

Video Field Production
CSCI S-Y/Summer 2007
Lectures: Monday/Wednesday 6:00 - 8:30
Section: Wednesday 8:30 - 9:30

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Course Description

Through readings, lectures, demonstrations and hands-on exercises students will explore the production of electronic sound and image. The course has an emphasis on video field production and digital nonlinear editing, but will include a study of framing, composition and light. Students will be encouraged to articulate the stories they wish to tell and to develop the skills to communicate their messages. Videos will be output for DVD distribution and/or prepared for interactive applications. Students will develop a critical awareness of their own work and be able to place it in a broader context. Students in this course are expected to be respectful of one another and the instructor, open to new ideas, and to work very hard towards creating distinct, compelling stories.

Course/Learning Objectives

After the successful completion of this course the student should:

1. Have a strong foundation of visual and aural aesthetics for the process of media production
2. Understand basics of the processes of pre-production, production and post-production
3. Be knowledgeable about the different approaches to and uses for the medium of video
4. Demonstrate basic skills in lighting, shooting and editing video
5. Understand the underlying technical concepts of the video process
6. Demonstrate the use of proper media production terminology
7. Be able to work collaboratively within a creative process
8. Be able to speak about what he/she has created and place the work in a broader context

Text

Video Basics 5 Herbert Zettl, Wadsworth Publishing Company

OR

Television Production Handbook, Herbert Zettl, Wadsworth Publishing Company.

*Check out both of these titles and choose whichever you find easier to understand/fits in your budget/answers your questions to the level you are looking for

Materials

- Several MiniDV tapes
- Several blank DVD-Rs
- 1 **firewire** (not USB) hard drive – I recommend a Lacie or Maxtor, at least 80 GB.
Do not get the Lacie Porsche drive!

Project Grading

Project grades are based on:

1. The technical and aesthetic merit of your shooting and editing
2. Creativity and content
3. Your understanding of the context of the piece
4. Your production book

Production Books

The requirements vary from one project to the next. However, standard production books for projects look like this:

1. A proposal, including objective, audience, and treatment
2. 2-Column Script or Script outline
3. Storyboard or shot list
4. A production schedule
5. Logging sheets
6. A paper edit or Edit Decision list
7. Talent release forms
8. Location releases
9. Lighting plots (For Graduate students)
10. Self Evaluation (1 from each partner)

Production books comprise a significant portion of your grade for each of the projects. The forms for the production books are available on the course website. Consult the syllabus and the schedule for details on when items are due.

Group Work

In order to fully appreciate the reality of video production it is recommended that students complete much of the coursework in groups. Acknowledging that this may not be possible for some Harvard Summer school students this is a strong recommendation, not a requirement. In the self-critique you pass in with your final cut I expect you to evaluate the group dynamic. If I determine from these comments that one person has done much more work than his or her partner(s) I reserve the right to redistribute the grades accordingly. In extreme circumstances it will be possible for the participants in a group to hand in different cuts, which I will grade separately. This must be discussed with me in advance. Remember, you are studying in a field where you will be required to work with others daily. It is expected that you can do so without major difficulty in this class.

1st/2nd cuts

We will be spending significant time discussing works in progress in this class. There are special designated times for this noted on the syllabus. **These are not final cuts but works in progress.** A 1st cut is an assembly cut that orders the shots you want to use into a rough but comprehensive whole. A 2nd cut is a finer revision of the first cut. For these sessions in class you are expected to make a dub of your work in progress onto a DVD, which you will bring with you to class. **1st cuts and 2nd cuts are not graded, however it is mandatory that you participate in these works in progress critiques.** You can lose points however for not having a 1st or 2nd cut in on time.

Late Work

Late work will be marked down. **For every class meeting the project is late you will lose a full grade.** So, if the project was due on Monday and it would have been an A, you will receive a B if you turn it in that Wednesday.

Exercise Grading

Exercise grades are based on:

1. Whether or not you successfully solved the problem
2. How you worked together as a group (if a group exercise)
3. Your demonstration of proficiency with the equipment and your willingness to experiment

Disability Statement

If you believe that you have a disability that may warrant accommodations in this class, I urge you to notify me immediately so that together we can work to develop methods of addressing needed accommodations in this class. You also must contact Joanne Eno, the Disabilities Services officer, at 495-0977. You can find the relevant forms at: <http://www.summer.harvard.edu/2007/forms/>

