

FT352 – Film Production Using Video

(Motion Picture Production using Digital Technology)

Syllabus

Instructor Name: Dr Will Davies

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Course Credits: 4 BU credits

Course Description

This is a basic introduction to film/video production. The course includes an introduction to film history and technology through to today, the production process through to completion and a brief understanding of the various roles of creators and technicians in the production process. There will be detailed work in the production and directing process and a practical exercise shooting a short film script and undertaking the editing.

Two specialist tutors will be involved in the course; David Collins ACS, a cameraman with over forty years experience and Baylin Davies, a producer-director-editor with the skill range necessary for young filmmakers in today's industry.

Their contact details are:

DAVID COLLINS: davidcollins1@optusnet.com.au

BAYLIN DAVIES: baylin.davies@engagedigitalpartners.com

Course Objectives

To provide course participants with a solid understanding of the film production process, the role of various individuals and the necessary skills to produce a short yet compelling film in the very limited hours (40) that the course allows.

Question-driven Course Description

- In a visual media world where information, facts and images are instant and in high demand, how can we identify practical ways to construct and deliver information?
- How can the basic skills of storytelling and film production be understood and used in new ways and with new technology?
- What observational skills will students gain to better assess information and understand the creative process of film production?
- What challenges will students face in applying technology to an idea, their script or factual documentary and deliver a finished film that addresses the criteria of the course?

What educational strategies will students employ in answering and exploring these questions, and how will their progress be assessed throughout the course?

Students will employ a variety of strategies in answering all the above questions. These include: attending lectures, classroom discussions, undertaking practical location filming exercises, experiencing practical tuition and 'hands on' experience with both camera and editing equipment,

learning to research, develop and 'pitch' ideas to the professor and the class and attend a master class with a veteran producer of both feature films and documentary.

During this time, they will be exposed to visual challenges, new ways to look at composition, screen movement, light and the subtlety of direction, visual persuasion and argument. Reading the required texts, watching films and understanding visual language in all forms will transfer students into another level of perception and appreciation.

During the 40-hour course, students will be taken through the following:

- An historical overview of the film and television production industry and the role various creative technicians like producers, directors, editors, writers and cinematographers play in the creative process.
- A practical class on operating and getting the best from a digital camera, lighting basics and a review of the work of the cinematographer.
- Basic directing including camera moves, composition, screen direction and covering the action.
- Basic producing skills, both theoretical and practical, including an understanding of the producer's role, copyright, pitching an idea, crew selection and creative roles and the overall management and control of a production to completion.
- Script writing skills including defining, then refining, the topic or story, getting ideas on paper and working to have ideas or script realised on film.
- The editing process including shot listing and completing a paper edit, working with a director and the practical skills required to operate one of a number of edit programs available on a laptop computer.
- Finally, introducing and screening the final production.

Hub Learning Outcomes

4 BU credits

Input Learning Outcomes

Capacity: Communication

Area: Digital/Multimedia Expression (1 unit)

Learning Outcome 1:

A student works in tandem with other students on a film project which essentially provides a visual narrative with sound, that takes into account colour, rhythm of speech, acoustics largely with a focus on content. It is chiefly shaped by composition. The objective in this case is to effectively transfer the "message" from the head of the director, through the ether, to the head of the audience. This course will develop an understanding of the role and impact of traditional production and media skills and reveal how to apply these to the evolving worlds of social media, corporate communications, information transmission, through production skills and theoretical knowledge.

During the course, students work in creative teams on a film project which essentially provides a visual narrative of images and sound, taking into account colour, rhythm of speech and acoustics. The focus is also on content, and shaped by a range of creative factors including composition, screen direction and editing. This content also reflects the film's message, audience and creative 'devise' in visualizing a concept and delivering a completed 'message'.

This is a creative process involving research, scripting, pre-production, filming, editing and post production through to delivery. With the need for a range of skills, this process relies heavily on teamwork, co-operation and collaborative contribution. Students are taught the fundamentals of visual expression, skills and techniques that are as relevant today as they were throughout the develop of the film production process. This includes the production of short Youtube type videos, websites, and a range of visual content used across the evolving landscape of social media and information transfer.

Learning Outcome 2:

Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the capabilities of various communication technologies and be able to use these technologies ethically and effectively. Students will be instructed in the use of digital cameras and electronic digital-based edit systems to complete the production of a film. Because students work in teams and on location in public and private spaces, students will be made aware to clear locations, deal with municipal requirements, and inform residents of the time, date, and content of their film work.

Back in the lab, the editing process begins with the digitisation of their shot material, the creation of a shot list, and then the writing (with the full team's involvement) of a "paper edit". From here, a non-linear edit is completed using one of a range of new, computer-based edit programs.

Learning Outcome 3:

Working to tight deadlines, students, having acquired the necessary skills of film making and editing, can demonstrate the production process that highlights their understanding of the visual skills necessary to complete a film. The 'design' aspects of their film project begin with the idea and the 'message' and from this, evolves script writing and other aspects of the conceptual design in terms of light, colour saturation, set design and planning, and a range of other design considerations based on the overall concept design for the film project.

