Comm 3313-001: Production I
Mondays | 4:20pm – 6:50pm | 3 Credit Hours
Room 201 | Bay Hall
Department of Communication & Media | Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi | Spring 2016

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Hours: Mondays 1:00pm - 3:00pm
Tuesdays 1:00pm – 2:00pm
Wednesdays 1:00pm – 3:00pm
or by appointment

Man with a Movie Camera (1929)
Course Description --

This course will introduce the basic principles and techniques of media production, with a focus on moving image and sound acquisition. This course is a foundational counterpart to COMM 3315: Editing 1. **It is strongly advised that you take Editing I PRIOR to taking this course.** This class serves as the prerequisite for COMM3316: Production II.

This course will be hard! Media production is a complicated endeavor, and will require both organizational and applied work on the part of each student. The course work will provide a solid foundation for all film/television work in the future. You will be required to spend a significant amount of time working outside of normal class meeting time to succeed in this course. If you are not committed to putting in this level of work, I would advise you not to take this course.

While this is a general production course, the emphasis this semester will be on non-fiction filmmaking. This is most commonly associated with documentary, though I hope to expand our definition/understanding of what this means. Being able to capture and showcase the world around us is one of the great powers of filmmaking.

Learning Objectives --

Students participating fully in this class will...

- learn the basic vocabulary and grammar for film/media production.
- gain a working knowledge of basic gear (camera, lighting, audio) necessary to produce films/videos.
- practice the pre-production/production/post-production processes of non-fiction filmmaking.
- produce 5 short films that can be added to their portfolio.

Course Materials --

Each student is required to purchase the following class materials:

- A digital camera (a DSLR, point-and-shoot, or even a cellphone camera)
- A 256gb (or larger) external hard drive (Thunderbolt interface strongly advised).

While not required, the following materials a recommended to aid students in completing work for this class:

- A Netflix and/or Hulu Plus membership.
- A subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud software.
Course Requirements --

Attendance/Punctuality
Class starts promptly at the indicated time. Coming to class late, even by just a few minutes, will negatively impact your final grade. Unexcused absences are unacceptable, and will result in an automatic reduction in your final grade by 5%. In the event that you have a health or family emergency that will require you to miss class, you must notify me as early as possible, and you may be required to do additional work to makeup for missed class time. Missing class for any other reason does not count as an excused absence. If you have 3 or more absences this semester, you will fail this course.

Active Class Participation
Your full and undivided attention is required during class meeting times. You are expected to contribute in all phases of the class: lectures, demos, in-class shoots, critique sessions, etc. Active class participation can take many forms, but basic characteristics include: initiative, involvement, collaborativeness, intellectual growth and impact on the class by the student. Participation in online critiques will also factor in to this grade. We will chat about your individual progress during one-on-one meetings throughout the semester, but I encourage you to check in with me at any time if you have questions about your participation level.

Reading Quizzes
To ensure completion and comprehension of reading assignments, a series of short quizzes will be administered throughout the semester. These quizzes are not designed to be difficult, but merely review the basic material covered in each assigned chapter of the class textbook. Students who complete the reading assignments should have no trouble on each quiz. Students who fail a quiz will be required to meet me outside of class.

Production Assignments
This semester, you will be required to complete five production assignments. Each assignment is designed to put the theories, concepts and skills you learn in class in to practice. Projects will be assessed on both technical and creative merits.

Production Assignment #1: Photo Poem
As filmmakers, we must learn to communicate information, thoughts and emotions through the visual language. For this assignment, each student will select a short poem (of the student’s choosing!) and will create 5-10 photograph visual representation of the text. The photographs need not be literal in their interpretation of the poetry: if the poem mentions ‘the ocean,’ you need not simply take a photo at the beach. Push beyond the obvious! This project is due in-class Monday, February 1st. Bring both the poem and either digital or printed photographs to class on due date.

Production Assignment #2: Actuality Film
The Actuality Film is a non-fiction film that, like the documentary film, uses footage of real subjects (i.e. events, people, places, things) yet unlike the documentary is not necessarily structured into a larger
argument. I want you to find a subject that exists in the ‘real’ world, and capture it on video. You should have little or no control over the subject, but absolute control over how you are presenting it on the film. [Try for something more ambitious and creative than your roommate getting up in the morning. Filmmaking is about engaging society and the world at large – i.e. the world outside your dorm room.]

For this project, you will work in pairs, and EACH student will shoot a single 50 second shot. No editing is required on this project. Filming for this project will be completed in class on Monday, February 8th. Students must save their shot, and post it to their Vimeo account by Monday, February 15th for review and critique.

**Production Assignment #3: Light Diary**

As filmmakers we must develop a keen eye for lighting. Many interesting lighting situations exist around us every day that we don’t pay much attention to. This project invites you to pay close attention to those instances of light. For this assignment, you will create a short (under 2 minute) film showcasing a variety of images which capture various dimensions of light (on a face, a landscape, a room, a surface . . . ) in visually compelling ways. There need not be any narrative link between the images but you should determine some organizational structure so that it stands alone as a complete piece.

This project must be shot on the TAMUCC JVC cameras, as it will provide you some much needed time to become familiar with that camera. There are no requirements or restrictions on the use of sound.

Final, edited projects are due in class on Monday, March 21st for review and critique.

**Production Assignment #4: Profile Film**

The ability to create memorable characters, whether in non-fiction or fictional filmmaking, is an essential skill for all filmmakers. For this project, you will produce a short (under 3 minutes) documentary that profiles an individual subject. This piece must include an interview with the subject, as well as additional visual material to make for an interesting/dynamic finished project.