Attendance/Class Participation Grading

Attendance is mandatory. If you have to miss a class for health or family reasons e-mail me before the class. You will lose points from your Class Participation/Attendance grade for every class you miss. Missing more than 30 minutes of class is considered an absence. **As we only meet twice a week for 8 weeks I really cannot be lenient about WHY you miss a class. No matter what the reason, you are missing class and it will affect your grade. This is a class where students are expected to show both complete and trial cuts of their own work to the class.** Outside works will also be discussed in class. Thoughtful feedback is essential to improving your work and the work of your fellow classmates. **I will be grading your participation based on how helpful I think your comments or questions are to addressing relevant concerns of the work at hand. I will be taking notes on this throughout the semester. Failure to participate in discussions and critiques will affect your semester grade.**

Grading Breakdown

Major Video Project	500 points
Exercise #1: Storyboarding	50 points
Exercise #2: Camera	50 points
Exercise #3: Lighting	50 points
Exercise #4: Sound Recording	50 points
Exercise #5: Camera/Lighting/Sound	100 points
Exercise #6: Editing	50 points
Exercise #7: Audio Editing	50 points
Attendance/Participation:	100 points

Grades

I grade on a points system. Your grade is based on the total grade from all exercises, assignments, and class attendance. To figure out your grade anytime during the semester, add up your points and compare them to the total possible points. Don't forget to factor in attendance! A "C" or below is an unacceptable grade for a graduate student.

A =93%	B =83%	C =73%	D =below 70
A- =90%	B- =80%	C- =70%	F =below 60
B+ =87%	C+ =77%		

Graduate Credit

Students taking the course for graduate credit will be responsible for completing all of the regular projects and in addition will be required to create lighting plots for all of the scenes shot (to be included in the production books), more thoughtful DVD interfaces for all projects, and to have higher quality audio mastering on all of the projects. In addition, the projects will be held to harsher grading criteria.

Incompletes

Incompletes will only be granted in extreme situations. Do not count on getting one.

Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited. Students guilty of academic misconduct either directly or indirectly through participation or assistance, are immediately responsible to the instructor of the class. In addition to other possible disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed through the regular instructional procedures as a result of academic misconduct, the instructor has the authority to assign an F or a zero in the course. For more information on the consequences of plagiarism please consult Harvard's student handbook. (<http://www.summer.harvard.edu/2007/enroll/enrolled/responsible.jsp#integ>)

Exercises

Exercise #1: Storyboarding exercise (solo):

"In short, I apply special care when depicting storyboards so as to tell my crew: "Here, this is how it is going to be." In my drawings, I show them what the houses are supposed to look like, where things are supposed to go, what I want for the characters' costumes. I believe that such a technique can prove to be very efficient in the making of a film."

– Akira Kurosawa

We will be giving you a scene on the first day of class to read for today. We will then begin class with a lecture on storyboarding, in which you will learn about several different storyboarding styles. After class today you will draw a storyboard that you think could be used to create the scene in video. You don't have to be Kurosawa, and this isn't a test of drawing skill. Rather, attempt to visually describe the scene, taking special care with shot types and camera angles. Remember, the ideal storyboard is thorough and descriptive enough that you can hand it over to a crew and they will be able to shoot the scene as you have envisioned it. At the beginning of next class, turn in the storyboard, making sure to staple all pages together and clearly writing your name on the first page.

Exercise #2: DV Camera Exercise (In Class, Group):

Get together in groups and develop a simple storyboard to visually describe a series of 30 shots. It is not important that the shots tell one cohesive story, rather we are interested in seeing you successfully create "a smooth pan" or "a rack focus". Using the miniDV camera, shoot the sequence of images from your storyboard. Include as many of the following as you can, repeating shot types on the list (but not exactly the same shot, use different scenarios) so that you can take turns being the cameraman:

1. Establishing shot
2. Close-ups
3. Extreme close-up
4. 2-shots
5. Z-axis
6. Diagonal lines
7. Framing
8. Leading lines
9. Unique camera angle
10. Creative lighting element
11. Pan
12. Tilt
13. Zoom
14. Selective focus/Rack focus
15. Appropriate headroom or lead room
16. Shot with the white balanced on something other than white
17. Shot where you play with the shutter speed of the camera

Each group will produce one short camera exercise and submit the project on MiniDV tape. Also submit your storyboard. No editing other than in-camera is allowed. Projects will be graded on creativity and technical execution. I recommend the use of a tripod for most of the shots. Make sure to label the tape and storyboard clearly with the names of all team members.

