The Camera as an Agent for Social Change

“*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

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 Reading (available at the BU Bookstore):**


**Access to Portable Hard Drive**—Recommended – Rugged G-Drive mini. 720rpm

http://www.g-technology.com/products/g-drive-mini.cfm

**Grades: The final grade will be determined as follows:**

- Research and Write a Proposal for a Short Video **15%**
- Create a Transformative Video Mash-up **25%**
- Final Video **30%**
- Distribute through Website and Social Media **10%**
- Attendance, Participation and Readings **10%**
- Documentary Screenings and Responses **10%**
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.

| Students are expected to abide by both KHC and BU’s Undergraduate Academic Conduct Code. Both can be found at http://www.bu.edu/khc/current-students/policies/ |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College of Communication Statement on Plagiarism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading scale:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100 A 74-76 C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-93 A- 70-73 C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89 B+ 67-69 D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-86 B 64-66 D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-83 B- 60-63 D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79 C+ below 60 F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 text, there will be articles posted on the Blackboard website.

5). Documentary Screenings and Responses:
In addition to the films and videos screened in class, you will be assigned five documentary films to screen outside of class. You must write a short response to each film, discussing your reactions—what you learned and what you will take away from each film. Approximately 250 words.
Weekly Schedule

Week 1
Tuesday, Sept. 6: Course Introduction & Explanation of Assignments. Overview of Semester; Survey of class skills and expectations. In-class screening of short social issue films.

Read chapter 1, 2 & 3 in Social Justice Handbook

Thursday, Sept. 8: Lecture/Discussion: What is Justice? Who/what calls us to take action? How did we end up in the mess we’re in? In-class screenings of short social issue films.


Week 2
Tuesday, Sept. 13: Introduction to digital editing software and skills: basic cuts, building a Timeline.


Thursday, Sept. 15: Discussion—choosing a topic. In-class screenings of short social issue films.

Week 3
Tuesday, Sept. 20: Discuss Fair Use Doctrine. What makes a successful video Mash-up? Screen examples. Finding and capturing material that you can transform.

Thursday, Sept. 22: Finding and capturing material that you can transform.

Week 4
Tuesday, Sept. 27: Practice Editing skills.

Thursday, Sept. 29: What is your topic for Final Film? Discussion of ideas and strategies for follow-up.

Week 5
Tuesday, Oct. 4: The power of the written word. Creating titles that are worth a thousand pictures.


Week 6
Tuesday, Oct. 11: Mash-ups Due: Screen and discuss Mash-ups.

Thursday, Oct. 13: Mash-ups Due: Screen and discuss Mash-ups.

Week 7
Tuesday, Oct. 18: The Camera – More than Show & Tell
Thursday, Oct. 20: Camera Practice
Due: Proposal for Final Project

**Week 8**
Tuesday, Oct. 25: Conducting an interview – capturing the truth?

Thursday, Oct. 27: Sound: More than voices. Creating Music and Sound Effects to drive the emotions.

**Week 9**
Tuesday, Nov. 1: The way forward? Progress reports and discussion. Each student presents his or her project’s status. What is needed? What are the next steps? How can we help?

Thursday, Nov. 3: The way forward? Progress reports and discussion. Each student presents his or her project’s status. What is needed? What are the next steps? How can we help?

**Week 10**
Tuesday, Nov. 8. Importing and Editing your Footage.

Thursday, Nov. 10: Putting it all together. Mixing picture, audio, music, titles into one polished video.

**Week 11**
Tuesday, Nov. 15: Getting it out there. How to disseminate your videos for maximum impact. YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook, and mounting a campaign.

Thursday, Nov. 17: Help!! Troubleshooting the Final Video.

**Week 12**
Tuesday, Nov. 22: Effects, Color Correction, Audio Mixing

Thursday, Nov. 24: Thanksgiving Holiday

**Week 13**
Tuesday, Nov. 29: Troubleshooting the Rough Cut

Thursday, Dec. 1: Troubleshooting the Rough Cut

**Week 14**
Tuesday, Dec 6: Presentation and discussion of final videos

Thursday, Dec. 8: Presentation and discussion of final videos
Week 15
Finals week: Students upload projects to YouTube, Vimeo, and help build the class website and Facebook page.