GENERAL INFORMATION

Class Meetings  T / Th 1:30 PM – 4:00 PM, Communications 113 (Studio D)
Lab  Th 4:30 – 6:00 PM, Communications 140 (Studio B / Comm 11 / Studio D; please check schedule for each week’s location)

Instructor  Irene Lusztig
Communications 111
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Spring Office Hours:
M 10:30 - 12:30; please book ahead at https://irene_officehours.youcanbook.me/

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. Regular screenings and discussion of film and video work, are scheduled to enrich our understanding of the different languages and practices of media making.

Lab sessions are Thursdays 4:00-5:30pm in Communications 140 (Studio B), the downstairs editing lab (Communications 11), or our regular classroom on critique days. 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).
Required and Optional Reading

The required text for this course is:


This book will be available at the Bay Tree Bookstore (or it can be purchased on Amazon). Please make sure you purchase the correct 2013 edition of this book, as this is the only edition that is current and up-to-date on the rapidly-changing state of digital video. The five short technical quizzes will be based on content and terminology covered by this book.

PDF versions of other required articles are available for download on the course website.

If you learn well from books, you may want to buy an optional Final Cut Pro textbook such as: *Apple Pro Training Series: Final Cut Pro X 10.1: Professional Post-Production* (Brendan Boykin)

You may also borrow FCPX training books from the checkout lab!

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.

• 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.

SPECIAL NOTE ON TECHNICAL QUIZZES: This course also includes five short technical proficiency quizzes that are based on your technical reading from The Filmmaker’s Handbook. Each quiz will have 3 questions and will be graded on a pass / fail basis (2 out of 3 questions must be correct to pass). The purpose of the quizzes is to reinforce your reading and make sure you complete 170B with a basic understanding of technical concepts of digital video; these terms and concepts are essential both to further production coursework and to production work in the real world. Study lists of key terms are provided in advance to help focus your reading on the most important concepts. Please arrive to class on time on days when quizzes are scheduled on the syllabus. Make up quizzes will be possible at my discretion for excused absences.

Your final evaluation and grade in the class will be based on the following:

Attendance and Participation.................................10%
Technical Proficiency Quizzes (5)...........................5%
Assignment 1: Continuity Shooting (in-class group project, April 9)...........5%
Assignment 2: Long Take (due April 21 / 23).........................15%
In-class Writing Project: Visualizing Memory (in class April 28)...............5%
Assignment 3: Based on a True Story (narrative project, due May 12 / 14)....25%
1 page treatment for (due May 19).................................5%
Assignment 4: Personal Documentary (due June 2)......................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.

Some Useful Links (more links on course website!)

COURSE WEBSITE: http://people.ucsc.edu/~ilusztig/170b
SLUGFILM: http://slugfilm.ucsc.edu/
PRODUCTION SUPPORT ON SLUGFILM: http://slugfilm.ucsc.edu/production_support/
SLUGFILM FCPX FAQ: http://slugfilm.ucsc.edu/production_support/?page_id=4490
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/ (navigate to FCPX section)
CREATIVE COW FCPX TECHNIQUE FORUM: https://forums.creativecow.net/fcpxtechnique
LARRY JORDAN’S FCPX TRAINING: http://www.larryjordan.biz/category/articles/final-cut-pro-x/
EMAIL AND CONTACT

Please check your UCSC email regularly to keep up with course announcements. I also check my email regularly, and email is the best way to contact me outside of class with any questions, technical issues, or concerns. I generally answer emails within 48 hours of when I receive them. Please be aware that I do not regularly check my work email after 8 PM or on weekends.

EDITING SOFTWARE

During this academic year, we have implemented a new postproduction curriculum designed to encourage students to learn two editing platforms during their time in the production program (a good learning strategy moving forward, as platforms change quickly and it’s wise to become a flexible and adaptable editor): In Film 170B we are now officially using Final Cut Pro X as our beginning editing software, and on the intermediate level (Film 172 and Film 175), you will learn Premiere, which more closely resembles an industry-standard professional editing environment. If you already have and use something other than FCPX, you may use it at your own risk (i.e. neither Tristan nor I can support editing on a platform that is not the official course software). If you use another software and have never used FCPX, you are still required to attend editing labs, and I strongly recommend you learn FCPX in addition to whatever you use at home (as part of your training it’s very important to be able to pick up new production and postproduction skills in a range of shooting and editing situations). You must use FCPX for at least one class project even if it is not your software of choice.

PERSONAL CAMERAS

The course position on personal cameras is similar to the editing software policy: you may use your own camera for most of the assignments so long as it is a prosumer camera with the option for full manual control of exposure, focus, shutter speed, audio levels, etc. and so long as you are able to use an external XLR microphone. That said, you must still attend all camera labs to learn the HMC-150 and you must use the class camera to shoot at least one project. Even if your own camera is newer or "better," learning a second camera will help you develop a flexible approach to learning new camera technologies and is an important part of the course. As with editing software, be aware that we are unable to support technical issues that may occur with personal cameras.

