

TFM 314 Film and Video Production
Fall 2011

Prerequisites: Admission to the TFM major. Transcripts or proof of registration required.

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Office Hours:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Instruction and practice in the techniques of moving image production. This workshop combines lecture/demonstration with student exercises and assignments. Instruction in equipment use will be combined with discussions of technique, style and approach. Peer cooperation and evaluation will be an important part of the workshop process.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this course students should be able to:

1. Identify and demonstrate competency in the use of the formal elements of moving image art.
2. Demonstrate competency in audio production and editing.
3. Demonstrate competency in producing.
4. Demonstrate competency in directing.
5. Demonstrate competency in shooting film and video.
6. Demonstrate competency in editing.
7. Write appropriate treatments and scripts demonstrating strong visual storytelling.

EVALUATION

Participation in class/on crews/and PA hours 10%

Students are required to work as Production Assts. for 10 hours on TFM 360 or 560 productions.

Students are required to attend performances of 2 student plays. Submit your ticket stubs with your final production book.

<http://theatre.sdsu.edu/streaming/html/shows.htm>

Portrait of Place Abstract/Experimental/or Documentary 15%
This is will be shot in video

Narrative Writing/Indoor and Outdoor 20%
This will be shot in 16mm film.

Midterm 20%

Treatment and Script for Final Project 10%

Storyboards Extra Credit 5%

Final Project Approximately 3-5 minutes 25%

This will be shot in 16mm film.

Final grades will include A-F with +/-

DUE DATES FOR ALL FILM PROJECTS ARE FINAL. LATE PROJECTS RECEIVE REDUCED CREDIT.

REQUIRED TEXTS

FREEMAN FILM AND VIDEO PRODUCTION

HURBRIS-CHERRIER VOICE AND VISION 2011

RECOMMENDED TEXT

BRENNEIS VISUAL QUICKPRO GUIDE: FINAL CUT PRO 6 or 7

Forms

<http://theatre.sdsu.edu/streaming/html/forms.htm>

Resources on-line

<http://studioa.sdsu.edu/workshop/>

<http://filmmaker.com/dumps/>

<http://kodak.com/go/motion>

<http://www.studentfilmmakers.com/>

<http://www.mandy.com>

<http://www.nowcasting.com>

<http://www.easycasting.com>

<http://www.studentfilmmakers.com/>

<http://www.withoutabox.com>

<http://www.saulbass.net/psychostudio/>

Audio

Sound Effects Library http://studioa.sdsu.edu/tfm_121321_library/Royalty Free Music Library

<http://incompetech.com/m/c/royalty-free/>

Soundsnap.com

<http://filmsound.org/>

<http://freesound.iaa.upf.edu/index.php>

<http://www.freeplaymusic.com/>

aaron@six-four.net

<http://www.newgrounds.com>

<http://www.jamendo.com/en/>

<http://www.filmsound.org>

<http://incompetech.com/m/c/royalty-free/>

<http://www.sounddogs.com>

<http://www.shockwavesound.com>

<http://filmsound.org/>

<http://www.pdinfo.com/index.php>

Sites for Creating Digital Music

<http://aviary.com/tools/myna>
<http://www.soundation.com/studio>
<http://www.looplabs.com/>
<http://www.jamstudio.com/Studio/index.htm>
<http://www.yourspins.com/>
http://www.indabamusic.com/#!/logged_out/home
<http://contrapunctus.thirdangle.org/>

Gaffer's tape and film

Nelson Photo
619-234-6621
1909 India Street, San Diego, CA 92101

<http://www.wedgewise-media.com>
Also see Kodak handout in the reader

Checkout Resources

Sound Effects Library and http://studioa.sdsu.edu/tfm_121321_library/Royalty Free Music Library

Cost

Each student should budget \$300-400 for production costs.

Groups

At the first class meeting you will divide into groups of three. These groups will work together to produce projects 1 and 2. It is essential that you choose group partners whose schedules and availability for production and postproduction coincide with your own

You will have the opportunity to create new working groups for the Final Project. Filmmaking by necessity and tradition is based on teamwork and collaboration. There will be a good deal of overlapping responsibilities. Consider the key creative tasks: writing, directing, production management, cinematography, picture editing and sound design. Be extremely judicious in selecting your crew, balancing skills, talents and personalities. Beware of brittle artistic egos, immaturity, or simple incompatibility. Remember, you will work intimately and intensely with everyone on your crew.

