated your school account, do so immediately. Go to Information Technology Services Help Desk in Kettler Hall, room 206 (phone: 481-6030) for directions on setting up your account.

I regularly send emails to students regarding assignments, course updates, schedule changes, and other announcements. You are required to check and read your class email on a regular basis, and to respond appropriately. I may be posting course information and readings on Blackboard as the course progresses.

Contacting Me

If you would like to meet and/or consult with me outside of class time, please see me in my office (Neff 230M) during drop-in office hours, or send me an email to schedule an appointment.

Before sending me an email, always make sure to write COM 333 (followed by the subject of the email) in the subject line, so that I know to pay attention to it.

I am more likely to pick up your email messages in a timely manner than I am voice-mail messages. I advise you to use voice-mail as a back-up only to an email.

I will check class email on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and will make every effort to reply within 48 hours.

Please reserve email correspondence for administrative issues (notifying of lateness or absence, clarification of assignment guidelines, technical problems), or for scheduling appointments. For more involved discussions about your particular assignments or your progress in the course, I prefer to meet in person.

Course Policies

CONDUCT, PARTICIPATION

This class is a shared learning environment that relies on each student's contribution to the learning process at hand. Respectful and considerate conduct is expected during class times. Students are expected to be in class on time, to remain in attendance for the whole of every class, and to contribute—through their participation in the course—to the learning of other students. While the class exercises, discussions and critiques are obvious access points for evaluating participation, participation also takes a subtler form of one's conduct in and contribution to the group as a whole.

When evaluating participation the following may be taken into consideration:

- Consistency and punctuality of student's attendance.
- Preparedness for class, including initiative and effort taken to complete assigned exercises or readings.
- Quality and frequency of participation in discussions, exercises (whether evaluated or not), and other course activities.
- Willingness to engage with information, ideas, and work presented by instructors and students.
- Respect for other students, including (but not limited to) proper care of shared equipment and facilities.
- Willingness to share ideas, knowledge, opinions and learning with others in the class.
- Willingness to collaborate.
- Individual contribution (effort, initiative, leadership) to group projects.

As a general rule, please turn off cell phones and pagers and do not use text messaging or the Internet unless directly related to the course.

Please wear comfortable, warm, clothing for classes in the studio. Film production often requires physical activity: please wear clothes you can easily move around in, and flat, closed-toe, rubber-soled shoes. As it is very cold in the studio, I recommend bringing a sweatshirt or jacket even on warm days.

I show a wide range of work in class. You may find some of it unfamiliar, disturbing or challenging in terms of form and content. You will never be 'forced' to watch anything in this class. If a work screened in class shocks or offends you to the point where you feel you need to leave the classroom, please do not hesitate to do so. I will, however, expect you to return to the classroom once the screening is over, and to discuss your reaction either within the context of the group discussion, or with me one-on-one, depending on the situation.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory for this course. As much of the course work involves collaborative exercises and group projects, poor attendance will affect not only your participation grade but also your project grades. Absences must have a valid excuse. Excused absences usually require documentation (ie a note from a medical professional, counselor, or equivalent). Valid excuses for absences include illness, bereavement, family emergency. Absences for reasons of religious observance may be excused, provided the date conflicts are brought to my attention within the first three weeks of class. Absences that occur as a result of work obligations are not, as a rule, excused.

If you miss a class it is your responsibility to take the initiative to do what you need to in order to catch up by, for example, contacting one of your classmates to find out what you missed, borrow notes, find out about exercises, assignments, schedule changes etc. It is not my responsibility to bring you up to date unless you have an excused absence.

SUBMISSIONS, LATENESS.

Students **must** present their video projects at a scheduled class critique prior to submitting the assignment to the instructor for evaluation. Video projects will not be accepted for grading if the student has not attended and presented work in the context of a class critique. Students who miss the initial class critique deadline will receive a 10% deduction for the missed critique deadline, and an additional 10% deduction for each subsequent week (or portion thereof) that it is late.

