

IML 520: Non-Fiction Cinematic Practice I

Fall 2018 / 2 units
Thursdays, 10:00am-12:50pm
SCI L104

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Course Description

This class is concerned with contemporary techniques for the use of video in academic scholarship and is open to graduate students from any department or program who are working on long term, large scale video projects, or who simply wish to develop their skills in these areas. Video plays an integral role in work and research carried out across many academic disciplines. By equipping themselves with the tools required for sophisticated documentation, expression and argumentation through the video medium, students in this class will enhance their ability to make meaningful contributions to the discourse of their chosen fields.

This class draws on traditional techniques of documentary filmmaking and storytelling and will be comprised of presentations, discussions, and in-class workshops and exercises. Topics will cover all phases of video production workflow. Emphasis is placed on masterful use of digital tools for acquisition of image and sound, organization, storage and management of digital media assets, editing sound and picture in Premiere Pro CC, and finishing work in appropriate formats for various distribution and exhibition options. Though technical proficiency is a key aspect of these endeavors, all technical pursuits are meant to serve the academic goals and integrity of student projects.

Because so much of the class is based around in-class work and collaboration, it is important that you attend all class meetings. Accommodation for unavoidable absences must be negotiated with instructor.

Required Texts

- Ascher, S., & Pincus, E. (2012). *The Filmmaker's Handbook: A comprehensive guide for the digital age* (4th ed). New York: Plume.
- Rabiger, M. (2015). *Directing the Documentary* (6th ed.). Boston: Focal Press.
- Additional Assigned screening/readings are provided on the course wiki

Assignments / Grading Breakdown

• Individual Portrait	Due Week 5	10%
• Process Film	Due Week 8	15%
• Event Film	Due Week 11	15%
• Rough Cut of Final Video	Due Week 13	10%
• Final Cut of Final Video	Due Week 15	10%
• Participation and Collaboration		10%

Project Descriptions

Individual Portrait – due week 5 – Sep 20

For this project, students will create a 3-4 minute biographical video portrait about a person of their choosing. Students are expected to illustrate an understanding of conducting and recording an interview — including operating the camera and sound gear — and of editing video using Premiere Pro CC to produce a seamless, questionless, and "transparent" flow of on-screen narrative by eliminating all trace of the interviewer's voice.

Process Film – due week 8 – Oct 11

For this film, students must choose a person (or people) and their activity to profile. They will visually reveal the steps to their process, its difficulties and challenges, and the personalities of those involved. After observing their process, making notes, and planning coverage, students will film their process in one take. During the take students need to be sure to collect as much coverage of the event as possible (close-ups, cutaways, reaction shots, establishing shots, etc.) for best results in the editing room.

Event Film – due week 11 – Nov 1

For this film, students will work larger groups. They will choose an event (i.e. a sporting match, a market, a political rally, a beauty pageant, etc.) to profile. Students must work with their group to decide what story and character(s) from the event is best to highlight, to plan their coverage, best to cover it, and what interviews should be performed. On the day of the event you the group will shoot with multiple cameras, working as a team to ensure they capture the moments necessary to tell the story; maximizing the total available footage of the event. Afterward, the students will work separately, with the same footage, to edit their own 4-5 minute film.

Final Video Project (Rough/Final Cuts) – due weeks 13 & 15 – Nov 15 & 29

In discussion with the professor, each student will create a 4-7 minute expository, remix video that gives a clear sense of a research topic, question, and the people/community/place they would like to study for a 15-30 minute documentary project. Students are asked to make contact with informants/research subjects (record interviews, or pre-interview) to give viewers a clear sense of some the people they will be studying and working with, explore what's visual about their topic, and communicate the significance of their project.

Evaluation

In general, you will be graded using these criteria:

Conceptual Core

- The project's controlling idea must be apparent.
- The project must be productively aligned with one or more multimedia genres.
- The project must effectively engage with the primary issue/s of the subject area into which it is intervening.

Research Component

- The project must display evidence of substantive research and thoughtful engagement with its subject matter.
- The project must use a variety of credible sources and cite them appropriately.
- The project ought to deploy more than one approach to an issue.

Form and Content

- The project's structural or formal elements must serve the conceptual core.
- The project's design decisions must be deliberate, controlled, and defensible.
- The project's efficacy must be unencumbered by technical problems.

Creative Realization

- The project must approach the subject in a creative or innovative manner.
- The project must use media and design principles effectively.
- The project must achieve significant goals that could not be realized on paper.

POLICIES

Fair Use and Citation Guidelines

We assert that all of our course work is covered under the Doctrine of Fair Use. In order to make this claim, however, all projects will need to include academically appropriate citations in the form of a Works Cited section, which covers all sources, in order to receive a passing grade. The Works Cited is either included in the project or as a separate document, as appropriate to your project. The style we use is APA 6th edition and you may refer to these guidelines:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *Scampus*, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A:

<http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at:

<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Emergency Plan

In the event that classes cannot convene at the university, all IML courses will continue via distance education. Specifically, the IML portal and course wikis will be deployed to enable faculty-student interaction (asynchronously and also via virtual office hours), complete syllabi, course readings and assignments, software tutorials, project assets, parameters and upload instructions, peer review processes and open source alternatives to professional-level software used in the IML curriculum. Further details are available on the course wiki.

