GENERAL INFORMATION

Class Meetings  T / Th 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM, Communications 130 (Studio A)
Lab               Th      12:30 – 2:00 PM, Communications 140 (Studio B)

Instructor  Irene Lusztig
Communications 111
459.2181
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Spring Office Hours:
M 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM, and by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW

In this class we will work with digital video to develop media production skills. Students will work in groups and individually. Collaboration during production is encouraged and expected as part of the course. The course will combine hands-on demonstrations, readings, discussion, and critique. A large portion of our class time is dedicated to technical workshops introducing you to the available equipment and software. You are expected to take notes. Your attendance in class is essential, as there is no time to schedule a review of missed material. Weekly screenings and discussion of film and video work, both historical and contemporary, are scheduled to enrich our understanding of the different languages and practices of media making.

Lab sessions are Thursdays 12:30-2:00pm in either Communications 140 (Studio B) or the downstairs editing lab (Communications 11). Attendance is mandatory. This is a time to get more hands-on help with the equipment. For the most part, these sessions will be structured around your questions and needs.

Lab Fee and Materials

Please be aware that there is a course materials fee of $150.00 for the course.

You are responsible for providing your own media storage, including backup media storage for tapeless media in case of primary hard drive failure. For tapeless flash-based video production, you are strongly encouraged to maintain two identical hard drives. Please view Slugfilm recommendations for specs (http://slugfilm.ucsc.edu/production_support/?page_id=2167).

Reading
PDF versions of required articles are available for download on the course website. Final Cut Pro tutorials and Help Menus are on all of the Communications Building editing stations.
You may want to buy an optional Final Cut Pro textbook:

**Final Cut Pro 7: Visual QuickPro Guide** (Lisa Brenneis)

**Apple Pro Training Series: Final Cut Pro 7** (Diana Weynand)

**REQUIREMENTS**

- Attendance and participation in class is essential. Regular, punctual attendance is non-negotiable. Two unexcused absences will result in a 1/3-grade markdown on the final course grade. Three unexcused absences results in a failing grade. Arriving to class more than 15 minutes late is marked as a 1/2 absence. Excused absences should be cleared with me before class. Three unexcused absences will constitute a no pass in the course.

- Thoughtful, articulate, and constructive critique is at the heart of this course. Students are expected to participate actively in in-class critique of their peers’ work.

- All assignments must be completed and turned in in order to receive credit for this course. Late work is not accepted.

- Incompletes for the course are not routinely given. Please assess your time commitments early in the quarter. Problems meeting deadlines, scheduling conflicts, and/or a busy course load are not compelling reasons for an incomplete. An incomplete will make you ineligible to proceed into another production class until the “I” has been cleared.

- Reading assignments should be completed before class meetings.

- Equipment and facilities should be treated carefully and conscientiously.

- Students must check their UCSC email and the course website regularly to keep up with course-related announcements and correspondence.

- All creative work must be your own original work made specifically for this course. Plagiarism is an extremely serious offense and is not tolerated.
ASSIGNMENTS

Production assignments are due at your section meeting. Work can be brought to class on a hard drive, flash drive, or DVD. Check all work before bringing it to class. Export all Final Cut timelines to Quicktime movie files for class screenings. Your final evaluation and grade in the class will be based on the following:

- Attendance and Participation……………………………………………………………………10%
- Assignment 1: Continuity Shooting (in-class group project, April 8)........................5%
- Assignment 2: Long Take (due April 20).............................................................20%
- In-class Writing Project: Visualizing Memory (in class April 29)...............5%
- Assignment 3: Based on a True Story (narrative project, due week May 11)...25%
- 1 page treatment for (due May 18).............................................................5%
- Assignment 4: Personal Documentary (due June 1).................................30%

Grading for creative assignments is assessed based on the following criteria: originality, craftsmanship / technical proficiency, aesthetics, structure, and whether or not the assignment follows project guidelines.

Standards of Evaluation

- A: reserved for the rare student who unites a superior sense of craft with an inspiring, imaginative, creative solution to the problems given. Concepts present within the work are original and complex and coupled with similarly challenging and developed themes. Clear style and voice is present in the work.
- B: Imaginative grasp on the medium coupled with an above average grasp of craft. Subject is of interest and is largely well rendered but with one or more elements that need greater development. The presence of an assured and original voice is intermittent, though some facet might be derivative or clichéd.
- C: Denotes average accomplishment. The assignment has been followed, but needs major development or re-imagining in one or more critical areas. The subject and its treatment may be bland, tired, or strain credibility. Work in a minor way does not follow the guidelines of the assignment. Technical errors, either because of their quantity or kind, are distracting.
- D: Work is partially incomplete, incorrect, and/or demonstrates a significant misunderstanding of the concepts underlying the assignment. Technical errors may obscure the content of the work.
- F: Work is incomplete, incoherent and/or plagiarized.