This project will be worked on in pairs, and filming will take place in class on Monday, March 28th. Final, edited versions will be due in-class on Monday, April 4th.

**Production Assignment #5: Final Project**

This is a individual assignment designed to combine all you have learned in the previous assignments into a final piece for this semester. This content and scope of this project will be designed by each student individually, and tailored to their personal interests and creative goals. This film must be non-fiction in nature, and be no longer that 4 minutes in length. Proposals for the final project are due in class on Monday, April 11th. All filming for this production must be completed during designated class meeting times. A solid rough cut of the piece will be due in class on Monday, April 25th. Final projects will be submitted at the Final Exam for critiques on Monday, May 9th at 4:30pm.
Grading --

Your final grade for this class will be determined as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Punctuality</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Active Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Production Assignment #1: Photo Poem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Production Assignment #2: Actuality</td>
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<td>Production Assignment #3: Light Diary</td>
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<td>Production Assignment #4: Profile Film</td>
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<td>Production Assignment #4: Final Project</td>
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Grade Appeals --

Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, [http://cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html](http://cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

Course Calendar --

**Monday, January 25th - Class #1**
Introductions / Visual Storytelling / JVC Camera Tech
*HW: Production Assignment #1 (Photo Poem); purchase class textbook*
*Reading: The Filmmaker’s Handbook - Chapter 3: The Video Camcorder*

**Monday, February 1st - Class #2**
Reading Quiz / Review Production Assignment #1 / Early Film History / Exposure
*HW: Prep for Production Assignment #2 (Actualities)*

**Monday, February 8th - Class #3**
JVC Camera Prep / Production Assignment #2 - Actuality Shoot
*HW: Create a personal Vimeo page; Upload Production Assignment #2 to Vimeo*
*Reading: Chapter 4 - The Lens*

**Monday, February 15th - Class #4**
Reading Quiz / Film History: Early Non-Fiction / Lenses
*Reading: Chapter 14 - Editing Digital Video*
Monday, February 22nd - Class #5
Reading Quiz / Introduction to Editing / Adobe Premiere Software
Reading: Chapter 12 - Lighting

Monday, February 29th - Class #6
Reading Quiz / Lighting Basic / 3-Point Lighting
HW: Prep for Production Assignment #3

Monday, March 7th - Class #7
Production Assignment #3: Light Diary
HW: Edit Production Assignment #3
Reading: Chapter 10 - Sound Recording Systems

Monday, March 14th - NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK

Monday, March 21st - Class #8
Reading Quiz / Review Production Assignment #3 / Sound in Film / Microphones & Recorders
HW: Online critiques, Prep for Production Assignment #4
Reading: Chapter 11 - Sound Recording Systems

Monday, March 28th - Class #9
Reading Quiz / Production Assignment #4: Profile Film
HW: Edit Production Assignment #4
Reading: Chapter 2 - Before You Begin Production

Monday, April 4th - Class #10
Reading Quiz / Review Production Assignment #4 / Modes of Documentary
HW: Online critiques, Prep for Final Project shoots

Monday, April 11th - Class #11
Review Final Project Proposals / Production Assignment #5: Final Project
HW: Editing for Final Projects

Monday, April 18th - Class #12
Production Assignment #5: Final Project
HW: Editing for Final Projects

Monday, April 25th - Class #13
Production Assignment #5: Final Project / Rough Cuts
HW: Online critiques, Editing for Final Projects

Monday, May 2nd - Class #14
Production Assignment #5: Final Project / Rough Cuts
Additional Notes --

● Bring a notebook and pen to every class!

● I’m planning to use Facebook as the platform to organize the classes online component. If you all would prefer to use Blackboard for this, I am open to switching. Be sure to ‘like’ the Media Production at TAMU-CC Facebook page!

● Feel free to call/email/message me any time. I’ve given you options by which to contact me, and I expect you to use them as needed.

● My classroom technology policy is always evolving… I will use my cell phone throughout the semester to check the time and keep us on schedule. You are allowed to do the same. Anything more involved that that (writing text messages or emails, browsing the internet) constitutes an inappropriate use of technology, and will not be tolerated. First violation, you will get a warning. Second violation, you will be dismissed from that class meeting.

● You must create original work for all assignments this semester. If you wish to combine production work for this class with an assignment from another class, you must notify me so that appropriate expectations can be set by all parties. These are academic integrity issues, and if violated, will be reported to the Department Chair for review.

● Attendance to our Final Exam meeting time is mandatory. Make all travel plans after the exam time.

● For additional production opportunities, consider joining the Production Club! For the Fall 2015 semester, the Production Club will meet on the second Tuesday of every month from 6:30pm - 8:30pm.

● Work produced in this class will be eligible for selection into the TAMUCC Media Production Track Student Showcase in the spring semester. Selective inclusion in the showcase provides students with networking opportunities and serves as a portfolio-building event.

● The South Texas Cinémathèque, a collaborative screening series run by The Department of Communication and Media and the Art Museum of South Texas, is designed to broaden Media students’ exposure to independent film by bringing internationally recognized filmmakers to Corpus Christi, Texas for discussions, screenings and lectures. Keep your eyes peeled for the date, and make every effort to attend. You won’t regret it!

● Bring this syllabus to class each week. It is subject to change due to contingencies.
Academic Advising --

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

Statement of Civility --

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Disabilities Accommodations --

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism --

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work. In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a failing grade for the semester.

Classroom Behavior--

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.