Weekly Schedule

The weekly schedule can be found on the course wiki at: <https://mapwiki.sca.usc.edu>

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Week 1 - 8/23: Class Overview

Course Introduction, SCA Paperwork, camera kit check-out, camera intro, purchasing hard drives and memory cards, and other basics of the class.

Read:

- Rabiger, Ch. 10 and 12, Capturing Sound and Camera

Week 2 - 8/30: Interviews and Workflow

Introduce: [INDIVIDUAL PORTRAIT](#)

We'll look at an overview of the basics of camera, including: frame rates, shutter speed/angle, focal length/lenses, aperture, ISO/Gain, depth of field, and white balance.

We'll discuss techniques for shooting interviews. Cinematography I Presentation

Read:

- Rabiger, Ch. 13 (Directing), Ch. 21 (Values, Ethics, and Choices)
- Ascher & Pincus - Chapter 1 - pgs 1-39 (overview of formats, compression, recording settings, etc.)

Homework:

- Prepare your idea(s) for an individual portrait to present in class next week

Week 3 - 9/6: Cinematography Workshop II + Audio.

Discuss individual portrait ideas/plans.

Cinematography II Presentation:

Read:

- Rabiger, Ch. 4 (Constructing Reality), and Ch. 5 (Story Elements and Film Grammar)
- Ascher & Pincus, Ch. 5 (The Video Image)

BE SURE TO SHOOT YOUR INTERVIEW BY NEXT WEEK'S CLASS

Week 4 - 9/13: Premiere Pro CC Tutorial

Using footage shot for your Individual Portraits, we'll review editing basics, including workflow (acquire -> ingest -> edit -> output -> transcode -> upload / burn)

Read:

- Rabiger, Ch. 14 (Creating the First Assembly), Ch. 15 (Editing for Refinement)

Finish Editing Project #1 (Due Next Week)

Week 5 - 9/20: Screen and Discuss Individual Portrait Film

INDIVIDUAL PORTRAIT DUE

In-class screening and discussion of your Individual Portraits.

Introduce: [PROCESS FILM](#)

If time, we'll review an example of editing an interview.

Read:

- Rabiger, Ch. 11 (Lighting)

Week 6 – 9/27: Cinematography Workshop III

We'll review Process Film idea/plans.

Hands-on exploration of key cinematographic techniques including composition, lighting, camera movement and shooting for the editing room.

Read:

- What to do About Documentary Distortion? Toward a Code of Ethics
 - <http://www.documentary.org/content/what-do-about-documentary-distortion-toward-code-ethics-0>
- Bridging the Credibility Gap - Drawing the Line on Manipulation in Documentary
 - <http://www.documentary.org/column/bridging-credibility-gap-drawing-line-manipulation-documentary>

Homework:

Film your process films. Bring footage to class next week.

Week 7 - 10/4: In-Class Editing Lab

Bring your footage from your Process Film shoot to edit in-class.

We'll discuss production issues that arose during your shoots.

We'll also look at an interview and dissect the distillation/clarifying process achieved through editing.

Introduce: [EVENT FILM](#)

Read:

- Rabiger, Ch. 2 (The Nature of Documentary, Ch. 3 (Documentary History)

Week 8 - 10/11: Screen and Discuss Process Films

PROCESS FILM DUE - In class screening and presentations

Review ideas for [EVENT FILM](#)

Homework:

Pre-production for your Event Film

Week 9 - 10/18: TBD

Homework:

Shoot/Edit your Event Film

Week 10 - 10/25: EFFECTS IN PREMIERE PRO I/In-Class Editing Lab

Introduce: [VIDEO PROPOSAL PROJECT](#)

We will begin to learn the basic usage of some of Premiere Pro's powerful built in tools for title creation, basic video effects, and motion.

Any available time can be used to work on your Event Film Edit.

Homework:

Shoot/Edit your Event Film

Week 11 - 11/1: Screen and Discuss Event Films.

EVENT FILM DUE - In-class screening and discussion.

Read:

- Virginia Kuhn's, [The Rhetoric of Remix](#).
- Everything is a Remix - <http://everythingisaremix.info/watch-the-series/>
- Prepare ideas for Final Video project to discuss in class.

Homework:

Edit your Video Proposal for Rough Cut Screening

Week 12 - 11/8: VIDEO REMIX + EFFECTS IN PREMIERE PRO II

We'll cover sound editing, designing and mixing in Premiere Pro CC. We will perform a close examination of sound editing techniques including transitions, ambience matching, basic equalization, noise reduction and level mixing.

We'll also look at Zotero, and tools to use for ripping videos from online, for your final project.

Homework:

Edit your Video Proposal for Rough Cut Screening

[Lynda Tutorial on color correction in Premiere Pro CC with Lumetri Color Effects](#)

Week 13 - 11/15: Screen/Discuss Rough Cuts + EFFECTS IN PREMIERE PRO III

Due: Rough Cut - Video Proposal

We will continue to learn the basic usage of some of Premiere Pro's powerful built in tools for color correction.

Homework:

[Editing/Field work](#)

Week 14 - 11/22: - THANKSGIVING WEEK - NO CLASS

Homework:

Editing/Field work

Week 15 – 11/29: Class Screening and Discussion:

Due: Final Cut of Video Proposal

Week 16 - FINALS - TUESDAY - 12/11 8-10am

I reserve the right to use this finals session to complete our screenings/discussions if needed.