Video projects should be submitted on the format specified in assignment guidelines, and should be delivered in person to the course instructor for final evaluation by the end of class on the date it is due for critique. However if, following their class critique, a student wants to make revisions to a project, they can take until the start of the next class to revise the work before submitting it to the instructor for final evaluation. Each student will be granted one—and one only—opportunity to do so without penalty, and this only provided they have screened the work for class on the critique due date. Once the student has taken advantage of this opportunity, any subsequent video projects the student does not submit to the instructor directly following their scheduled critique will receive a 5% deduction for lateness if submitted by the following class, and a 10% deduction for each subsequent week (or portion thereof) that it is late.

Requests for exceptions to these policies should be discussed with me in advance, and will generally only be granted in the event of documented illness or family emergency.

It is imperative that students manage their time wisely. They should not let themselves fall behind in the schedule, otherwise they may find it extremely difficult to catch up by the time a deadline arrives. If students find that they cannot finish an assignment or keep up with the workload, they must speak to the instructor immediately, to discuss practical ways to make the course manageable.

SPECIAL NEEDS.

“IPFW is committed to providing reasonable accommodation and access to programs and services to persons with disabilities. If you have a disability or acquire one, contact the office of Services for Students with Disabilities, Walb Student Union Rm. 113, 260-481-665 <http://www.ipfw.edu/ssd/text-version/academics.shtml> “.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

It is plagiarism to present someone else's words, work or ideas as one's own. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated and may result in failure on an assignment, of the course, and, if repeated, dismissal from the University. You are responsible for being attentive to or observant of campus policies about academic honesty as stated in the University's Student Conduct Code.

(http://www.ipfw.edu/senate/STU_CODE.HTM)

Civility /Ground rules for discussion

Students and instructors are expected to maintain a professional relationship characterized by courtesy and mutual respect and to refrain from actions disruptive to that relationship. It is my responsibility, as the instructor, to maintain an appropriate academic atmosphere in the classroom, and the responsibility of the student to cooperate in that endeavor.

I believe that the open exchange of ideas is central to learning. I hope to create an environment where students feel safe to venture differing opinions, to disagree, and to debate. To create that kind of environment it is imperative that students show each other consideration and respect, even while disagreeing. I expect students to not only express their ideas, but to genuinely listen, with an open mind, to the ideas of others.

Learning to critique or assess works is a vital part of a creative practitioner's growth and learning, as is learning to respond to critiques and assessments of your own work. For critiques to remain productive and constructive, certain ground rules will be established, that I will expect students to adhere to when commenting on each other's work.

Diversity and nondiscrimination

“IPFW is committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the university seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The university believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. IPFW prohibits discrimination against any member of the university community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a disabled or Vietnam-era veteran.”
(from the IPFW Student Handbook).

Disabilities Statement

If you have a disability and need assistance, special arrangements can be made to accommodate most needs. Contact the Director of Services for Students with Disabilities (Walb Union, Room 113, telephone number 481-6658) as soon as possible to work out the details. Once the Director has provided you with a letter attesting to your needs for modification, bring the letter to me. For more information, please visit the web site for SSD at <http://www.ipfw.edu/ssd/> .

