

PRODUCTION 1 (FILM 1304)

Jan term 2020

Class: every day 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. / 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. classroom TBD

Professor: Mark Kerins

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telephone: 214-768-2642

email: mkerins@smu.edu ***email is generally the quickest way to contact me***

office hours: after class 1-2 every day

Skype / Facebook / Google chat whenever I'm online

online and in-person meetings at other times by appointment/request

UC Tags:

Creativity and Aesthetics I (UC 2012)

Creativity and Aesthetics (UC 2016)

Technology & Mathematics (UC 2016)

Pseudo-prerequisite:

basic Mac computer skills (if you feel uncomfortable with these, see the instructor for help)

Required Book:

Voice & Vision by Mick Hurbis-Cherrier (reading assignments will refer to 2nd edition; I have provided corresponding page numbers for the 1st edition as well where possible, though the material may differ in places)

Required Materials:

SDHC class 6 or class 10 memory card (at least one, recommended ≥16GB size).

a jumpdrive or other flash media (min. 512MB) for project backup

portable hard drive, min. 500 GB (recommend ≥1 TB) (USB 2.0 or 3.0)

Recommended Materials (esp. for those continuing in production):

Leatherman or similar tool

mini-Maglite

work gloves

copy of Adobe Premiere Pro (if you want to edit on your home computer) (available as monthly subscription)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class is an introduction to the process of video/film/television production, intended to provide you with a strong foundation in the process and prepare you for the more advanced production classes you may take in the future. It is not necessary to have any prior knowledge about *making* movies to take this course; I will, however, assume that you understand the basics of *how* movies work (from watching movies and television and/or possibly taking prior courses like FILM 1301).

Today anyone has access to the basic tools of filmmaking, and can shoot and share video with little more than a cell phone. Probably everyone in this class has made a video of one sort or another – so why take a class in filmmaking? The key is that there is a difference between being able to capture video, and being able to use all the tools of filmmaking to serve the goal of your project. An artist must have something to say – information to convey, a story to share, an audience reaction to elicit. In this class you will learn to how to use craft to say whatever that is BETTER than you could before.

Filmmaking (a generic term including making films, videos, TV shows, web videos, etc.) is a complicated process, involving a lot of different components and skills. By nature of this being an introductory class, we will be covering a lot of ground quickly – the intention is not for this class to make you an “expert” in every aspect of the production process, but rather to give you a solid foundation across the board so you can make your own projects from start to finish. Additionally, for those planning on further coursework and/or careers in this area, I hope this approach helps you find out which aspects of production you enjoy the most and would like to pursue further, either in later classes or in outside productions.

Like virtually every art, filmmaking involves a combination of craft (including technical know-how, skills, and techniques) and creativity – as well as a lot of effort! **The goal of this course is to give you, at an introductory level, the technical/skill/craft tools you need to achieve your creative aims.** As we build up your filmmaking “toolkit,” we will also discuss why we are learning these tools and how they can be used creatively – the point is to get you thinking about how can you *use* your filmmaking toolkit to express your own artistic voice as strongly as possible. In keeping with this combination of art and craft, all our projects will have at least one highly specified/structured element (to ensure you work on particular aspects of your toolkit) and at least one area in which you will be required to inject your own creative voice into your project.

One important note about how this class will run. I believe production is best learned through practice and hands-on production work; you become a better filmmaker in large part by making more films. This means much of our time will be devoted to discussion and short exercises rather than lecture; I will assume you are doing assigned readings and homework outside class to cover some material not communicated directly in lecture. **Use the in-class time to ask questions, try things out, and make mistakes.** Outside class, this means the class is structured not about making one or two “big” projects (as in Production 2) or trying to hone projects to perfection (as in Editing). Instead, we will do a *lot* of short projects and exercises so you get as much experience shooting, recording, and editing as possible. This means some of your projects will not turn out how you want and/or will not be polished to the degree you would hope. That doesn’t mean your project is a failure – it’s still valuable as long as you learn from it, and become a better mediamaker by applying that knowledge to your future work.