SPECIAL NEEDS

If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please get an Accommodation Authorization from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) and submit it to me in
person outside of class (e.g., office hours) within the first two weeks of the quarter. Contact DRC at 459-2089 or http://drc.ucsc.edu for more information on the requirements and / or process.

**Laptops and Cellphones**

Please do not use laptops and cell phones in class. If you have a disability requiring the use of a laptop for taking notes, please discuss your needs with me in person.

**Useful Links**

- **Course Website**: http://people.ucsc.edu/~iluszti/170b
- **SlugFilm**: http://slugfilm.ucsc.edu/
- **Production Support on SlugFilm**: http://slugfilm.ucsc.edu/production_support/
- **SlugFilm Final Cut Pro Tutorial**: http://slugfilm.ucsc.edu/production_support/?page_id=1040
- **SlugFilm HMC-150 Camera Guide**: http://slugfilm.ucsc.edu/production_support/?page_id=1089
- **Ken Stone’s Final Cut Pro Page**: http://www.kenstone.net/
- **Creative Cow Final Cut Pro Forum**: http://forums.creativecow.net/applefinalcutpro
- **LA Final Cut Pro User Group Forum**: http://www.lafcpug.org/phorum/list.php?
**SCHEDULE**

Screenings and readings may be added over the course of the quarter

1. **March 30**
   - *Introduction and Orientation*
   - One-minute video introductions, Discussion of Goals and Expectations, Syllabus
   - Operations staff orientation

2. **April 1**
   - *Introduction to Video*
   - Terms, concepts, buttons and knobs;
   
   **Reading Due:**
   - “Video and Hi Def” (from Blain Brown, Cinematography)
   - “The Video Camcorder” and “The Lens” (excerpts from The Filmmaker’s Handbook by Steve Ascher and Ed Pincus)

   **LAB:**
   - Panasonic HMC-150, tripods

3. **April 6**
   - *Cinematography, Videography*
   - Aesthetic strategies, Composition, Visual Language

   **Screening:** Hello Photo (Nina Davenport)

4. **April 8**
   - *In-class Group Production Exercise (Assignment 1: Object / Action / Obstacle)*

   **LAB:**
   - Screening and Critique of completed Assignment 1 (meet in Studio A)

5. **April 13** (Meet in Communications 11)
   - *Final Cut Pro Workshop Part 1*

6. **April 15**
   - *Experiments in Duration: The Long Take*

   **Screenings:**
   - La Chambre (Chantal Akerman)
   - Royal, Nebraska (Toby Lee)
   - Bread Day (Sergei Dvortsevoy)

   **Reading Due:**
   - “When Less is Less” (David Macdougall)

   **LAB:**
   - Final Cut Pro Workshop Part 2 (Meet in Communications 11)
ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE: “Long Take”
Screening and critique of work

TH April 22
Screening and critique of work
LAB: Lighting -- equipment, strategies, terminology

* SPECIAL EVENING EVENT: SCREENING OF DDR / DDR WITH FILMMAKER AMIE SIEGEL, 7 PM STUDIO C (attendance strongly encouraged; 1-2 page response paper for extra credit)

5 T April 27
In-class writing workshop – Visualizing Memory
in-class pitches, workshopping project proposals

TH April 29
Sound and Image
Microphones, Recording strategies, Sound Design

Reading Due: Sound excerpts (Filmmaker’s Handbook)
LAB: Microphones, cables, recording and listening exercises

* SPECIAL EVENT: FDM VISITING ARTIST SERIES PRESENTS COLORIST ERIC ESCOBAR, MONDAY APRIL 26 1-3 PM STUDIO C (attendance strongly encouraged; 1-2 page response paper for extra credit)

6 T May 4
Narrative strategies
Pre-Production: treatments, scripts, forms, etc.

Reading Due: Excerpts from Bresson’s Notes on the Cinematographer

TH May 6
Narrative strategies
Mise-en-scene, locations, props, objects

LAB: Sound work in Final Cut Pro (meet in Communications 11)

7    T    May 11
DUE: ASSIGNMENT 3
Screening and critique of work

TH    May 13
Screening and critique of work
LAB: Additional critique time if needed

* SPECIAL EVENT: VISITING ARTIST SERIES PRESENTS FILMMAKER VALERIE SOE, MONDAY
MAY 10 1-3 PM STUDIO C (attendance strongly encouraged; 1-2 page response paper for extra credit)