VISITING ARTISTS

This quarter there are three visiting filmmaker events (Deborah Stratman on April 6, Jesse Moss on April 16, and Kevin Jerome Everson on May 18). I strongly recommend attendance at as many visitor events as possible. You may write a two page response to the artist events for extra credit. You are required to attend at least one of the three events. If you have a legitimate work or course scheduling conflict and cannot attend either event, you may arrange to view work by one or both of the visitors in the media library and write a short response. It is your responsibility to communicate with me in advance about scheduling conflicts.
SCHEDULE
Screenings and readings may be added or changed over the course of the quarter

1  T  March 31 [guest instructor Jennifer Maytorea Taylor]
Introductions and Orientation
Goals, Expectations, Syllabus
Operations orientation

TH  April 2 - MEET IN STUDIO B
Introduction to Video
Terms, concepts, buttons and knobs
Panasonic HMC-150, tripods
Studio B Orientation

LAB: In-class camera exercise

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VISITING ARTIST EVENT: DEBORAH STRATMAN, Monday April 6, 7 PM, STUDIO C
(1-2 page response paper for extra credit; you are required to attend one visitor event this quarter)

T  April 7
Cinematography, Videography
Aesthetic strategies, Composition, Visual Language
TECHNICAL QUIZ #1

Screening:
66 Scenes from America (Jorgen Leth, 38 min.)
Hello Photo (Nina Davenport, 1982, 55 min.)

Reading Due: CH 1 -2: “Introduction to Digital and Film Systems” from The Filmmaker’s Handbook and “Before you begin production”

TH  April 9
In-class Group Production Exercise (Assignment 1: Object / Action / Obstacle)
TECHNICAL QUIZ #2

LAB: Screening and Critique of completed Assignment 1 (meet in Studio D)

Reading Due: CH 3-4: “The Video Camcorder” and “The Lens” from The Filmmaker’s Handbook
3 April 14  (Meet in Communications 11)
TECHNICAL QUIZ #3
FCPX Workshop #1 (with Tristan)

Reading Due: CH 14: “Editing Digital Video” from The Filmmaker’s Handbook

TH April 16
Experiments in Duration: The Long Take

Screenings:
Manakamana (Stephanie Spray and Pacho Velez, 2013, 118 min.)
Hacked Circuit (Deborah Stratman, 2014, 15 min)

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

LAB: FCPX Workshop Part 2 (Meet in Communications 11)

VISITING ARTIST EVENT: JESSE MOSS, “The Overnighters,” Thurs. April 16, 7 PM, STUDIO C

4 April 21
ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE GROUP 1: “Long Take”
Screening and critique of work, Group 1

TH April 23
ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE GROUP 2
Screening and critique of work, Group 2

5 April 28
In-class writing workshop – Visualizing Memory

TH April 30
Lighting
TECHNICAL QUIZ #4
in-class pitches, workshopping project proposals
**DUE:** Visual Writing Project for Assignment #3

**Reading Due:** CH 12: “Lighting” from The Filmmaker’s Handbook

**LAB:** Lighting – equipment, strategies, terminology (Studio B)

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**T** May 5

Narrative strategies
Workshopping narrative projects contd.

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

**Screening:**
- Truth or Dare (Francois Ozon, 1994, 4 min)
- Gasman (Lynne Ramsay, 1998, 15 min)
- Wasp (Andrea Arnold, 2003, 26 min)
- In the Air (Liza Johnson, 2009, 22 min)

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**TH** May 7

Sound and Sound Recording
TECHNICAL QUIZ #5
Microphones, Recording strategies
Field Recording exercise

**Listening:**
- Sound Safari, Bath Maine (Sharon Lockhart with Sensory Ethnography Lab, 2008, excerpt)

**Reading Due:** CH 10-11: “Sound Recording Systems” and “Sound Recording Techniques” from The Filmmaker’s Handbook

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

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**T** May 12

**DUE:** ASSIGNMENT 3 GROUP 2
Screening and critique of work, Group 2

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**TH** May 14

**DUE:** ASSIGNMENT 3 GROUP 1
Screening and critique of work, Group 1

LAB: Additional critique time if needed

**May 19**

*Documentary Modes: Languages of Realism*

Personal Documentary

In-class pitches for Assignment 4, workshopping project proposals

**DUE:** 1 page treatment for Assignment #4

**Screenings:**

*Bachelorette 34* (Kara Herold, 2007, 30 min.)

*Trick or Drink* (Vanalyne Green, 1984, 20 min.)

*Dear Bill Gates* (Sarah Christman, 2006, 17 min.)

*Phantom Limb* (28 min., Jay Rosenblatt)

**May 21**

Guest Instructor TBA

*Documentary Modes: Languages of Realism*

Observational Documentary

**Screening:** *Seventeen* (Joel DeMott and Jeff Kreines, 1983, 120 min.)

In-class pitches for Assignment 4, workshopping project proposals

**May 26**

*INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS*

**DUE:** Shooting completed for Assignment #4

**May 28**

*INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS*
10  T  June 2
DUE: Assignment #4 (Groups 1 and 2)
Screening and critique of projects

TH  June 4
Screening and critique of projects continued
ASSIGNMENT # 1 • OBJECT / ACTION / OBSTACLE
[5% completed in class, April 9]

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
[15% 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 (if you choose to move the camera at all!). 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% 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% 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%]

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.