Exercise #3: Lighting Exercise (group recommended):

Create a lighting diagram for using 3-point lighting to successfully light a medium shot of a subject wearing glasses. Then go to a location, set up the lights according to your diagram, and achieve the shot. If the diagram you created is not working for you, move those lights around until you achieve success. Beware of shadows created by the glasses (raccoon eyes) as well as reflections off of the glass. Make sure to also videotape an establishing shot, showing where each of the lights are in respect to the subject. Turn in the miniDV tape and your lighting diagram, each clearly labeled.

Exercise #4: Sound Recording Exercise (group recommended):

Come up with storyboards for scenarios where it would be most appropriate to use a:

1. Boom microphone – 3 different situations
2. Handheld microphone – 3 different situations
3. Lavalier microphone – 3 different situations

After storyboarding the situations, check out the necessary equipment and go shoot these shots getting both video and clean audio! Turn in the miniDV tape and your storyboard, and making sure your name is on each.

Exercise #5: Editing Exercise (In Class, Solo):

Using 14 minutes of video footage that I provide use Final Cut Pro to edit a 30 second piece. Although I will be providing the video, you may use any audio that you like, and you may create any sort of piece that you like. The finished piece may be a serious commercial spot, a music video, an experimental film, a corporate video...be creative! The only restrictions are that you use this particular video footage and that the final product be exactly 30 seconds. Be careful with continuity. Export the finished piece as a QuickTime file and burn it onto a CD-R that you turn in, clearly labeled.

Exercise #6: Putting it all together (In Class, Group):

In groups select one of the storyboards drawn for Exercise #1. Consider shot types, lighting, and audio. You must use at least one external type of microphone and lighting that you have manipulated (with lighting kit, or other alternatives) for at least 3 of your shots. Check out the necessary equipment (what type of mic(s) do you need for your shots?) and go shoot your video. Only in camera edits are allowed, so you will need to rewind and shoot over if any of your shots were unsuccessful on the first (or 20th) take. Be careful not to break timecode and leave any blue frames! When you are finished turn in the miniDV tape, lighting plot, and your storyboard, and make sure that all names are on each.

Exercise #7: Sound Editing Exercise (In Class, Solo):

Using audio that I provide, balance the levels, sync up any audio that has come out of sync, clean up noise, etc. to create a clean, and balanced audio track that has appropriate sound perspective. Export the finished piece as a QuickTime file and burn it onto a CD-R that you turn in, clearly labeled, before you leave class.

Project

There is one major video project in this class. It should be turned in on a DVD. It also requires a Production Book. Here is a basic run down:

- Suggested 2-4 person collaboration
- This is a 5-8 minute project.
- The content is entirely up to you, as is the genre.

If you're having trouble getting started, here are a few thoughts:

Place

Place is the organization of space for purposes which may be practical, psychological, spiritual, sociological, political, economic, or aesthetic. For the purposes of this project, investigate your attachment to a site or space which figures prominently in your everyday life. As part of your notation work, research the physical and historic facts associated with the site. Use this information to begin to frame your material and procedural decisions to “work” the site (by documenting it, embellishing it, revealing something concealed, or transforming it). The “place” you end up with may be actual, imagined, remembered, or a combination of all of these things.

Time

We organize time in “natural” ways (by seasons, bodily functions, the shifting quality of light), in “unconscious” ways (by memories and dreams), in “institutional” way (by bus schedules, project deadlines, long queues at the bank), in “social” ways (by family vacations, formal dinners, awkward conversations), in “cultural” ways (a 4-minute pop tune, a 3-hour opera with 15-minute intermissions, a 100-minute ‘feature-length’ film). Time is discussed in economic terms by employers and in political terms by employees. Develop work that focuses on time as a medium, as a way of organizing your work process and ideas, and as a subject matter.

Identity

Identity speaks of our contact with the world, the private colliding with the public, locating our “selves” in our experiences with others. Investigate ways in which you personalize or distance or confuse or give importance to the things you say. Picture the physical space between you and your viewers/listeners; is this space intimate or impersonal, ordered or chaotic, confessional, informative, shared or differentiated? Use “voice” (figuratively or literally) to enter this space in order to affirm, transforms or rupture it. Consider modes of address such as satire, narrative, ritual, role-playing, manifestos, rants, and rumors.

Proposal, storyboard, script, and production schedule due: 7/2

First cut: 7/23

Second cut: 7/30

Third cut: 8/6

Project due: 8/13

Projects Requirements:

Elements that your project MUST include:

- A Production Book. (See syllabus)
- Bars and tone (can be placed on DVD separately from video, but must be there so that we can test the audio levels in your piece accurately)
- An audio source in addition to the sync sound – something recorded separately from the original video footage
- At least one created lighting effect – even if you are shooting outside
- Use of external microphones – don't just use the in-camera mic.

