

DMA 327

Independent TV Production (W 12:45 - 2:30pm)

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OFFICE HOURS

TTH 12:00-1:00 PM

TTH 3:00-4:00 PM

COURSE OBJECTIVE: Capstone production project culminating in a broadcast-quality feature segment for airing on the University cable TV channel. Aspects of producing film and television features on an independent-producer basis. By the end of the course, each student will gain hands-on experience in pre-production coordination, budget accounting, script writing, location shooting, directing, and on-line editing of a documentary film or television feature that will serve as the hallmark of a student's portfolio reel for graduate school, industry internships, or employment in the television/film industry.

TEXT: Lipton, Independent Filmmaker \$50 (Optional)

Vinovich, EFP Field Production Manual

Vinovich, On-Line-Edit System Manual

Vinovich, Audio Lab Manual Recording Manual

MATERIALS:

- (6) BCT-30m BetaSP 30-min Video Tapes (*Source Tapes for Location Shooting*) \$20ea
- (1) BCT-30m BetaSP 30-min Video Tape (Master Tape for On-Line Editing) \$20ea
- (1) VHS T-120 Videocassette (*1/2" Window Dub Tape for Home EDL Off-Line Editing*) \$3ea
- (1) Floppy or Mac Zip Cartridge (*Storage of Avid CG, EDL, and Master Files*) \$9ea
- (1) Walkman Headphones with 1/8" Mini Plug (*For Monitoring Audio in the field*) \$10
- (1) Leather Work Gloves (*For Handling Lighting Equipment*) \$3

COURSE CONTENT:

1. Program Aesthetics - human interest appeal for general TV audience, program pace, intersperse editing and negative adaptation, cognitive rationalization, highlight condensation, staggered (split) edits, shot composition, and interview staging for increased production value.
2. Program Construction - analysis and use of the various program elements of voice over narration, ADR, sound effects foley, ambient tracks, music score, interview/soundbite, cut away, multi-angle continuity shooting of action sequences with single camera, and music montage.
3. Writing - topic research and script development; program focus; content support of program's major points; tease/introduction hooks; transition bridges; script blocking and format.
4. Pre-Production Planning - location scouting, pre-interviewing, production breakdown scheduling, equipment checklists, crew requirements, and budget requirements.
5. Legal Responsibilities - talent/model releases, location clearances, and use of copyrighted music, photographs, and pre-recorded audio, video, and film materials under *fair use* law.

MODE OF OPERATION: During class sessions students will view, analyze, discuss, and evaluate samples of their own work with the instructor as well as the work of previous student productions. Guest producers will be interviewed in class regarding their experience and particular problems in completing independent productions. Since the course emphasizes material screened in class, consistent attendance is required.

PROJECT APPROVAL CRITERIA - projects must meet the following criteria for approval by the instructor:

1. Topic Appeal - the program topic must be of interest to a general TV audience.
2. Visual Appeal - the topic must have visual appeal with opportunities to shoot action, spectacle, color, or supporting cut away footage that illustrates the points of the program.
3. Viability Factor - the project must be manageable for a student production team to complete with limited resources, time constraints, budget, and connections (clout/pull).

DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTION *(Co-Producer Project)

Each student, along with his or her co-producer from the class, will produce and direct a documentary project with the following production requirements:

Time: 10-12 minutes

Pre-Production Report: Required before shooting. (see *Documentary Pre-Production Report format*).

Script Approval: Required before shooting.

Footage: Shot off campus on Beta SP format *(only limited stock footage permitted).

Narration: Voice-over narration track required.

Interviews: At least "4" talking head interviews on separate sets with B-Roll footage.

Editing: Must incorporate "intersperse approach" and "split edits" in program.

Music: Accompanying music tracks required.

SFX: At least one wild sound track required.

Titles: Opening titles and keyed CG titles for "talking head" interviews required.

Edit System: Beta FXE-120 for Main Cut; Avid Nonlinear for Fine Cut.

Report: Documentary Project Report required. (see *Documentary Report format*).

PRE-PRODUCTION REPORT

*Each student, along with his or her co-producer, must complete a joint Pre-Production Report before checking out the camera system for shooting the documentary. The Pre-Production Report must include the following information: (see *Documentary Pre-Production Report format*)*

Program Summary - brief synopsis of program's content similar to a *TV Guide* description.

Bibliography - list of at least "5" published sources used for research on the topic.

Major Points - list of at least "5" major points you wish to impress upon the audience.

Source Credibility - list of name, title, and affiliation of experts appearing in program.

Pre-Interviews - list of personalities interviewed before appearing on camera.

Program Highlights - describe the most interesting, exciting, or emotional parts of the program.

Major Locations - list at least "5" locations planned for shooting and clearance/permission status.

Location Scouting - list of locations scouted for lighting, staging, sound, and electrical access.

DOCUMENTARY PROJECT REPORT

*Each student is required to submit his or her own separate Documentary Project Report explaining his or her contribution to the following aspects of the production: (see *Documentary Project Report format*)*

Topic Idea/Research - input on the original concept and research of the program.

Pre-Interviewing - involvement in pre-interviewing the subjects for the program.

Script Writing - involvement in conceptualizing, shot blocking, and writing of the narrative script.

Pre-Production Coordination - involvement in location scouting, unit managing, and clearances.

Production - involvement in location shooting of interviews and B-Roll footage for the program.

Post Production - involvement in window dubbing, tape logging, EDL, titling, music, and narration.

On-Line Editing - involvement in on-line editing of the master tape for the program.

Budget - itemized accounting of expenses for tape, food, lodging, telephone, postage, transportation, etc.

Production Role - your personal contribution to the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Individual Grade - the rationale and justification for the grade you believe you deserve for the course.

Co-Producer's Grade - the rationale and justification for the grade you believe your co-producer deserves.

STUDENT OUTCOMES - by the end of the course, each student should be able to understand the basic techniques of program conceptualization, topic research, sales pitch presentation, script writing, shot blocking, producing, directing, and on-line editing a documentary program for a general television audience. (See *Course Content listing on this syllabus sheet*).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

(Please consult the section of the University Catalog entitled "Academic Integrity" for official campus policy on cheating and plagiarism. The instructor will not tolerate either of these acts in this course).

GRADING CRITERIA

*The documentary production will be evaluated according to the grading criteria listed under the Project Evaluation section of this course syllabus; however, each student producer will receive a separate grade on the joint project based solely on his or her own individual contribution and work on the project. (see *Grading Criteria For Project Evaluation*).*