

Introduction to Digital Motion Picture Production

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COMM 1610 SYLLABUS

Text: Practical DV Filmmaking, Russell Evans, Focal Press. Order at www.focalpress.com.

Course Description

A prerequisite course designed for Communication in New Media majors. The course covers the digital motion picture production industry in a number of environments including commercial, corporate, Internet, documentary and feature production. Includes historical overview of the development of the medium and a critical analysis of effects. Uses discussion, outside reading, viewing and research, and a text to progress students' understanding of this powerful medium.

Required Skills

This course requires literacy skills beyond the high school level.

Policies

Final Assessment Every course in Arts, Letters, and Sciences will include a final exam. Consult the semester schedule for the final exam date and time.

Class attendance goes without question. Your career in this field begins here. Show up.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. If there is evidence of plagiarism on your part, your work will be rejected and you will fail the assignment. Plagiarize a second time and you will fail the class. If you rip off someone else's work, ideas, thinking in an attempt to complete the activities for this course you will only hurt yourself and thwart your own ability.

Research Activities are due the date indicated in this syllabus. Late work is not accepted. Work containing typos and grammatical errors be returned without evaluation. Please proof your work. Using "Spell Check" is not proofing your work. Use resources such as a dictionary, the DSC Writing Lab and the DSC OWL (Online Writing Lab). This website includes APA and MLA guides for writing, formatting and editing research papers.

Cell phones and pagers drive me crazy. Please turn them off while you're in class.

Disability - If you are a student with a medical, psychological, or learning disability or think you might have a disability and would like accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center (652-7516) in the Student Services Center. The Disability Resource Center will determine eligibility of the student requesting special services and determine the appropriate accommodations related to their disability.

Course Objectives

Through regular attendance and active participation you will be able to:

- Understand the digital production process and its future,
- Critique feature, short and documentary media on production quality,
- Understand acquisition mechanisms in both film and digital video,
- Relate to the demands of the Pre-production domain,
- Understand the protocols of the Production domain,
- Discern between film, 30i and 24p.
- Understand the purposes of production departments,
- Identify roles within production departments,
- Distinguish post-production protocols and procedures,
- Identify career opportunities commercial, corporate, Internet, documentary and feature production,
- Understand philosophies of light and sound acquisition,

- Progress to upper-division courses in the Communications in New Media Baccalaureate.

Item Pool

These research activities are designed to get you discovering different aspects of digital production and come to a working knowledge of general and specific protocols.

Pre-production

Review the various pre-production roles, executive producer, producer, unit production manager (UPM), screenwriter, location manager and select one to research. The DSC library has the video collection, *Behind the Camera* that you can review to increase your understanding of these roles. Find a real-world role model preferably in documentary production, such as producer Ken Burns (*Baseball*, *The Civil War*), and research their work involved in a specific production. These role models do not necessarily need to be celebrity, the more personal access you have to this individual, the better. Document your research in a paper, APA form, indicating how your role model developed concepts, communication objectives, coordinated and managed personnel and resources or any other specific tasks directly related to their work in pre-production. Your research should be stratified using bibliography (including periodicals and biographies), personal interview (e-mail and phone cards are handy for this), the Internet, and production media. There is no prescribed length for the paper.

Production

Select a production department that interests you such as directing, photography, gaffing, gripping, sound, art direction, digital/special effects, etc. Research this department's roles and duties based on a specific production. Should you decide to research a specific technology such as Steadicam or motion control, include the technology's development and utilization in the production. Document your research in a paper, APA form, using stratified research using bibliography (including periodicals and biographies), personal interview, the Internet, and production media. There is no prescribed length for the paper.

Post Production

Choose a post-production technique that interests you such as non-linear editing (NLE), compositing, computer-generated effects (CGE), and research that technology's development and application in a specific feature film. Document your research in a paper, APA form, using stratified research using bibliography (including periodicals and biographies), personal interview, the Internet, and production media. There is no prescribed length for the paper.

Assessments

All assessments are designed to give me an idea of how you're doing in understanding and applying the objectives of this course, and how I'm doing in teaching them. Assessments may be a combination of multiple choice, true/false fill-in-the-blank, and short answer. You will be accountable for and assessed on principles discussed in class and in the book.

Grading Philosophy

It's my opinion that letter grades and subsequent grade point averages in no way represent an assessment of achievement of the above objectives. Grade inflation and behaviorism over the years have mutated what might once have been considered valid assessment of student achievement.

Unfortunately for you, I'm still required to give you a grade at the end of the semester, a grade that in some way, in one little letter, states your achievement, application, improvement and ability that you have demonstrated during that semester - an impossible evaluation. However, that's what you've come to expect after twelve years of conditioning in our schools.

