The Camera as an Agent for Social Change
KHC FT 101
Fall 2011
Tuesdays/Thursdays
11:00 AM - 12:20 PM
Room: COM 301A

Sam Kauffmann
Office hours: Mondays 1:30-3:30 PM, Tuesdays 1:30-3:30PM
Office location: 704 Commonwealth Ave, Rm. 407

“If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.”
--Desmond Tutu, winner of Nobel Peace Prize

“Make visible what, without you, might perhaps never have been seen.”
--Robert Bresson, French filmmaker

Course Description and Objectives

This course starts with the presumption that students enrolling in this seminar believe in promoting a just and fair society, and wish to learn to use filmmaking skills to expose and address injustices in our Global Village.

We will explore the historical and theological foundations that compel people to promote social justice. We will then examine potential social issue “topics” that may be of interest to students in the class. Students will each choose a social issue and then research, write and produce a short video (five to ten minutes) about an important aspect of it. Each video will seek to change the way people perceive that issue and will highlight ways in which positive changes can occur. The completed videos will be launched on YouTube and Vimeo and linked to the most popular social media sites. No previous filmmaking skills are necessary; students will be given training as part of the course.

Required Texts

2. Watching YouTube: Extraordinary Videos by Ordinary People, by Michael Strangelove, University of Toronto Press, 2010
-Recommended Reading: The Justice Project, Edited by Brain McLaren, Elisa Padilla and Ashley Bunting Seeber, Baker Books, 2009
-Readings are available at the BU Bookstore
Access to Portable Hard Drive—Recommended - Rugged LaCie with FireWire 800

Grades:

The final grade will be determined as follows:
Research and Write a Proposal for a Short Video: 25%
Create a Transformative Video Mash-up: 25%
Final Video: 35%
Distribute through Website and Social Media: 10%
Attendance, Participation, Screenings and Readings: 5%

Written Material

All written material must be neatly typed and double-spaced, with a cover sheet. Attention at all times must be paid to spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Proofread your work before handing it in. Your grade will suffer if you hand in sloppy or poorly written work.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance: I expect you to come to every class and to be on time. Obviously, illnesses occur and emergencies happen. If you are going to miss a class or arrive late, I expect you to tell me in-person, or to call my office (617 353-7740) and leave a message if I’m not there. If you do not notify me prior to the class, it is an unexcused absence; if you have more than two unexcused absences you may be dropped from the course. Participation: I expect you to participate in the class discussions, to have studied your notes and read/screened the assignments so you can add information and perspectives to the issues at hand. I expect you to give honest criticism and praise to your classmates in order to help them improve their research and filmmaking skills.

Academic Dishonesty
http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT ON RECORDINGS DURING CLASS

Please note that classroom proceedings for this course [seminar] might be recorded for purposes including, but not limited to, student illness, religious holidays, disability accommodations, or student course review. Note also that recording devices are prohibited in the classroom except with the instructor’s permission.

COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the act of representing someone else’s creative and/or academic work as your own. It can be an act of commission, in which one intentionally appropriates the words, pictures or ideas of another, or it can be an act of omission, in which one fails to acknowledge/document/give credit to the source, creator and/or the copyright owner of those words, pictures or ideas. Any fabrication of materials, quotes, or sources, other than that created in a work of fiction, is also plagiarism. Plagiarism is the most serious academic offense that you can commit and can result in probation, suspension or expulsion.

Grading scale:

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<th>Score Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>90-93</td>
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<td>74-76</td>
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<td>77-79</td>
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Assignments

1). Research and Write a Proposal for a Short Video
Each student will decide upon a topic for their final video, research the issues surrounding it, accumulate relevant facts, list who are the experts are in that area, identify and read books and articles to increase knowledge about the arguments surrounding the topic and then write a proposal for a short video. Students must include a bibliography as part of the proposal, as well as include all their notes in order to show where their information came from and how they have used that information to develop their proposal.

2). Creating a Transformative Video Mash-up (between 2-4 minutes in length)
Following a close examination of the Fair Use Doctrine and a discussion about recent court decisions that permit the use of copyrighted material under certain conditions (commonly referred to as Fair Use), students will create a video Mash-up that addresses a social issue. For this assignment, students will use pre-existing video and audio material (news, historical archive films, trailers, feature and short films, documentaries, music videos, etc.) to create a new and transformative video that seeks to change the way people perceive that issue and will highlight ways in which positive changes can occur.

3). Produce a Five to Ten Minute Video about a Social Issue
Using portable video cameras and digital editing software, students will produce a short video that addresses a social issue (it can be the same one examined in Assignment 2). The finished video will consist of a 5-10 minute QuickTime movie, with titles, music, video and audio material. Pre-existing video and audio material may be included, but it cannot make up more than 50% of the final video.

4) Assigned Readings: In addition to the assigned chapters from the two required texts, there will be articles posted on the Blackboard website.

5). Screenings: In addition to the films and videos screened in class, students will be assigned videos to watch on YouTube, Vimeo or DVD.