When (not if) problems develop... try to resolve them with clear communication. As much as possible avoid blame. Focus on creating solutions that will allow you to move forward and successfully complete your work. Feel free to contact me for advice and, if necessary, for intervention.

Contracts

Each production group is required to submit a typed contract, signed by each member of the group, specifying who is to pay how much money, how it is to be paid and by when. The contract should be clear and should also anticipate the possibility of a budget over-run.

Production Assistant Logs

Each student is required to volunteer for a minimum of 10 hours as a production assistant on TFM 360 or 560 film project. Students should maintain a log describing the dates and hours worked as well as the duties performed. The log should be signed by the producer or director of the production. This signed log is due at the last class meeting. **Each hour not completed reduces the final grade by 1 point.**

Note About Stunts, Safety and Liability

Anyone planning any effects or stunts, no matter how "safe," must have them approved in writing before attempting them. Release and waiver forms and liability forms are included in the class reader. Releases must be signed by each non-SDSU cast member, and liability forms must be filled out for all location shooting.

WEEK 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE CAMERA and PRE-PRODUCTION

THE VIDEO CAMERA---Operation and Composition

Reading: Chapters 3, 9, 10, 11 The Visual Language and Aesthetics of Cinema, The Digital Video System, The Camera Lens, Camera Support

SHOT SIZES AND TYPES FOCAL LENGTH FRAMING AND PERSPECTIVE

See Rosebud on line tff.sdsu.edu/sddocs/Rosebud.pdf
Confirm members of your 3 person group
Make Shooting plan for Assignment #1

Activity (NB You must be on the campus network to access this material.)
Review on <http://studioa.sdsu.edu/workshop/>

WEEK 2 SOUND

Bring 8 AA batteries for Marantz

Reading: Chapters 15 and 16 Sound for Production; Location Sound Techniques

Shoot Assignment #1

Assignment: Bring an example of a photo, ad, drawing, painting or video excerpt that you find visually exciting. Be prepared to discuss your example.

WEEK 3

Reading Chapter 3 Preparing for Production

Kathy McCurdy Presentation The Film Commission and Location Shooting

WEEK 4

Reading: Chapters 15 and 16 Sound for Production; Location Sound Techniques
(Continued from Week 2)

Class exercise 10-12

Collect sound for project one and/or Create an SDSU Soundscape

Use a lavalier, and a shotgun with boom

Observed Sound

Foley

Music --music bldg

Fx

Ambience Air conditioning

Inteviews

7-10 Effects Keep Log

5-10 minutes unedited

8 AA batteries for Marantz

12:30

Screen Rushes Assignment 1

Review Assignment 2

WEEK 5

Learn to load 16mm Camera.

Learn to use Light Meter.

Reserve Camera, Light Meter and Tripod

Purchase 16mm film and other supplies

Make Shooting plan for Assignment #2

Choose a laboratory. Make payment arrangements.

Reading: Chapter 8, 12 The Film System, The Basics of Exposure

Treatment/Storyboard/Script due for Assignment 2

Final Edit Assignment 1 Due

WEEK 6

LIGHTING

Reading: Chapter 13 and 14 Basic Lighting for Film and DV; Lighting and Exposure Beyond the Basics

WEEK 7

WRITING---Treatments, Scripts, Storyboards

Reading: Chapters 1 and 2 from Idea to Cinematic Stories, The Screenplay

Note: Your scripts should **NOT** have sync dialogue.

Revised Treatment/Storyboard/Script due for Assignment 2

MIDTERM

EDITING AESTHETICS

Reading: Chapters 4 and 21 Organizing Cinematic Time and Space The Art and Technique of Editing, The Art and Technique of Editing.

WEEK 8

Scripts and Pitch for Final Projects. No credit for late work.

Please make copies of treatment for each student and the instructor.