Other services for students

- **Center for Academic Support & Advancement (CASA)** KT G23 481-6817 www.ipfw.edu/casa study skills development, tutoring, STEPS short courses, supplemental instruction, ESL can help with all phases of the writing process
- **Career Services** KT 109 481-0689 <http://www.ipfw.edu/career/> assistance with on and off-campus job placement and internships
- **Information Technology Services Help Desk** KT 206 481-6030 www.its.ipfw.edu/helpdesk information on all aspects of computing at IPFW; hardware and software support (including Blackboard Vista 4); student e-mail accounts
- **Center for Women and Returning Adults** Walb 120 481-6029 www.ipfw.edu/cwra/ workshops, support groups, counseling, and other programs
- **Multicultural Services** Walb 118 481-6921 <http://www.ipfw.edu/odma/> skills workshops, support groups, diversity training, counseling, mentoring, cultural heritage programs; ASAP program
- **International Student Services** KT 104 481-6034 or 6923 <http://www.ipfw.edu/iss/> visa and INS issues; help with housing, counseling
- **Mastodon Advising Center (MAC)** KT 109 481-6595 <http://www.ipfw.edu/mac/> appointments with professional academic advisors; help with guiding students in deciding on their major and ultimately their career; help for exploring students, deciding students, and readmitted students; and various student resources.
- **Helmke Library Service Desk** 481-6505 www.lib.ipfw.edu reference librarian help, books, journals, reference, interlibrary loan reserve readings for courses: Reserves Express (REX): www.lib.ipfw.edu/rex/
- **Dean of Students office** Walb 111 481-6601 www.ipfw.edu/dos/ student health insurance, mentoring, grade appeals; free short-term personal counseling and support

Tips for success

Come to class.

Do the readings.

Exercise independent thinking and initiative.

Try to get as much as you can out of the process of completing exercises and assignments: focus on the process, rather than the results.

Take advantage of my office hours.

Let me know if you are having problems keeping up with the assigned work - for whatever reason - either by email or through an office-hour appointment. Ideally in advance of deadlines.

Take advantage of the University's advising, counseling, tutoring and support services: you've paid for them, may as well use them.

Be open and willing to learn, especially from others.

Be open and willing to contribute to the learning of others.

Be open and willing to engage with new ideas, to try new things, to risk getting things wrong, and to learn all you can in the process.

Students called for military duty

"If you are a student in the military with the potential of being called to military service and /or training during the course of the semester, you are encouraged to contact your advisor immediately."

Tentative Course Schedule:

This schedule is tentative and subject to change, with notice. Students will be notified both in class and by email of any changes. Additional readings, technical handouts, and take-home exercises may be suggested or assigned as the term progresses.

		Date	Topic	Readings due for next class.	Other Homework
Wk 1	LECT	Aug 25 6-7:45	Introductions, course syllabus. 10 fascinations. Intake survey/ interviews.		
	LAB	Aug 27 6-8:45	Hands-on introduction to video cameras. Technical troubleshooting. Workings and failings of automatic functions.	Ascher p 4–25 Intro to video systems	Journal Exercise: 10 fascinations.
Wk 2	LECT	Sep 1	Intro to video cameras cont'd. Camera types, video formats. Basic compositional tools, shot types, hand holding strategies. Manual functions demystified.	Ascher 59-109: The Video Camera.	Journal exercise: Watch TV # 1. Print camera manual & bring to class.
	LAB	Sep 3	Tech Exercise 1: Shooting.		Proj. 1: develop ideas.
Wk 3	LECT	Sep 8	Present Project 1 ideas. The Characteristics of Light.	Ascher 441-466.	Journal exercise: Describe the Light. Find photo to bring in.
	LAB	Sep 10	Tech Exercise 2: Lighting	Eisenstein on Montage Ascher, 208-223.	Shoot Proj 1.
Wk 4	LECT	Sep 15	Intro to editing: history of editing; different approaches. Overview of Final Cut Pro editing software.	Final Cut Pro tech handouts.	Journal Exercise: Watch TV # 2. Print FCP handouts.
	LAB	Sep 17	Hands-on intro to Final Cut Pro. Tech Exercise 3: Editing.	Ascher, 368-404 on tech theory of sound & audio.	Finish edit exercise. Digitize Proj 1 footage.
Wk 5	LECT	Sep 22	Review edit exercises. Sound & audio technical theory. Listening exercise. Cage on silence.	Audio tech handouts.	Journal exercise: Listening, part one.
	LAB	Sep 24	Tech Exercise 4: Audio Recording.	Metz, The Aural Object. Breson, Notes on Sound.	Journal exercise: Listening, part two. Edit proj one cont'd.