Finally, food for thought about filmmaking and art in general:

- 1. Most things worth learning or doing do not come easily.**
- 2. An easily satisfied filmmaker is a bad filmmaker.**

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The primary objective of this course is to *understand* and learn how to *use* the various aesthetic and technical tools of the art of filmmaking. This goal corresponds to (1) the Creativity and Aesthetics component of the University Curriculum (or “Creativity and Aesthetics, Level I” in UC v. 2012), which requires:

- a) **Students will identify and/or employ methods, techniques, or languages of a particular art form and explain how those inform the creation, performance or analysis of that form.**
- b) **Students will demonstrate an understanding of concepts fundamental to creativity through explanation and analysis.**

and (2) the Technology and Mathematics component of the University Curriculum, which requires:

- a) **Students will demonstrate an understanding of how particular technologies (*in this case video cameras, microphones, and editing software*) work.**

In other words, this course will teach you the basic craft of filmmaking and how to use the various methods, creative tools, and technologies of that art to make creative work.

This overall aim can be broken into several specific learning outcomes. Thus in this course you WILL:

1. **Learn the fundamentals of professional video and audio capturing, editing, and finishing.**

This class is designed to serve not only as a stand-alone introduction to video/audio production, but also as a foundation for future production classes. Hence we will spend a lot of time ensuring that you have mastered the basic skills and techniques that will be employed in all your future classes. These will include (though not be limited to) how to acquire high-quality raw video and audio, how to put those pieces together into a coherent whole, and how to get the finished product into a format people can see. These skills will be crucial to your success in any other production courses you take, as well as on any future independent projects. We'll spend a lot of time on these foundational skills – the goal is for them to become second nature so you don't have to think about them. *Sample Outcomes: Students will demonstrate proper use of a video camera and other necessary gear to shoot video that is properly exposed and focused. Students will record desired audio with a high signal-to-noise ratio and no clipping. Students will demonstrate use of software to import file-based media, assemble and modify video and audio footage, and output the finished product to appropriate file formats. Students will explain filmmaking terms and procedures orally and in writing.*

2. **Learn to tell stories effectively through audiovisual media.** Put simply, *this* is the ultimate aim of this course and all the production courses that follow it. Ultimately, the goal of a mediamaker is to engage the audience with a *story* (whether narrative, documentary, or otherwise) as well as possible. This is NOT a class on scriptwriting (for that take FILM 2354 Basic Screenwriting), though you will do some writing for this course. What we *will* cover is how to use the formal elements of cinema – blocking, cinematography, sound design, acting, editing, production design, etc. – to better *tell* whatever story you're shooting. **Whether dealing with your own project, a collaboration, or discussing someone else's, in this course you should ALWAYS be thinking about how we/you could tell the story (whatever it is) better.** *Sample Outcomes: Students will create coherent and compelling short videos. Students will use various technical tools and techniques to enhance their cinematic storytelling. Students will articulate why they made certain aesthetic or technical choices in their own projects based on those projects' creative needs. Students will explain filmmaking tools and how they can be used for storytelling purposes.*

3. **Learn how to successfully apply the tools of filmmaking to a broad spectrum of media forms.** Though the basic principles and tools of production remain the same across different

audiovisual media forms, how those tools are *used* can vary. To give you a taste of how the needs and challenges of different audiovisual media forms vary, we'll specifically do three projects in particular unique forms (video documentary, commercial, radio show) as well as two other projects where the form is up to you. *Sample Outcomes: Students will be able to articulate production-related differences between several media forms. Students will produce audiovisual work in at least three different media forms. Students will discover what types of audiovisual mediamaking they like and/or have talents for producing.*