Since I'm required to give you a letter grade, it's my philosophy that the grade will represent the following criteria:

A – The student surpasses the requirements of the research activities, reaches above 90% on assessment rubrics, executes original critical thinking in digital motion picture production contexts, demonstrates achievement of the objectives evidenced in written and oral communication, and asks good questions and engages others, including the instructor.

B – The student meets the requirements of the research activities, reaches above 80% on assessment rubrics, executes critical thinking in communication in digital motion picture production contexts, demonstrates understanding of the objectives evidenced in written and oral communication, and asks good questions and engages others, including the instructor.

C – The student meets most of the requirements of the research activities and reaches above 70% on assessment rubrics, demonstrates identification of the objectives evidenced in written and oral communication, and asks good questions and engages others, including the instructor.

D – The student meets less than half of the requirements of the research activities, only reaches above 60% on assessment rubrics, and acknowledges the objectives evidenced in written and oral communication.

F – The student’s apathy outweighed achievement.

Past students have expressed fears to me that this course could disrupt their current GPA and thwart scholarship opportunities. It’s my experience that we are driven by two basic emotions; fear and love. Students who are afraid of their performance in this course will limit themselves and will consequently fear their evaluations. Students who love what they do in this course and discipline and embrace evaluation for their own improvement rise above assessment criterion and have little worry or care about their grade. The outcomes are dramatically different. It’s a choice, I promise.

Points Breakdown

Keep track of your scores and grade using the matrix below:

Item	Points	Your Score
Pre-production Research Activity	200	_____
Assessment One	100	_____
Production Research Activity	200	_____
Assessment Two	100	_____
Post-production Research Activity	200	_____
Assessment Three	100	_____
Quality Evaluation	100	_____

Points Possible 1000

Grading Breakdown

900 - 1000 = A range

800 - 899 = B range

700 - 799 = C range

600 - 699 = D range

Below 599 = F

Cut off for minus to straight grade = 35

Cut off for plus to straight grade = 65



Introduction to Digital Motion Picture Production

Schedule

Date	Discussion	Reading	Artifacts/Activity Due
Aug 22	<i>Introductions and Orientation</i>	9, 10	'Production Environments
Aug 24	<i>From Celluloid to Digits</i>	1, 2	From Gondry to Jonz
Pre-production			
Aug 29	<i>The Collaborative Process</i>	3	<i>O Brother, Where Art Thou?</i>
Aug 31	<i>Scripting and Breakdown</i>	4	
Sep 05	<i>Budgeting</i>		<i>Military Records - <u>Ancestors</u></i>
Sep 07	<i>Scheduling</i>		
Sep 12	<i>Researching/Conceptualizing</i>		<i>Mountain Meadows Massacre</i>
Sep 14	<i>Feature/Short Pre-production</i>		
Sep 19	<i>Conceptualizing/Previsualization</i>		<i>Sky Captain and the WOT</i>
Sep 21	<i>Production Design</i>		<i>Benny & Joon</i>
Sep 26	<i>Assessment Review</i>		Pre-production Research
Sep 28	<i>Assessment 1</i>		CHAP 1-4, 9, 10, Lecture
Production			
Oct 03	<i>Production Protocol</i>		
Oct 05	<i>Digital Acquisition v. Film</i>	5	
Oct 10	<i>The Camera</i>		<i>World's Fastest Indian</i>
Oct 12	<i>Semester Break – No Class</i>		
Oct 17	<i>The Color of Light</i>	6	<i>Good Night and Good Luck</i>
Oct 19	<i>The Timber of Sound</i>		<i>Never Cry Wolf</i>
Oct 24	<i>Recording Light / Art Direction</i>		
Oct 26	<i>Digital Effects/Compositing</i>		<i>Minority Report</i>
Oct 31	<i>Screen <u>Girl with a Pearl Earring</u></i>		<i>Girl With a Pearl Earring</i>
Nov 02	<i>Screen <u>Girl with a Pearl Earring</u></i>		
Nov 07	<i>Moving the Frame</i>		<i>Number Five</i>
Nov 09	<i>Moving the Plane</i>		
Nov 14	<i>Assessment Review</i>		
Nov 16	<i>Assessment 2</i>		CHAP 5, Lecture
Post Production			
Nov 21	<i>The Traditional Process of Post</i>	7	
Nov 23	<i>Thanksgiving Break – No Class</i>		
Nov 28	<i>Nonlinear Editing</i>	8	
Nov 30	<i>Film-Digital-Film</i>		
Dec 05	<i>Distribution</i>	9	
Dec 07	<i>Assessment Review</i>		16 Blocks
Final Dates	<i>Section 1 – Dec 12, 7:00 Section 2 – Dec 14, 8:00</i>		