Wk 6	LECT	Sep 29	Sound & image dynamics. Intro to Sound editing and design.	TBA, on sound design.	Record narration, sounds for proj 1.
	LAB	Oct 1	FCP cont'd: sound editing and other tools. Tech Exercise 4: Sound Editing.	Ascher 208-229 on digital video issues, codecs.	Research assignment due next week. Proj 1 sound edit.
Wk 7	LECT	Oct 6	Research assignment due. Finishing: codecs, exporting, laybacks. FCP cont'd: overview of effects. Titles & transitions, color correction tools.		Work on proj 1.
Wk 7	LAB	Oct 8	Work on finishing Proj 1. Desk crits. Take-up research assignment.		Work on proj 1.
Wk 8	LECT	Oct 13	No class: Fall recess.		Finish proj 1 to dvd.
	LAB	Oct 15	Proj 1 Due. Screen & crit.		Journal exercise: 10 fascinations revisited.
Wk 9	LECT	Oct 20	Coming up with ideas. 10 fascinations revisited. 3 moments exercise.	Handouts on generating & developing ideas.	Journal exercise: 3 moments revisited. Proj 2 first ideas.
	LAB	Oct 22	Writing Workshop: take-up 3 moments exercise. Visual writing. Developing ideas. Cinematic storytelling. From ideas to proposals. Discuss Proj 2 ideas.		Proj 2: initial proposal
Wk10	LECT	Oct 27	Production models: dramatic, documentary, alternatives. Proposal writing. Treatments. Pre-visualization tools. Schedules & budgets.	Handouts on coverage, continuity, pre-visualization. Compositional tools.	Finish Journal Assignment.
	LAB	Oct 29	Journal due. shooting exercise 1	TBA: doc & alt strategies,	Project 2 treatment et. al.
Wk 11	LECT	Nov 3	Documentary strategies. Ethical issues. Alternative approaches: personal, diaristic, community based, activist.	TBA: doc technique.	Plan project 2.
	LAB	Nov 5	Shooting exercise 2		Plan/ shoot project 2.
Wk 12	LECT	Nov 10	Alternative approaches: experimental, video art.	TBA: found footage.	Shoot proj2
	LAB	Nov 12	Found footage exercise.		Shoot/edit proj 2.

Wk 13	LECT	Nov 17	Proj 2: assembled rushes due. Screen & discuss.		Edit project 2
	LAB	Nov 19	Work on project 2. Desk crits.		
Wk 14	LECT	Nov 24	Proj 2 rough cuts due. Screening & feedback.		
	LAB	Nov 26	No classes. Thanksgiving.	Handouts on shooting for web, codecs. Review Ascher 222-229 on digital video issues, codecs.	Proj 2 edit cont'd.
Wk 15	LECT	Dec 1	Shooting & finishing for broadcast vs web vs DVD.		
	LAB	Dec 3	Proj 2 fine cuts due for desk crits. Work on titles & credits.		Proj 2, sound edit, fine cut.
Wk 16	LECT	Dec 8	Intro to DVD authoring.		Finish project 2 to DVD; post to web.
	LAB		Project 2 Due Final due for screening & crit.		
Finals week		Date TBA	Project 2 FINAL DVD's dues. screening & crit cont'd.		

Important dates

Aug. 24	Classes Begin
Aug. 24-28	Late Registration and Drop/Add
Aug. 28	Final Payment Deadline (late registrants)
Aug. 30	Last Day for Full Refund (for full-term classes)
Sept.4-7	Labor Day Holiday Recess Begins at 4:30 p.m.
Sept. 8	Classes Resume
Oct. 12-13	Fall Recess
Oct. 14	Classes Resume
Oct. 30	Credit-to-Audit Deadline
Oct. 30	Last Day to Withdraw from Classes without receiving a grade.
Nov. 24	Thanksgiving Recess Begins after Last Class
Nov. 30	Classes Resume
Dec. 14-20	Last Week of Classes and Final Exams
Dec. 20	Classes and Final Exams End