WEEK 9

Reading Chapters 20 and 22 The Process of Digital Editing and Sound Design in Film

Rushes Assignment 2

Revised Scripts due Project 3

Voice over scripts for Project 2 due

Editing Workshop

WEEK 10

WORKING WITH ACTORS

POST PRODUCTION and LABS

Reading: Chapters 7, 19, 23 The Cast and Crew; Postproduction Overview and Workflow; Cutting Sound and Working with Multiple Tracks

Final Edit Project 2 Due

WEEK 11

No Class Veteran's Day

WEEK 12

GETTING A JOB, DISTRIBUTION, FESTIVALS

Reading: Chapter 24 Finishing, Mastering and Distribution

Sign up for Individual Meetings

Rushes Final Project

WEEK 13 No Class Thanksgiving

WEEK 14

Meetings with each group individually

WEEK 15

FINAL PROJECTS DUE

Screening Final Projects. Notebooks and DVD's etc. due.

WEEK 16 FESTIVAL SCREENING December 15 Don Powell

THREE FILM PROJECTS

GRADING POLICY

Content: What did you include? Is it appropriate to the assignment?

Originality: Is this an unusual approach? Are there new ideas or new ways of seeing here?

Risk Taking: Is the approach challenging? Is it difficult to execute? (High Degree of Difficulty)

Technique: How well is the production organized? How well is it shot? Composition? Camera Control? Focus? Exposure? Sound Quality?

Expectations

The class will include an emphasis on content including writing practice and story development. The best work is based on your personal vision, experience, passion and imagination. Explorations of character and human relationships are particularly encouraged. Resist the impulse for gratuitous inclusion of sex and violence. Parodying formulaic dramas or comedies is usually a dead end. The simplest and most predictable way of resolving dramatic conflict is blowing something up, setting something on fire and/or killing it/her/him/them. Extra credit for projects that manage to exclude weapons --- especially guns.

Actors

Students are strongly encouraged to use actors from the SDSU Theatre program and trained actors from the community. The use of friends and roommates without acting experience is discouraged. Students in TFM 314 are not permitted to act in TFM 314 productions without permission of the instructor.

Production Book and Sealed Evaluations

For each project, each film production team will generate a detailed production notebook including information about shooting and post-production activities. The notebook will include:

contract

treatment

script and script revisions

*SDSU Film Shoot Evidence of Coverage

*SDSU Waiver and Release Forms

*San Diego Film Commission Form

SDSU Credit Form

storyboards

budget and revised budgets

receipts

equipment lists

crew and cast lists

signed releases

location information

camera log
sound spotting sheet
music release

* These forms must be prepared in duplicate and signed by the instructor. One copy is for the notebook; the other must be submitted to the appropriate office.

For the FINAL FILM ONLY:

Each crewmember will include in the notebook a sealed envelope containing a confidential production report detailing the work of each member of the crew, as well as an evaluation of the production--its pluses and minuses. What did you learn? What was the best/worst experience? What would you do differently if you could? Advice for students who will take this class next semester? Suggestions for the prof?

PA Hour reports are also due with the final film.

A dvd copy of each project must be also be included . This copy will not be returned.

TIMELINE

“On-time” and “on-budget” are the keys to successful professional filmmaking. When confirming the particulars of your own schedule plan carefully. Be sure to factor in time for shipping and/or driving to and from the lab.

Remember Freeman's Invariable Laws of Scheduling:

1. Something will always go wrong.
2. Everything always takes twice as long as you think.
3. Even if you allow "twice as much time" (see law two above), it will still take twice the time you've allotted.

PLAN AHEAD. BE FLEXIBLE. DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE. DEADLINES COUNT.

FILM #1- OUTDOORS

(See Reader for “Exploiting a Location.”)

Purpose:

- a) To familiarize you with video cameras.
- b) To familiarize you with different ways "reality" can be represented cinematically.
- c) To fix and put into practice your understanding of shot nomenclature.
- d) To develop your eye for composing a moving image.

This film should be between 1 and 2 minutes long. You will discover that working short is very unforgiving in the sense that one weak shot can bring down the entire effort; every shot must pack a punch. Think of the economy of a short poem. Your group should agree on the approach, create a storyboard, shooting sequence and a clear production plan. For each shot, all three students should study the image through the viewfinder before shooting. Discuss the shot before shooting it! Take turns shooting.