4. **Make work that means something to YOU.** Most media – and art in general – is ultimately aimed to engage an audience. And it's a truism that it's difficult to engage others with something the artist him/herself does not find interesting or meaningful. Thus you should strive to make work that is meaningful **to you** – that will make the time, effort, and skill put into the project worthwhile, and will make it more likely to be meaningful to others as well. Several of our projects and exercises are specifically designed to get you thinking about a topic, story, emotion, or situation that is important **to you**, and use that as a starting point for your work. But even when not explicitly required by the assignment, you should try to make each project worth your time by making it *about* something that what you *yourself*, as an artist, wish to explore or communicate. *Sample Outcomes: Students will create projects centered around.*
5. **Learn to GIVE, RECEIVE, and USE criticism constructively.** As explained in objective #2 above, in this course you should always be thinking about how each video/shot/story could be improved. This is not an abstract exercise – a key part of good filmmaking is listening to critiques (of your work AND of others' work) and using them to improve yourself as a filmmaker. Remember that a good filmmaker is not easily satisfied with a film but is always looking for ways to improve it. Giving constructive criticism requires you to thoughtfully consider someone else's ideas or work, then be able to articulate what is working, what is not, and suggestions for how the latter might be addressed – and all in a non-personal way focused on bettering the film at hand. Accepting and using critiques requires you to take a step back from your personal investment in your work to fairly analyze others' comments and learn from them (traditionally an area with which beginning filmmakers struggle). It also forces you to better articulate – to others and yourself – your ideas as you determine how to address others' comments. *Sample Outcomes: Students' projects will improve technically and creatively through the semester. Small group discussions of stories and projects will produce actionable ideas for improvement. Technical/craft mistakes made on a project will be discussed and not repeated on future projects.*
6. **Learn to work collaboratively.** Film and other audiovisual media are inherently collaborative media: it is virtually impossible to put together a movie or television show working solely on your own. Thus success in the media industries requires working with others in a productive way. Through group work, you will learn how and why filmmakers work with others and the types of people with whom you work well (or not). You will also learn what it means to behave like a "professional," including an introduction to the rules of set etiquette (the codes of behavior other professionals will expect from you on set). *Sample Outcomes: Students will demonstrate and be able to articulate accepted professional practices of set etiquette. Each student will work on other students' projects, oversee others on his/her own project, and collaboratively develop ideas and films working with partners or small groups.*
7. **Learn to take creative risks.** Part of developing as an artist is trying new or unconventional stories, ideas, aesthetic approaches, etc. This inevitably means not everything you will try will work well or the way you expected. *That's okay, it's part of the process.* In fact, you should feel encouraged to take creative risks, and some of our projects will specifically reward or require that you do so. By stepping outside the norm and outside your comfort zone you will help develop your artistic sensibilities. Related FYI: in general, I tend to give higher grades to more "original" projects than to those that merely do a good job of mimicking someone else's style or genre.

Sample Outcomes: Students will try a variety of aesthetic strategies. Students will create works that are not all straightforward fictional narratives. Students will use filmmaking craft in unexpected ways.

8. **Have FUN.** Filmmaking is a lot of work, but can be enjoyable as well. While we will be working hard and covering a lot of material, I have tried to structure the course (both class time and assignments) to do this in the most enjoyable way possible. Your job will be to get to know your classmates, to enjoy working with the rest of the class, and to come up with crazy / intense / funny / dramatic / etc. videos that we will enjoy working on and screening. *Sample Outcomes: Each student will make a video that is interesting/engaging/important to him or herself. End-of-semester ratings for "How fun was this class" will be high. Students will engage with each others' work through discussion, critique, and assisting each other on set.*

GRADING AND OTHER OFFICIAL STUFF

Grading

I want you to play with the filmmaking process, experiment, try out different things, and find your own style. We are, however, in a university setting, which means I must judge your work and give you a grade. Therefore, my imperfect solution:

Your final grade will be assessed out of 100 percent, using the following scale:

A+ = 97.0 and above	A = 93.0 to 96.9	A- = 90.0 to 92.9
B+ = 87.0 to 89.9	B = 83.0 to 86.9	B- = 80.0 to 82.9
C+ = 77.0 to 79.9	C = 73.0 to 76.9	C- = 70.0 to 72.9
D+ = 67.0 to 69.9	D = 63.0 to 66.9	D- = 60.0 to 62.9
F = below 60.0		

The components of the final grade will be weighted as follows:

1. Class participation / in-class work / homework (12 % of final grade)
2. Progress (4 % of final grade)
3. Projects
 - a. Project 1: Image/Audio (the "You" project) (10 % of final grade)
 - b. Project 2: Camera Techniques (18 % of final grade)
 - c. Project 3: Documentary (18 % of final grade)
 - d. Project 4: Big Question (18 % of final grade)
4. Tests
 - a. Exam (written part) (12 % of final grade)
 - b. Exam (practical part) (8 % of final grade)

In total, 54% of your final grade comes from projects 2-4 (where grading will be tough and a high level of technical and aesthetic success will be expected), 20% from exams, and the remaining 26% from areas where you can get full credit or close to it simply by meeting minimum requirements of each assignment.

N.B.: This means that if you (a) work hard, (b) take an active part in the class, and (c) meet the stated requirements on all assignments, you can get a B in the class even with only a C average on the exams and major projects. It is thus relatively easy to get a B or C in this course; getting an A requires both technical proficiency and a high level of aesthetic/creative performance, but does *not* require getting an A on every project/exam. Getting a D or F is virtually impossible *if* you come to class *and* do all the assignments to minimum specifications.

