

Documentary Project Studio

MPFV238-1, 3 Credits

Course Description

A very intensive studio course for students who want to produce their own short documentary using a traditional, cinéma vérité, or subjective approach. Through weekly class meetings that include short presentations, discussion, and critique, you will be guided through the phases of research, planning, production, post-production, and distribution. This course is ideal for artists who want to document their work or aspiring documentary filmmakers who want to make a short documentary film on a topic of personal interest.

Prerequisites

Participation in Documentary Video Boot Camp or Introduction to Video Production or equivalent experience and permission of the instructor. The course emphasizes the philosophical, logistical, and aesthetic aspects of documentary rather than technical processes, therefore, you are expected to be familiar with video camera operation, sound recording, and must have prior experience working with a Macintosh computer and editing video with Final Cut Pro or Final Cut Express.

Class Meetings

Tuesdays, 6:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. (with 1 hour additional studio time TBA), July 13 through August 31, 2010 in Tower room 312 and 7th Floor Labs TBA

Instructor

David Tamés, Media Arts Studio Manager
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Web site: <http://Kino-Eye.com>
Office hours by appointment

Web Resource Page

Handouts, reference materials, and links to items related to this class are available on the page at: <http://Kino-Eye.com/dps/>

Required Text

Readings will be assigned from *Directing the Documentary* by Michael Rabiger (Focal Press). You must obtain the book prior to the second class

meeting. Readings from the book assigned at the first meeting will be provided as handouts.

Objectives

Upon completion of this class, you will have completed the production of a short documentary film. Through readings you will learn about historical trends, the modes of documentary film, aesthetic and ethical issues, and the process of making a film. By shooting and editing your own film, you will learn through experience the processes and techniques of documentary filmmaking. Completed films will be screened during a public screening and gathering in October or November, 2010, to be scheduled among participating students.

Procedures

Class meetings will consist of presentation, discussion, and critique. Since this is a very intensive studio class with several assignments that involve production and post-production, students are expected to commit significant time outside of class meetings in order to complete readings and assignments.

Assignments

Readings and assignments will be assigned every week in class and must be completed prior to the following class meeting. Deliverables other than screening of work must be produced using a word processing program and submitted in printed form. If you miss a class, email your assignment to the instructor as a PDF as soon as possible.

Grading/Evaluation

Grading is on a Pass/No Credit basis. Active participation in class is required. Assignments will be evaluated on the basis of organization, storytelling, and technique. An incomplete grade may be given at the discretion of the instructor if at least 80% of the requirements have been met.

Attendance

Given the intense nature of the class and the importance of participating in discussion and critique, attendance for all class meetings is mandatory. Missing two class meetings may result

Week	Topics	Deliverables	Activities	Week	Date	Topics	Deliverables	Activities
1	Introduction, screening, discussion, ideas, proposal writing		Idea / Proposal	1	July 13			
2	Directing & interviewing craft	• Proposal	Planning	2	July 20			
3	Production issues & techniques	• Interviewee List • Shot List	Production	3	July 27			
4	Editing the documentary	• Rushes • Transcripts	Post-Production	4	August 3			
5	Finding the story	• Rushes • Transcripts		5	August 10			
6	Post-production sound editing & mixing	• Rough Assembly • Transcripts • Pickup Shots		6	August 17			
7	Distribution options	• Rough Cut		7	August 24			
8	Final screening & critique	• Fine Cut • Distribution Plan		8	August 31			

in a No Credit grade or an incomplete based on individual circumstances. Missing three class meetings will result in a No Credit grade.

Media Storage and Supplies

You must supply your own videotape and other expendables. You will need a USB flash drive for backing up documents and an external hard drive for editing. A portable, bus-powered, triple-interface (USB, FireWire 400/800) drive is recommended (e.g. LaCie Rugged). 7,200 RPM drives provides better video performance and only cost a little bit more than slower 5,400 RPM drives.

Equipment

You are encouraged to use your own camcorder, sound gear, and editing system (Final Cut Express or Final Cut Pro is recommended), however, please confirm with the instructor that your camera and/or editing system is suitable. Cameras, lighting kits, and sound gear may be reserved and checked out from Audio Visual Services (AVMS) on the 3rd floor of Tower. Special summer hours are in effect. Call AVMS to confirm hours. Equipment may be reserved in person or by calling 617.879.7160. An equipment access form must be on file with Professional and Continuing Education in order to check out equipment.

Editing Lab Access

The Computer Arts Center (CAC) labs on the 3rd floor and 7th floor of Tower will be open during special summer hours. You should check the inside.MassArt web site or call the CAC at 617.879.7300 to confirm lab hours.

Schedule

The schedule of class meetings, topics, and deliverables are illustrated on the left. You are expected to carefully manage the scope of your work in order to complete deliverables on time as you work towards the final screening date.

Planning, Production, and Postproduction Time

You will be expected to spend an extensive amount of time working on your project outside of class meetings and all deliverables must be completed on time. Documentary production is a very time-consuming activity.