Your proposal should include the following:

- A narrative description of your piece – what it's about, what happens?
- Who is your “client”? What is the message they need articulated?
- A treatment, which is a description of the genre and approach or style of your piece, the tone or mood you're trying to establish, the pace, the editing style, how sound will be used.

On days when your proposal is due you must “pitch” your idea to the class. Specifically describe what you plan to do, what you hope to accomplish and justify why the piece is worth making. Your pitch should last 5-10 minutes, including time for questions and response from the class. On those days you should also have a copy of your storyboard, script, and production schedule ready to hand in. I will then read everything over and email you responses ASAP so that you can begin production.

Grading is based on:

- Effective and creative storytelling and communication of content
- Camerawork – exposure, use of movement, composition
- Editing style – appropriate structure and pacing
- Editing technique – color bars, audio levels
- Lighting technique
- Audio Recording
- Sound Design

Course Schedule (may be revised, with warning, throughout semester)

Monday June 25– class 1

Introduction to class and to one another
Discuss: Composition and Design
Demo: Storyboarding
Video Screening and discussion – “Space” (Deep, Flat, Limited, Ambiguous)
Introduce Project/ View examples and Discuss

Wednesday June 27 – class 2

Discuss: Continuity
Discuss: Production Book
Video Screening and discussion – “Tone” (contrast, affinity, tonal control due to reflectance or incidence)
Demo: cameras

Section: Citizen Kane investigated

Homework:

Exercise #1 - Storyboarding
Read: Chapter 1 and 2 (in either text)
Prepare Proposal, Storyboard, and Schedule for Project– this is due 7/2

Saturday June 30th – If you are still on the waitlist, you did not make it into the class and you will need to stop attending. Sorry – try again in the fall semester!

Monday July 2 – class 3

Proposal, Storyboard and schedule due for Project – (I’ll be emailing you responses)
In Class Exercise #2 – Camera/Shot types
Discuss Readings

Wednesday July 4 – No class

Homework:

Read: Chapter 3 and 4 (in either text)
Revise Project proposals for 7/9

Monday July 9 – class 4

Revised Project Proposals/Scripts due
Video Screening and discussion – “Lighting” (to see, to create mood, to create space...)
Demo: Lighting

Wednesday July 11 – class 5

Demo: Microphones and sound
Discuss Readings

Section: Casting and other production issues. How to shoot for green screen. Organize for 7/18. Get started on Exercise 3 & 4.

Homework:

Exercise #3 – 3-point lighting
Exercise #4 – Sound Recording
Read: Chapters 5, 6, and 7 (in either text)

Monday July 16 – class 6

Demo: Editing and Exporting

Exercise #5 – Editing

Wednesday July 18 – class 7

In Class Exercise #6 – Storyboarding/Camera/Lighting/Sound (this will take all class and section time)

Homework:

Shoot raw footage for Project for critique on 7/23

Read: Chapter 8 and 9 (in either text)

Complete Exercise #5

Monday July 23 – class 8

First Cut of Project due – critique (for this one I want to see your footage, but it doesn't have to be "edited")

Demo: Audio Editing

Demo: iDVD

Wednesday July 25 – class 9

Video screening and discussion – “Color” (Saturated hue, Complimentary colors, Warm/Cool, Warm, Limited)

Demo: more editing tips

Section: Audio editing. Chroma Keying. **Exercise #7 – Audio Editing**

Homework:

Complete Exercise #7

Read: Television Production Handbook: Chapter 10 and 12. Video Basics: 11 and 12

Edit 2nd cut of Project #1 – due 7/30

Monday July 30 – class 10

2nd Cut Project due – critique

Advanced editing techniques

Wednesday August 1 – class 11

Video Screening and discussion – “Movement” (continuum of movement, camera movement, object movement)

Discuss: Interactive Media and its application

Discuss: Tape formats

Discuss Readings

Section: Using LiveType

Homework:

Read: Chapter 13 and 15 (and 14 in TV Production Handbook)

Monday August 6 – class 12

3rd Cut Project due - critique

Video screening and discussion – “Rhythm” (rhythmic control, continuous and fragmented event)

Advanced Editing Techniques and Editing Aesthetics

Wednesday August 8 – class 13

Video Screening and discussion

Editing in class/troubleshooting

Section: Incorporating Photoshop into video projects

Monday August 13 – class 14

Editing in class/troubleshooting

Wednesday August 15, 6:00 pm – class 15

Final project due – no exceptions and don’t forget your production books!