The above categories will be assessed as follows:

Class participation: Exactly what it sounds like. Participation in lecture, discussions, and hands-on time. This grade also includes your work on homework (such as the diagnostic exam and the strengths/weaknesses description) not graded elsewhere and on all in-class exercises other than our three in-class small group shoots (graded separately). Our classroom time should be an opportunity for you to experiment, hence your participation will *not* be graded on technical or aesthetic "success," but simply on your engagement and effort. Attendance also factors in here. January term is an intense, condensed setting where each day we'll be covering about as much material as we'd do in TWO WEEKS during the regular semester. Thus the attendance policy is simple: you need to be at every class meeting, on time and prepared. In exceptional circumstances, in consultation with the instructor,

you may be allowed to stay in the class with one day missed. More than one miss will result in failing the class or being withdrawn from it.

Overall Progress: My sense of how you change over the length of the class in terms of the stated learning objectives for the course. This includes technical skills; collaborative abilities; storytelling techniques; ability to give and process feedback; etc. In this category you are graded only against *yourself*: someone who comes in with a significant video background but does not progress will receive a lower score than someone who knows nothing to start and learns a lot, even if true “proficiency” is not attained.

Monologue scripts, voting for scripts, directorial treatment for Mini-movies: Simple completion. Meet all the requirements listed on the assignment specs for full credit on these items.

Finished projects (all three): These will be graded both for technical proficiency and aesthetic success, as detailed in the assignment specifications. As these are supposed to be *completed* projects, any and all aspects of the production (editing, cinematography, sound, production design, acting, etc.) are fair game, though obviously I will be more lenient on earlier projects since you will not have as much experience. All are weighted equally; there is no “major” project but rather a series of small projects aimed at achieving / practicing different objectives. **For all projects, failure to follow any of the guidelines of the assignment will automatically result in a penalty of, at minimum, one full letter grade.**

“Unpolished” works (Project 1 and edited version of Mini-movie): You will not have much time to spend on these projects, and hence I do not consider them “finished” works like your other projects. So while you are required to turn them in, I will not grade them on “aesthetic success,” but rather on a simple rubric largely based on meeting the stated requirements on the assignment sheet. For the “edited version of Mini-movie,” you are responsible only for the project you *edited*; your groupmates will each be responsible for their own edited versions.

Exams: The class will have both a practical (hands-on) and written (online) exams. For both the practical and written parts, anything covered over the course of the class to that point in lecture, discussion, lab, readings, or on your assignments, is fair game. All are comprehensive, designed to make sure you’re familiar with the wide range of terminology, processes, and other information covered in this class to the point of the exam. As each exam approaches, I will provide more specifics – and in the case of the practical exam, we will partially build it together as a class, then have a “practice” version, so there should be few surprises.

Extra credit: Given that the grading structure of this course gives you a lot of points that are relatively easy to get, there will not be a lot of opportunities for extra credit. However, you *can* earn a small amount of extra credit by reworking projects based on feedback from the instructor and your peers after turning them in. For your Camera Tech and Documentary projects, you *may* (at your discretion) reedit or otherwise polish the project for reevaluation after receiving your grade. If I deem it to have *significantly* improved, your score on that project will go up by 10 percentage points (or until your score is 100% if you scored above 90% initially); if not, your grade will not be altered. Reworked edits are due in the second class after we screen the project, and should be turned in in the same format/fashion as the original project. To potentially receive credit for a reworked version, you must also turn in a **paper hard copy** of a brief (a paragraph or two) description of the changes you made and why. Any reworkings with no description or turned in (description OR project) after the two-week deadline will not be reviewed.

A NOTE ON SUBJECTIVE GRADING: Film is an art. And as with all arts, reasonable people may disagree on the caliber/brilliance/etc. of a particular film. In a classroom setting, however, ultimately the

grading process requires me to qualitatively evaluate your art. I am always happy to discuss the reasons why I gave a particular project a particular grade; however, I cannot always give a clear grading rubric ahead of time, since each project grade is partially determined by the strength of the piece as a whole, rather than on a finite set of individual criteria. **If you are uncomfortable having your art graded, or with the fact that this process is inherently subjective, then you should not take this class.**

Expectations

Take part in the class. Other than during project screenings, feel free to jump in with questions and comments at any time. It's been said before, but it's worth saying again: there's no such thing as a stupid question. If you don't understand a concept, or want to ask about a different way to do something, go for it. We're covering a lot of material very quickly, and if you don't ask questions I'll assume you're getting everything as we go. MOST IMPORTANTLY, offer feedback when your classmates present their works. Feedback almost invariably leads filmmakers to better decisions.