Content

This film is a portrait of place (outdoors). People are secondary. No actors. You can use a single location, or multiple locations that are thematically related. Pay special attention to composition, focus, depth of field, framing and angle of view. This piece can be abstract and experimental ---an exploration of pure form, or more narrative in structure.

Suggested locations: Flea market, amusement park, zoo, outdoor cafe, pier, construction site etc. Be especially creative if you choose a trolley station. Pre-production is essential. Study your location before filming. Consider the light at different times of day. Gauge the ebb and flow of activity. Listen carefully and record as many appropriate sounds as possible. Capture the life and spirit as well as the style of your location.

You must incorporate CUs, MSs, LSs and ELSs in your film.

Be sure to explore and exploit the essential visual components of filmmaking:

1. Shape
2. Value and Exposure
3. Movement

Sound

Sync dialogue should be minimal and incidental. No interviews. No scripted exchanges. Sound can be natural and/or constructed with or without narration or voice over. You can personify the place or use it as the setting for a heard but unseen human drama.

Technical Requirements

Shoot outdoors with available light. Each group will shoot digital video. You will work only with natural light. Use a tripod. (Note – Use the Focus Tripod if you need to use a high hat.)

Do not shoot handheld. Do not move the camera, pan or tilt. Do not use the zoom - place the camera where you think it best frames your shot.

Editing

Each group will edit their footage into an approximately one minute film. Students will synchronize sound tracks including music, effects and voice. A wall-to-wall music track is not encouraged. Neither is a voice over that tells us everything that we're shown. Sound should add additional levels of meaning. Consider contrasting sounds and images as a creative possibility. Do not include sync dialog.

For this assignment you must use straight cuts only. No fades, dissolves, slow motion or other effects. Do not crop or otherwise digitally manipulate your footage.

FILM ASSIGNMENT #2 – OUTDOORS and INDOORS

PURPOSE

- a.) To sharpen your sense of viewpoint. This means much more than p.o.v. - it means the "attitude" or "feeling" conveyed through your aesthetic choices.
- b.) To develop your sense of the relationship between the aesthetic choices you make and "attitude" or "feeling" conveyed by these choices; to develop your control of film language.
- c.) To develop your understanding of the connection between "mise-en-scene" and editing -- the way you shoot will critically affect the way you edit.
- d.) Coverage: To emphasize the need to properly cover your event.
- e.) To develop an "ear" for effective screenwriting.

You must turn in a completed treatment and/or script and/or storyboard before proceeding with the production of this project. This project must include one or more characters shot in an interior environment with lights. **Voice over is expected and can be interior monologue, off-screen voices or third person narration.** Don't tell us things we can see for ourselves on the screen. The writing should add to or change audience perceptions. Good writing and direction are critical to the success of this production.

Use the camera as a tool for cinematic interpretation. You will create meaning through your creative decisions about lighting, camera placement, lens choice, coverage, movement, and continuity planning. Carefully analyze the dramatic (or comedic) situation to determine the best aesthetic choices. Be especially careful to motivate camera moves. You may track, dolly, pan and tilt, but avoid zooms. Handheld camerawork is permitted if it yields results superior to a tripod shot--- that is the inherent unsteadiness adds to the meaning and "grace" of the shot.

Run off 5 feet of film at beginning of the roll after closing the camera chamber. Be sure to run off at least 5 seconds of film before "action" and after the end of each shot.

200' of Black and White Reversal film. Use Plus-X Reversal 7265 - **ASA 100 outdoors.** Use Tri-X Reversal Tri-X 7266 **ASA 160 indoors with artificial light.** If Plus X is not available use Tri-X outdoors with a .6 ND (Neutral Density Filter). Using the ND filter with Tri-X outside means that you need to open the iris 2 stops. For example if the lightmeter gives a reading of f16 you would set your aperture to f8.

Final running time should be 1 to 2 minutes.

Transfer your film at Perfect Image. Digitize and edit on Final Cut Pro.

FINAL FILM PROJECT

The main distinction between this assignment and the first two assignments is that they were designed to familiarize you with the basic elements of filmmaking, whereas the final project requires that you synthesize these elements into a more complex production.

