DIGITAL MEDIA TOOLS AND TACTICS
IML 500

Fall 2013
2 units
Wednesday, 10:30 – 12:50
SCI L106

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Office Hours TBD

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class is concerned with contemporary techniques for the use of video in academic scholarship. 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.

The class 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 Final Cut Pro, 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. While drawing on traditional techniques of documentary filmmaking and storytelling, this class will also attempt to update those techniques for contemporary tools within a networked ecology that offers new kinds of collaboration, discussion, documentation and distribution for digital scholarship.

The class was designed to support the learning needs of the Masters of Visual Anthropology program and the yearlong development of their thesis ethnographic film projects. While still conducted in close collaboration with Anthropology 576L, the class 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.

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

- *Directing the Documentary, Fifth Edition. Michael Rabiger, Focal Press*
- *The Filmmaker's Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide for the Digital Age, 2008 Edition. Ascher and Pincus, Plume.*

ASSIGNMENTS / GRADING BREAKDOWN

- **Vox pop (Due 9/11)**   10%
- **Process Film (Due 9/25)**   15%
- **Event Film (Due 10/16)**   15%
- **Essay Film (Rough cut due 11/11, Final due 12/2)**   20%
- **In-class Exercises**   20%
- **Participation and Collaboration**   20%

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 5th 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 (SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS NECESSARY)

AUGUST

Week 1 - 8/28: **Class Overview**
Camera kit check-out, camera intro.
Read Rabiger, Ch. 9, Camera Equipment (141-160)

SEPTEMBER

Week 2 - 9/4: **Interviews and Workflow**
Techniques for shooting interviews – camera, sound, shot types.
Workflow overview (acquire -> ingest -> edit -> output -> transcode -> upload / burn)
Plan **VOX POP**
Read Rabiger, Ch. 10, 11, 12 (161-203)

Week 3 - 9/11: **Cinematography Workshop**
VOX POP DUE
Hands-on exploration of key cinematographic techniques including composition, lighting, camera movement and shooting for the editing room.

Week 4 - 9/18: **Final Cut Pro Workshop**
Editing picture and sound. The fundamentals.
Plan **PROCESS FILM**

Week 5 - 9/25: **Screen and Discuss Process Film**
PROCESS FILM DUE
Plan **EVENT FILM**

OCTOBER

Week 6 - 10/2: **Sound**
All things sound, recording, editing, designing and mixing. Working in Final Cut Pro, we will perform a close examination of sound editing techniques including transitions, ambience matching, basic equalization, noise reduction and level mixing.

Week 7 - 10/9: **In-class Work Session / Individual meetings**

Week 8 - 10/16: **Screen and Discuss Event Films**
EVENT FILM due

Week 9 - 10/23: **Delivery and Distribution**
In-depth look at video specs, codecs, best practices for acquisition, editing, mastering, compression, delivery in physical media and online.

Week 10 - 10/30**: FX in FCP Workshop**
We will learn the basic usage of some of Final Cut Pro's powerful built in tools for color correction, title creation, compositing, chroma-keying and basic motion effects.

NOVEMBER

Week 11 - 11/6: **Work on Essay Film Rough Cuts**

Week 12 - 11/13: **Class Screening and Discussion: Essay Film Rough Cuts**

Week 13 - 11/20: **Individual Work Session**

Week 14 - 11/27: **Field work, NO CLASS MEETING**

DECEMBER

Week 15 - 12/04**: TBD**