Be in class. This follows from the previous point. Not only does missing class hurt you (since you'll be missing that day's material and exercises) and your grade (see "Participation" above), it hurts your classmates – it's impossible to have a good discussion, in-class shoot, or critique if half the class is MIA. So show up.

Be ready for class. I would like to use most of our classtime for hands-on work, lecture/discussion of topics not covered in the textbook, and other activities – I do NOT plan to spend much time reiterating things from the book. MUCH of the information you will need to succeed in this course (and in production) will only be found in the textbook. To reiterate: **Not everything important in the book will be covered in class; I'm assuming you will be doing the necessary reading to keep up.** We will be moving quickly through a lot of material during the semester, and if you get behind it will be difficult to keep up. Make sure to consult this syllabus regularly and have all work/readings done when required. **There will be time each class for questions on material covered in readings, but do not expect that I will re-cover everything in the book during these periods.**

Be prepared to spend time and effort on your projects. Production is a hands-on and time-consuming process. Regardless of talent, competent filmmaking takes practice and work. In a super-condensed course like this one, you should expect at least a couple hours of your post-class time each day to be taken up with homework, particularly shooting and editing. **Expect to put forth a lot of work in class and both time and work outside it** - in particular, you should expect to spend a fair amount of our one "weekend" prepping, shooting, and/or editing your projects.

Be prepared to spend time and effort on OTHER PEOPLE'S PROJECTS AS WELL. Film is a highly collaborative media, and it is difficult to make a good film entirely by yourself. This is why films have crews. Particularly while in school, crewing works on an unofficial quid pro quo basis: you work on someone else's project, and he or she works on yours. You should think of this not as a chore, but as a chance to increase your own knowledge and learn from others' mistakes.

Be careful and courteous with the equipment. Other classes are sharing our equipment and labs, so treat them with care. When using gear, treat it as if it's your own (or better). When in the editing labs, don't change any settings that you are not supposed to change – 99% of computer difficulties are caused by people messing with settings they shouldn't be. Any problems with equipment or the lab should be reported to me ASAP so that I can fix them and adjust project due dates if necessary (be forewarned, computers CAN and DO go down from time to time. Due dates will only be changed in extraordinary circumstances).

Be professional (part 1). Filmmaking in the “real world” is very unforgiving – particularly for those just starting out, doing a good job on a project will likely garner you more work, but if you do a bad job word will spread quickly and job opportunities will dry up. This class will operate on the same model. This includes (but is not limited to):

- be on time
- wear appropriate attire (closed-toed shoes) when working with equipment
- come to class prepared with any equipment, media, and information you need
- type all written assignments (except storyboards, which need merely be neat)
- ensure all papers (and anything else turned in) have your name on it
- have all discs/tapes in labeled, hard cases when handed in
- have assignments ready to hand in at the *beginning* of class on the due date

Be professional (part 2). Many of our projects will require the use of gear from the equipment cage. Even though you do not have to pay each time you check out gear, I expect you to act as if you were dealing with a rental house. This means, adhering to the cage’s posted policies, putting in reservations on time, and dealing courteously with the cage employees. **If the cage manager informs me of any major problems or non-professional behavior (such as not showing up to check out gear when you have a reservation or turning gear in late) I will deduct at minimum an automatic 10% (a full letter grade) from your grade on the project in question.** Repeat offenses will be penalized more severely. Report any problems with equipment as soon as possible so that they can be remedied.

Other Department/Class Policies

Communication: You are responsible for *all* information on this syllabus whether or not we specifically go over it in class. Throughout the semester, I may make changes to the schedule and due dates as I feel it is necessary. These, as well as other class information, will be communicated via email. Hence you **MUST have a working email**, and should **check it at least once a day**. Updated versions of the syllabus, assignments, grading rubrics, and so on (as well as equipment reservation and other necessary documents) will be posted regularly to Canvas; since I may not update Canvas every day, though, the latest emailed information will be considered the final word if it differs from the website or handed-out info.

