RTVF 225 (Tues) - VIDEO FIELD PRODUCTION

Dr. Larry Ward  
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course has two basic goals. First, to provide students with basic training in the fundamentals of electronic field production. The class will stress the technical skills and knowledge necessary to produce a variety of video assignments. Secondly, students will explore aesthetic and theoretical approaches applicable to any video production.

OBJECTIVES
By the end of the semester each student should be able to:
1) write  2) do preproduction  3) light  4) shoot  5) edit  6) create titles and special effects, and 7) record and mix the sound for a variety of high quality video productions. Student work will be assessed through three projects, reading/lecture quizzes, and class participation.

TEXT

EVALUATION
Your grade will be based on the total number of points you accumulate during the semester. Grades will be assigned according to the percentage of points you attain. In practice, this works out to something like the traditional 90%, 80% 70% grading scale for A’s, B’s and C’s respectively, but the final grade will be curved based on the highest point total in the class. You will take the quizzes on the test themselves.

Class Participation & Attendance  50 pts  
3 Quizzes (@ 20 pts each)  60 pts  
FCP Lesson Exercises (5 @ 10 points each)  50 pts.  
Stolen Object/Continuity (Prod. #1)  100 pts  
Mini-Doc (Prod. #2)  100 pts  
Dramatic Scene (Prod. #3)  100 pts.  
Demo Reels (Prod. #4)  100 pts  
560 pts

LATE ASSIGNMENTS
Probably the most difficult aspect of any production class is meeting a production schedule. Projects are DUE at the beginning of the class period when listed in the syllabus. Late assignments lose the equivalent of one letter grade per class. If you have equipment problems, you must let me know prior to class, not after the fact. (You can always leave a message for me on my office phone which has an answering machine or e-mail me- both will provide date and time) We will talk more about this as the semester progresses. I hope some of you have your own cameras, because that will make it easier for you to shoot at your convenience. With the high demand for our limited equipment and resources, you need to get your reservations in early in order to insure that you have cameras, tripods and/or editing time. That is your responsibility.

CLASS ATTENDANCE/ PARTICIPATION
You are expected to attend all classes, to be on time and to stay the entire period. If you are late or miss class you are penalizing yourself, your partner and/or your group. In a job setting, you would simply be considered unprofessional. After one time or two at the most, you would simply lose your job (or internship). Please notify me within 24 hours with an acceptable reason for any absence.
SUPPLIES/EQUIPMENT CHECKOUT/MALFUNCTIONS/RESPONSIBILITY

Equipment is checked out (and editing facilities are reserved) through the equipment room in the basement of the library (times to be arranged). You MUST return equipment within the prescribed time period or you will pay a fine. Miss it again and you may lose checkout privileges. You don’t want to do that.

Equipment checkout is done online. It is your responsibility to do this within the proper time periods. We will have lots of folks hammering on the same equipment (both editing facilities and cameras), so it is imperative that you turn in requests as early as possible and that you CANCEL the moment you have a change in plans. That way someone else can check out the equipment.

Always report equipment malfunctions as soon as possible. When you check out a camera be sure to write down the number of the camera you are using. If you think (feel, suspect) the camera is malfunctioning it is IMPERATIVE that you let the student workers in checkout (or Chuck, or me) know. Sometimes you won't find this out until you actually view your tape on a decent monitor. But the minute you discover a problem--report it. Don't attempt repairs yourself. We'll get the camera pulled out of service and checked, hopefully before someone else shoots their assignment with broken equipment.

Whatever you do, DON'T leave an expensive camera where it can be stolen. You are responsible for it when you check it out and if you leave it in the backseat of your car you are either very rich or very …….. Remember, you will have to replace the equipment if you lose it or damage it through negligence, so be very careful.

COST

You are going to participate in a variety of video shoots and editing assignments. You may need to buy videocassettes for the camcorder you use (mini-DV cassette, or possibly some other format if you are using your own camera) and for editing purposes. What is really important for this class is to buy an external hard drive that you can use for editing. The best drives cost around $100-200 (and have firewire 400, 800, Esata or USB 2.0 interfaces) and can be used long after the class has ended. More about this later.

Another thing to contemplate is buying a camera. The prices have fallen into the $250-300 range for a DV camera (tape-based cameras are on their way out). A single-chip camera doesn’t produce as good an image as the school’s 3-chip cameras, but the quality is still amazing. The light sensitivity of the newest chips keeps improving which also lessens the difference between the department’s “older” cameras and the newest cameras in the marketplace. Some of the smallest one chip cameras we are currently using in the department produce a high definition image and record directly to a hard drive or flash memory card. Those cameras have come down to $500 dollar range. Sounds like a great thing to add to your post Christmas wish-list. My best advice: try to stick to Canon, Panasonic, JVC or Sony cameras. Be a little more wary of Sharp, Toshiba, Samsung etc. And remember that HD is coming on with a vengeance. The prices of those cameras has fallen dramatically too. I don’t think I’d buy a standard definition camera now.

FCP 7 Lesson Check Off Schedule

1) Lessons 1-3     Have the completed exercises available on your external drive.
2) Lessons 4-6     I’ll check them off in groups of three. If you don’t get a group of three done within one week of the deadline, you can’t get credit for that group….so go on to the next .
3) Lessons 7-9     group of exercises.
4) Lessons 10-12
5) Lessons 13-14
SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Jan. 26
  Class costs/ Overview of semester projects
  Facilities, forms/procedures
  Quick look at the cameras/tripods
  Brief Digital formats overview
  Continuity Assignment – Crews

Feb. 2
  Lecture: Camerass & Camera Operations
  Lenses & Composition
  Shoot Assignment #1 (Continuity)
  Bring a mini-dv tape to class if you need it
  Bring your camera to class if you have one
  Read Camera Folder on website

Feb. 9
  Lecture: Editing principles
  Edit Demo
  Begin edit for Continuity Assignment
  Bring book & external hard drives to class
  FCP checkoff #1 Due

Feb. 16
  President’s designated furlough day - Finish continuity exercise

Feb. 23
  Continuity exercise DUE – in class screening
  Assign mini-doc
  In-Class editing in the lab
  Productions meetings for Mini-Docs

Mar. 2
  Camera Quiz  (read Camera folder on website and use the study guide for terms)
  Preproduction / Production Planning
  In class editing

Mar. 9
  Read Lighting Folder
  Lecture: Lighting
  Lab: Shoot/Edit Mini-Docs
  FCP checkoff #2 Due

Mar. 16
  Lecture/Demo: Audio
  Lab: Shoot/Edit Mini-Docs

Mar. 23
  Mini-Doc Due – in class screening
  Assign Dramatic Scene

Mar. 30
  Spring Break – no class but continue work on FCP 7 Book & Dramatic Scene

April 6
  Lighting Quiz
  FCP Checkoff #3 DUE
  Shoot/Edit Dramatic Scenes

April 13
  Lecture: Streaming/Shooting for Web
  Shoot/Edit Dramatic Scenes

April 20
  Compositing/Video Effects

April 27
  Lecture – Demo DVD Production
  Dramatic Scenes DUE- in class Screening
  FCP Checkoff #4 DUE
  Assign Final Project

May 4
  Audio Quiz
  Pick-up Shooting or In-class editing T.B.A.

May 11
  Pick-up Shooting or In-class editing T.B.A
  FCP Checkoff #5 DUE

May 18
  FINAL PROJECTS DUE
  -- In-class Screening at 1:30 p.m.