I am especially interested in the scope of the problems you take on and how creative you are in solving them.

The recommended length for the final project is 3-5 minutes. Each student in the class will write and pitch a script for a final project. The class will choose 7 or 8 scripts to be produced as final projects.

Students will then form new 3 person production teams. Please note that the projects are collaborative. It is **not** true that the screenwriter will be the director of the film, or have more than an equal voice in the creation of the film.

Shoot your film in black and white negative. Plus X Negative 7231 Daylight 80 Tungsten 64 or Double X Negative D 250 T 200. If Plus X Negative is not available use for outside shooting use Double X with a .6 ND. In this case open the iris 2 stops more than the lightmeter indicates. [Color negative may be permitted, if you make a compelling case that color is essential to your production.] Sound must be mixed from at least three tracks --- dialog, FX and music. **Uncleared, copyrighted music will not be permitted.** See reader for information regarding telecine transfer procedures.

Script

Each student will prepare a Treatment and/or Script. A treatment is a brief narrative description of the production. Describe the film as if you are telling a friend about a movie you just viewed. A script may be in A-V form (see reader) and include the sequences of audio and visuals for the entire film. Storyboards are encouraged.

Please see the Reader for ITVS description of a Treatment.

Your treatment must specifically address the following concerns:
(Include these headings.)

WHAT --- the story and plot

WHO ---the characters

WHERE --- setting, costume, period

WHY --- do we care

STYLE --- dramatic or comedic; genre; formal or realistic

THEMES --- what are the over-arching concepts, ideas, and/or emotional subtexts

Be sure to make a copy of your treatment and/or script for every student and the instructor.

Your two to three minute pitch should include:

Your Name

Title of the Production

Concept and highlights of major sequences

Feasibility

Your personal motivation and

ENTHUSIASM/PASSION for the film It's not worthwhile to present an idea that you don't believe in strongly.

You will be evaluated on both your pitch and your written treatment.

SCRIPT EVALUATION FOR FINAL PROJECT

_____ Working Title Evaluate each component on a scale from 0 to 10

PLOT STRUCTURE _____ Points
Will it sustain your interest? Is there a strong beginning, middle and end?

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT _____ Points
Are the characters compelling? Believable? Are you emotionally connected to the characters?

DIALOG/VOICE OVER/NARRATION _____ Points
Does it ring true? Is it appropriate to the character, setting, and time?
Is the piece too talky? (Award full points for films that will succeed with limited dialog.)

VISUAL EXCITEMENT _____ Points
Is the story told visually?

ORIGINALITY _____ Points
Is the project unusual? Bold? Does it explore and test forms and techniques?

FEASIBILITY _____ Points
Is it "doable" within the time and budgets proposed.
Are the sets, locations, talent and costumes likely to be available.

YOUR INTEREST _____ Points
How much would you like to work to work on this film?

BONUS POINTS (No more than 10) _____ Points
How likely is this to be a better than average (5) film?
Consider passion, resources available, budget, and intrinsic interest and appeal of the subject matter.

TOTAL POINTS (80 Possible) _____ Points

Using the Sekonic Studio Delux III

1. Make sure the Lumisphere is attached.
2. Set the ASA/ISO.
3. Take a reading from the subject and note the footcandle reading.
4. If the reading is off the scale insert the H High Slide.
5. Rotate the dial ring so that the footcandles measured match the < arrow or if you are using the High Slide the H<
6. Match the 1/60 shutter speed with the corresponding f stop.
7. Remember if you are using the ND filter you need to open 2 stops to compensate.
8. Set the fstop on the camera. (Remember to focus at wide open f2 and then after focusing to set the correct fstop.

Valentin de las Sierras Bruce Baillie

KODAK Stock DVD

Plus X Reversal and Tri-X Reversal film may be available from Checkout, otherwise order from Kodak.

Submit proof of completion of FCP exercise

Week 10 *Spotlight on a Massacre*

Add second edit session

??? CUT EDITING MECHANICS

Reading: Brenneis (Reference as needed.)

Ascher Chapters 13 Picture and Dialogue Editing

Editing Workshop

Screening: *Visions of Light* and/or *Film Noir*