Assignments: All assignments (unless otherwise specified) are due when they are **COLLECTED**, usually at the *beginning* of class on the due date; **late assignments will receive zero credit, NO EXCEPTIONS.** *This means that if you’re late for class and the assignment has already been collected, you get a zero on it.* You are required to make copies of your assignments and *hand in the copy*, so that you still have an original. For written work, **only typed hard copies (stapled if multi-page) will be accepted.**

Equipment Checkout: Students must fill out and sign an Equipment and Facilities Liability Agreement at the beginning of the semester before being allowed to check out or use equipment. This means that you are financially responsible for any equipment you use. Checkout is located in Umphrey Lee, room 129. May term equipment reservation procedures will be discussed on the first day of class. Cage hours and the most current cage policies can always be found posted outside the cage and on Canvas.

Facilities Access: In general, aside from when classes are using them, the editing labs and audio studios will be available whenever UL is open (approximately 7 a.m. – 11 p.m. each day). During open hours, all lab computers (UL 107) operate on a first-come-first-served basis. Rooms in the audio post

suite are available by reservation; contact the professor if you're interested in getting access to these rooms.

Consent to Release: By taking this class you grant a non-exclusive license to the Division, the Meadows School of the Arts, and SMU to use your likeness, your voice, any works created collaboratively by the class, and any audiovisual works created by you to fulfill the requirements of this class for current and future publicity or other purposes through print, online, broadcast, screenings, and other media, with the single exclusion that the Division, School, and University may not post online any of your audiovisual works in their entirety before either obtaining your explicit consent or waiting a period of three years after the conclusion of this course. You retain sole ownership and rights to your own works created in this course; the rights to works created in small groups of less than four are owned in equal portion by the members of the creating group, while the rights to works created by larger groups (including the entire class) are owned by the Division.

Credit: The final version of any audiovisual works created as part of this course must include an onscreen credit reading "Made in association with the Division of Film & Media Arts, Southern Methodist University." The credits should also include "Copyright ©(year) by (your name)".

Copyright information: Unless you already have clearance from the copyright holder/publisher in writing and can present this written contract to me personally at the beginning of the semester, no copyrighted material may be used for these film projects, other than the specific exceptions below. This includes short stories, poems, recorded music, any performance of non-public domain music, existing films, TV shows, photographs, posters or other art works.

There are four exceptions to this policy: (1) for Project 1 (You Project), you may use any and all media regardless of copyright or licensing; (2) for the monologue submissions, the monologue may be a copyrighted work as long as the author is credited when you submit it; (3) you may use royalty-free music (such as that available for free on some websites) as long as you strictly follow whatever restrictions are attached to it and you clearly credit the source and composer/musicians; (4) you may license music for use on a project, if you *both* include the appropriate credits in the project *and* provide me with documentation of this license when you submit the project.

Any other use of copyrighted material will be considered plagiarism and handled as such.

University Policies

Policy on Academic Dishonesty: Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty (the SMU Honor Code) are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. An "F" in the course will be the recommended penalty in most cases of academic dishonesty, including any instance of cheating, plagiarism, or otherwise handing in work that is not your own. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Honor Council web site at <http://www.smu.edu/honorcouncil>

Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) at 214-768-1470 or www.smu.edu/alec/dass.asp to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements (See University Policy No. 2.4).

Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class must notify the professor in writing by the third class session, and should discuss in advance acceptable ways of making up any work missed (see University Policy No. 1.9).

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities: Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the professor, *prior* to any missed classes, to make up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalog)

Campus Carry Prohibition: In accordance with Texas Senate Bill 11, also known as the “campus carry” law, following consultation with entire University community SMU determined to remain a weapons-free campus. Specifically, SMU prohibits possession of weapons (either openly or in a concealed manner) on campus. For more information, please see: http://www.smu.edu/BusinessFinance/Police/Weapons_Policy.

COURSE SCHEDULE

N.B.: readings are due by the class AFTER they are listed as homework; so the readings listed on 1/07 should be read by the start of class on 1/08. Other homework items are due on specified date.

