

IML 520: Non-Fiction Cinematic Practice I

Fall 2019 | 2 units
Wednesdays, 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.

Learning Objectives and Course Structure

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. ***Photocopied chapters will be provided**
- 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 | 20% |
| • Process Film | Due Week 9 | 20% |
| • Rough Cut of Final Video | Due Week 12 & 13 | 20% |
| • Final Cut of Final Video | Due Week 15 & 16 | 20% |
| • Participation and Collaboration | | 20% |

Assignment Descriptions

Individual Portrait – due week 5

For this project, students will create a 3-5 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 9

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.

Final Video Project –

Rough Cut due weeks 12 & 13

Final Cut due weeks 15 & 16

In discussion with the professor, each student will create a 5-10 minute final project. This is open to interpretation but should be focused on continued exploration of the skills built over the course of the semester. The final project can be a short documentary, a web based interactive, or an expository, remix video that gives a clear sense of a research topic, question, and the people/community/place you would like to study for a 10-20 minute documentary project in IML 521–Non-Fiction Cinematic Practice II

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.

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

| | | |
|----|--------------|--|
| A | 95-100 | |
| A- | 90-94 | |
| B+ | 87-89 | |
| B | 83-86 | |
| B- | 80-82 | |
| C+ | 77-79 | |
| C | 73-76 | MINIMUM PASSING GRADE FOR MEDIA ARTS + PRACTICE MAJORS |
| C- | 70-72 | |
| D+ | 67-69 | |
| D | 63-66 | |
| D- | 60-62 | MINIMUM PASSING GRADE FOR USC |
| F | 59 and below | |

ACADEMIC POLICIES

ATTENDANCE POLICY

MA+P classes depend on group work and in-class critique, which makes attendance crucial. You are expected to be present for every scheduled class session. If you must miss a class, please be sure to get any notes and assignments from a classmate so you do not fall behind.

Students are allowed two absences before a reduction in grade. Tardiness or leaving class early for (0 to 15 minutes) will be considered ½ an absence. Missing more than 30 minutes of a class is considered an absence. **After your second absence, each additional absence will lower your final grade by 5%.**

Diversity Statement:

Diversity and Inclusion are foundational to the SCA community. We are committed to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment where students of all identities and backgrounds can flourish. The classroom should be a space for open discussion of ideas and self-expression; however, SCA will not tolerate verbal or written abuse, threats, harassment, intimidation or violence against person or property. If students are concerned about these matters in the classroom setting they are encouraged to contact their SCA Diversity and Inclusion Liaison, <http://cinema.usc.edu/about/diversity.cfm>; e-mail diversity@cinema.usc.edu. You can also report discrimination based on a protected class here <https://equity.usc.edu/harassment-or-discrimination/>

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Statement on Fair Use:

Fair use is a legal principle that defines certain limitations on the exclusive rights of copyright holders. MA+P projects are produced with fair use doctrines in mind using its four pillars: (1) the purpose and character of use, (2) the nature of the copyrighted work, (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work. Generally speaking, this means you must only use as much of a copyrighted work as is necessary to make your point, and you must cite your sources accordingly.

Citation Guidelines:

We assert that work produced in our classes is covered under the Doctrine of Fair Use. In order to make this claim, however, all projects must include academically appropriate citations in the form of a References section, which covers all sources, in order to receive a passing grade. The

References section is either included in the project itself or as a separate document, as appropriate. For citation purposes, we follow *Kairos Journal of Rhetoric, Technology and Pedagogy* style guide; Kairos uses [APA format](#), which is slightly modified and whose general guidelines and specific examples may be found here:

<http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/styleguide.html#apa>

Computer Code:

Computer code is often shared and reused. This is appropriate in a MA+P course unless otherwise directed by the assignment. If you do use code, you should attribute it. Please follow these protocols from MIT which call for placing a comment in one's code with a URL to the original source, a note if it was adapted, and the date of retrieval:

<https://integrity.mit.edu/handbook/writing-code>

Research:

Need to do research but don't know where to start? Searching for a book, article, or data to support your argument? Not sure how to cite a source in your bibliography? Ask a librarian!

Research help is available:

- In person and by phone, chat and email at Ask a Librarian
- Through research guides and FAQs
- By contacting your subject librarian

Disruptive Student Behavior:

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.

Support Systems:

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

Student Health Leave Coordinator – 213-821-4710

Located in the USC Support and Advocacy office, the Health Leave Coordinator processes requests for health leaves of absence and advocates for students taking such leaves when needed.

<https://policy.usc.edu/student-health-leave-absence/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call
engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) / Title IX - (213) 740-5086
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421
studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776
dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710
studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101
diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Trojan Food Pantry
<https://campusactivities.usc.edu/trojan-food-pantry/>

Any currently enrolled USC student who does not have a dining hall meal plan or whose plan's swipes have been fully used and is experiencing a food emergency/food insecurity qualify for the services of the Trojan Food Pantry.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

PLEASE NOTE:

**FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED
IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX**

Weekly Schedule

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

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Week 1 - 8/28: 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 - 9/4: 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 - 9/11: 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 - 9/18: 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 Individual Portrait (Due Next Week)

Week 5 - 9/25: 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 – 10/2: 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 - 10/9: Editing II – audio in interviews / 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, with an emphasis on audio editing.

Read:

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

Week 8 - 10/16: Film Structure / In-class Editing Lab

We'll discuss film structure and have time for additional editing support. Bring your footage to work with.

We'll continue to explore audio editing in Premiere Pro CC

Homework:

Edit your Process Film

Week 9 - 10/23: Screen and Discuss Process Films

PROCESS FILM DUE - In class screening and presentations

Homework:

Week 10 - 10/30: Field Audio Workshop

We'll use this session to review placement of microphones for various recording environments.

Introduce: Final Video Project

Homework:

Week 11 - 11/6: Effects in Premiere Pro CC I

We will explore the basics of some of Premiere Pro's powerful built in tools for title creation, video effects, and motion. We also will perform a close examination of sound editing techniques including transitions, ambience matching, basic equalization, noise reduction and level mixing.

Read:

- Virginia Kuhn's, [*The Rhetoric of Remix*](#).
- Everything is a Remix - <http://everythingisaremix.info/watch-the-series/>

Homework:

- Prepare ideas for Final Video project to discuss in class
- Edit your Final Video for Rough Cut Screening

Week 12 - 11/13: Final Video – Rough Cuts I

Due: Rough Cut – Final Video Project

We'll screen and discuss Rough Cuts of the Final Video 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 - 11/20: Final Video – Rough Cuts II

Due: Rough Cut – Final Video Project

Homework:

- Editing/Field work

Week 14 - 11/27: - THANKSGIVING WEEK - NO CLASS

Homework:

- Editing/Field work

Week 15 – 12/4: Final Video – Screening I

Due: Final Cut of Final Video Project

Week 16 – Final Video – Screening II

Monday – 12/16 – 8-10am

Due: Final Cut of Final Video Project