8    T    May 18
Documentation Modes: Languages of Realism
Observational Documentary
DUE: 1 page treatment for Assignment #4

Screenings: Basic Training (Frederick Wiseman)

TH    May 20
Documentation Modes: Languages of Realism
Personal Documentary
In-class pitches for Assignment 4, workshopping project proposals

Screenings: Rules of the Road (Su Friedrich)
Trick or Drink (Vanalyne Green)
Jollies (Sadie Benning)
All Water Has a Perfect Memory (Natalia Almada)

9    T    May 25
INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS
DUE: Shooting completed for Assignment #4

TH    May 27
INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

10  T  June 1
DUE: Assignment #4
Screening and critique of projects

TH  June 3
Screening and critique of projects continued
ASSIGNMENT # 1 • OBJECT / ACTION / OBSTACLE
[5% created in class April 8]

Working in your camera groups, you will conceptualize, plan, create, and screen a short narrative in class.

This in-class group assignment is designed to help you:
• gain familiarity with the camera’s knobs and buttons,
• practice your cinematography skills,
• devise and execute a sequence of shots.
• explore construction of space and time
• explore continuity and discontinuity
• devise methods for collaboration
• work creatively and spontaneously with narrative constraints

CONSTRAINTS:
• in-camera edits only (use playback menu to delete outtakes)
• 10 shots minimum; 15 shots maximum
• include a wide shot, a close-up, and a tracking shot
• include a match on action edit across two shots
• do not zoom in or out during a shot
• your narrative must include one of each of the following prompt categories (these will be randomly assigned to each group):
  › an object
  › an action
  › an obstacle

ASSIGNMENT # 2 • LONG TAKE
[20% due April 20; 3 minutes minimum to 5 minutes maximum]

Make a video that is one long shot. A shot begins when you start recording and ends when you stop. Think visually.

Be expressive with your framing and camera movements. Make sure that your camera movements are motivated. Think about color and light and the space of the story, objects and/or people in the frame.

Create a transformation (or several) over the duration of the shot, e.g. start in a dark space and end in a bright space, move from interior to exterior, from CU to WS, from one genre to another, one character to another, etc. How do the characters change over the course of the shot? Is there a conceptual shift or transformation? How does the shot begin and end?
ASSIGNMENT # 3 • BASED ON A TRUE STORY (NARRATIVE)
[25% due May 11; 5 minutes maximum; in-class writing work 5%]

Script, shoot, and edit a short narrative piece that is based on a true story (yours or someone close to you). We will spend one day in class workshopping a piece of prose writing drawn from an actual memory that will inform and inspire your script. Remember that the more specific visual and aural detail you provide about characters, places, textures, sensations, light, objects, gestures, and sounds the more evocative and compelling your piece will be.

CONSTRAINTS:
• No sync sound dialogue
• No more than 3 actors
• No student filmmaking clichés (list to be made in class; includes guns, violence, alarm clocks, unmotivated oceans)
• Your story must be in sequential time
• Your story must take place during one day
• Your story must be based on an actual memory – why is this memory important, and how can you use visual language to give it emotional weight?

ASSIGNMENT # 4 • DOCUMENTARY (PERSONAL OR OBSERVATIONAL)
[30% due June 1; 5 minutes maximum; project treatment worth 5%]

Shoot and edit a short nonfiction piece.

Before you begin your documentary project, you will be asked to turn in a short TREATMENT FOR ASSIGNMENT #4 [1-2 pages, 5%, due May 18]

This piece of writing should include: a working title; a general description of the main themes and concepts; a description of story or events and character/s; a description and discussion of the visual style (discuss your reasons for your stylistic choices); a description and discussion of the audio track. Are you choosing to make a personal or observational project (see below)?

You may choose to work in one of two modes:

Personal:
Make a piece that addresses something about you. This can be: a self-portrait; an account of an event in your life; a memory of something. You may use sync sound, but do not address the camera directly or use sync interviews. You may use voiceover. Think imaginatively about sound / image relationships. What do we see and what do we hear? Remember that your audience is larger than you, your group of friends, or family.

OR

Observational (Portrait, Process, or Place):
Choose a subject that interests you that you are able to spend some time observing. It can be a place, a person (portrait), or a process (something visual) that has a
beginning and end; e.g. a cobbler fixing shoes, a workday on a farm). Choose a subject that is not familiar to you (i.e. do not film your roommates, friends, or coworkers). When shooting, do not direct your subject, but rather respond with the camera to what is happening. Do not interview your subject or attempt to make conversation. Simply observe and film. Do not include voiceover or direct address to the camera.