PRETERM WORK (to be completed prior to the first day of class):

1. Take **online diagnostic exam** (under “Quizzes” on Canvas) (this quiz is not factored into your course grade, other than whether you took it or not – it is a way for the instructor to gauge your prior knowledge)
2. read **syllabus** and “points off list” *carefully*; look over “production tips” and Liner “Rules for School” (esp. #3 and #10); skim “D’oh! on a Grecian Urn” (all on Canvas)
3. Prepare **Project 1: You Project** to show first day (see assignment specs for details)

M 1/06: *****DUE: Project 1: The You Project*****

fill out class contact sheet and liability forms

what do you want out of this class?

syllabus questions, outline of course, and requirements

go over SLOs

discussion: why a filmmaking class?

discussion: tools of filmmaking – using cinematic tools to tell story

screen opening of HN2QYDJ, discuss filmmaking tools used and effect

discussion: having something to say

present and discuss Project 1

introduction to production

tripods – parts and setup

in-class hands-on: tripod setup

video/camera basics – parts of the camera

in-class practice: checking and packing up cameras

in-class hands-on: camera and tripod setup

camera basics (cont’d) – factors affecting the shot

format

video standards: pixels, aspect ratios, and frame rates to know/memorize

white balance / color temperature

exposure

gain

focus

lens length

in-class hands-on: camera functions

basic controls of the Sony HXR-NX5U

power

auto versus manual controls

white balance / color temperature

exposure, ND filters, zebra bars, histogram

gain

focus

lens controls

introduce / assign Project 2: Camera Techniques

handout contact sheet

HW: read V&V p. 253-254, 261-267 (old: 223-224, 230-236) (exposure); read two 1-pg. notes on lenses and focal length (on Canvas)

- Tu 1/07: discuss readings
in-class hands-on review: camera/tripod setup and basics
review camera functions covered Monday
complete intro to camera basics and functions (as needed)
mini-lecture: types of shots
zoom lenses: telephoto vs. normal vs. wide angle
screenings: examples of lens length, etc. – how does it affect storytelling
discussion: contrast
depth-of-field (what affects this)
screenings: examples of depth-of-field
memory cards
formatting cards for use in camera
storage and media management with file-based media – **backing up footage**
questions: contrast, zooms, audio
practice in pairs for Camera Techniques project
review Camera Techniques practice footage
in-class practice practical exam (no grade) – cameras
begin shooting Camera Techniques projects (as time permits)
HW: read V&V Chp. 10 (lenses, p. 221-240 (old: 193-210)); review exposure/lenses readings from prior class
HW: read V&V Chp. 3 (composition / angles, p. 43-64 (old: 35-54)); skim Canvas chapter on composition and shot types (21 p.)
HW: read V&V Intro (p. xvii-xxii (old: xix-xxii)) and Chp. 9 (digital video, p. 194-220 (old: 169-192))
HW: skim V&V Chp. 20 (basics of digital editing, p. 417-443 (old: 367-392))
HW: shoot **Project 2**
- W 1/08: *****You must have shot your footage for the Camera Techniques project by now*****
- make sure to bring your hard drive with the footage to class
in-class hands-on review: camera/tripod setup and settings
in-class backing up footage with footage from Camera Techniques practice
post-production overview
questions: digital editing basics from reading
introduction to editing
introduction to Premiere
 windows, tools, and workflow
 user settings
media management
 backing up and importing footage
 codecs
 aspect ratios, frame rates, and pixels (review)
 where media is stored
 saving and copying projects
 backing up media
 bringing in audio
basics of editing:
 insert vs. overwrite editing
 3-point editing
 creating titles
 transitions
 basic audio keyframing and levels

exporting / outputting from Premiere
Quicktime movies and QT formats
review: codecs, pixel ratios, etc.
proper output settings

in-class practice: getting media into Premiere and editing (use Camera Tech footage)
in-class time to edit on Camera Techniques project with instructor help (as time permits)

HW: read V&V Chp. 21 (art of editing, p. 445-469 (old: 393-414))

HW: read *parts* of V&V Chp. 15 (audio/sound: p. 329-341, 345-350 (old: p. 293-297, 302-304, 311-315)); read V&V Chp. 16 (on-set recording, p. 351-362 (old: 317-328))

HW: complete Project 2

Th 1/09: *****DUE: Camera Techniques Project*****

discuss Mini-Movie scripts

screen and critique Camera Techniques projects

discuss and assign project 3: Documentary

in-class screenings: student-made documentaries

discuss interview techniques, B-roll, documentary editing

begin audio

in-class screenings: sound design examples (as time permits)

in-class hands-on: set up cameras with audio equipment

audio settings on cameras

mic / line / mic att inputs

phantom power

manual vs. auto levels

setting audio levels

microphones

on-camera mics

boom microphones

lavalier microphones – settings and menus

setting up and repacking boom and lav mics for return

lavalier and boom techniques

in-class hands-on practice : Sony NX3 cameras and mic setups

review / complete microphones, mic setups, and cable wrapping

do practice practical: audio (in-class)

intro to lighting

lighting terms: hard/soft, key/fill/back/set, etc.

light “quality” and light “quantity”

power usage and safety

practical lights, available lighting, lighting units

lighting equipment: flexfill

in-class demo: using available light & reflecting (as time permits)

in-class exercise: setting up 3-point lighting

HW: read V&V Chp. 22 (sound design, p. 471-487 (old: p. 415-431)); *skim* V&V Chp. 23 (working with sound in post); read “Seven Suggestions for Stellar Soundtracks” on Canvas (4 p.)

HW: begin **Project 3**

HW: send instructor a short monologue/dialogue script for Mini-Movies

F 1/10: *****DUE: Mini-Movie scripts***** (emailed to instructor by 8:30 a.m.)

go over common issues in Camera Tech projects

mini-lecture: shotlists, storyboards, shot diagrams

in-class screenings: sound design examples (cont'd, as time permits)

demo / tour of audio suite
basics of recording in the studio
where to find instructions
transferring audio files
using SoundMiner to find sound effects

demo BGP projects
finish/review audio in Premiere
review bringing in audio files
review keyframing (Pen tool) and adjusting audio levels
tracks: mono vs. stereo, working with 2-channel audio from camera
modifying clip audio channels
muting and soloing tracks
basic audio processing (AudioSuite)

hand back Camera Tech grades
lighting review
lighting basics and terminology
lighting and safety review

in-class small group exercises (round 1)
1. lighting
exterior (sun)
exterior (shade)
interior (create a mood/space/feel)
2. sound design
create a short audio-only story (no dialogue, no music)

in-class small group exercises (review round 1, do round 2)
review small group exercises (round 2)
discuss next step in Mini-Movies
lecture: addressing the same ideas with different forms/genres/stories
small group (5) in-class workshop: seven deadly sins stories
discuss and assign Big Question project
in-class workshop on Big Question projects
hand out practice practical to do at home (no grade) – Premiere portion
HW: read V&V Chp. 13 (lighting, p. 270-301 (old: 238-270))
HW: read V&V Chp. 4 (continuity shooting / coverage, p. 65-97 (old: 55-82))
HW: vote on Canvas for script for Mini-Movies
HW: start **Project 4:** Big Question

M 1/13: *****NO CLASS*****

Tu 1/14: *****DUE: Project 3: Documentary *****
*****DUE: vote for Mini-Movie script ***** (vote on Canvas by **8:30 a.m.** today)
review / questions: audio recording, audio studio, audio editing
screen and critique Documentary projects
questions on Premiere practice practical
questions on lighting / audio / BQ project
discussion: questions on anything and anything (review for practical and written exams)
in-class screenings and discussion: cinematic style – varying treatments of material
in-class directing exercise – creating a treatment
interpretation of script
what's the story / theme / core
what location will be used

how each component of cinema will be used to further the story / theme / core
(camerawork, lighting, sound design, acting, production design, location, editing)

in-class screening: mini-Movies from past semesters

in-class discussion: use of filmmaking tools in past group's Mini-Movies

in-class exercises: creating treatments for Mini-Movies

HW: read V&V Chp. 5 (planning the shoot creatively, p. 100-120 (old: 85-100)); read V&V Chp. 6 (pre-production, p. 123-140 (old: 105-118))

HW: read Canvas article "DCFS_WhyReject" (4 p. on common reasons why films are not accepted for film festivals)

HW: prep for mini-Movie shoots

W 1/15: *****PRACTICAL EXAM – PREMIERE and CAMERA/AUDIO PORTIONS*****

*****WRITTEN EXAM*** (in-class)**

in-class small group shoots: mini-Movies round 1

in-class small group shoots: mini-Movies round 2

HW: read V&V Chp. 18 (on set practices, p. 379-394 (old: 329-344)); read Canvas handout "Set Etiquette" (2 p.) and Canvas handout "Setiquette" (1 p.)

Th 1/16: *****DUE: Big Question projects*****

screen and discuss Big Question projects

go over common issues on written exam

go over common issues on practical exam

edit and screen mini-Movies (in-class)

discussion: filmmaking as a profession (as time allows)

end-of-semester course evaluations (as time allows)