Capacity: Intellectual Toolkit

Area: Teamwork/Collaboration – one unit

Producing media across a broad spectrum of genres and platforms requires students to contribute skills in a team enterprise to secure an end product. Students need to co-operate, work together and function as a team and the media production process requires this co-operation and mutual support where separate and disparate ideas, skills and points-of-view are pooled and coordinated in a unique way.

This course is designed to provide students with basic practical and theoretical skills to visualise factual and fictional scripted information and from this, produce a film project which demonstrates these skills and which can be used for future employment opportunities. It also teaches the need to combine these creative skills, to contribute and share ideas and collaborate in a positive, team-based way for a single outcome.

Learning Outcome 1:

Teamwork begins with the first location filming exercise where students are rotated around various production roles including directing, camera operation, note taking, shot identification and the co-ordination of talent, as well as assisting the movement of the camera (grip role) and also site safety and traffic control. By undertaking each role, students are made aware of the importance of teamwork and providing skills in a collaborative and positive way.

Learning Outcome 2:

In a second production stage, that of editing, students are again assigned production roles and required, in a collaborative and meaningful way, to contribute to the editing and final post production process of the film project. This often involves discussion, the analysis of ideas and the selection and justification of a way forward. Students need to take criticism and engage in solid discussion and feedback to ensure that the best outcomes are generated by the creative team, that ideas are espoused, discussed, rejected or accepted and then seamlessly integrated into the team project. This at times requires both respect for opinions and ideas and also a modesty and acceptance of other ideas as opposed to one's own. This sheds a strong light on real teamwork, collective collaboration and the engagement and blending of ideas and results.

The formation of teams by students to successfully navigate the requirements of the course, strengthens these skills in each individual which they can take forward in the workplace or to other ventures in their personal lives. They will come away from this course with new skills and an appreciation of how teamwork and collaborative contribution make for a better end product and better project outcome.

Program Learning Outcomes

Study Abroad Sydney Program Outcome:

The student will “demonstrate knowledge of Australian culture and society with respect to a combination of the following areas: Australian politics, industry, science and technology, economics, social policy, environmental policy, literature and the arts, film, marketing, advertising, and mass media”.

Instructional Format, Course Pedagogy, and Approach to Learning

After an introduction to the course, explaining the course outlines and the assessment procedures, the practical skills will be demonstrated and blended with theoretical information and notional imagery. For this course, formal lectures, group pitching workshops, practical hands-on experience, guest lectures, field trips, and seminar presentations have been organised. Attendance at, and preparatory reading for, all sessions is compulsory.

All students will be expected to contribute to all practical workshop and seminar discussions. In this regard, they will have to research and script two ideas as potential film projects and present these to the class in a pitching session. They will therefore need to prepare for each session and read the supplied student notes and be ready to undertake practical instruction and then demonstrate these skills in the examination and marking process. Apart from a final examination, each student will also be expected to submit a completed film, made by a student team within the class and then screen this before the entire BU student body.

Format

The course will involve a number of instructional elements including class lectures and demonstrations, the screening of short films and sections of films, practical exercises outside of the classroom, visits to production facilities (given access and timing), plus specialist instruction in cameras and the edit process.

Books and Other Course Materials

There are no required texts or reading material necessary for this course.

This course, while principally directed at practical skills, requires students to read both practical film/video production handbooks, but also books covering screen history and theory.

The following will be required reading for the course:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Barnouw, E. | <i>Documentary: A History of Non-Fiction Film</i>
Oxford UP, Oxford, 1993. |
| Nowell-Smith, G. | <i>The History of Cinema: A Very Short Introduction</i>
Oxford UP, Oxford, 2018 |
| Collins, D. | <i>Hollywood Downunder: Australians at the Movies 1896 to the Present.</i>
Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1987 |
| FitzSimons, K. et al (eds) | <i>Australian Documentary: History Practices and Genres</i>
Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2011 |
| Hamilton, P. and Mathews, S. | <i>American Dreams, Australian Movies</i>
Currency Press, Sydney 1986 |
| Dancyger, K. | <i>The Technique of Film and Video Editing</i>
Focal Press, Waltham, Mass. 2006 |
| Millerson, G. | <i>Video Camera Techniques</i> |

Focal Press, Waltham, Mass. 2015

Proferes, N. *Film Directing Fundamentals*
Routledge, Waltham, Mass. 2017

Mascelli, J. V. *The Three C's of Cinematography*
Silman-James Press, Hollywood, 2005

Courseware

There are no required websites to be reviewed for this course.

www.bu.edu/learn

This is an active online link to all materials including the course outline, criteria sheets, due dates of assignments, secondary sources, online links, and announcements. From time to time, there is contemporary material posted on blackboard learn.

Assignments and Grading

This course is assessed based on four separate examinable sections. The first is for the pitch and supporting documentation (30%), the second for the film project (40%), the third, the final examination (25%) and a final 5% for class contribution.

The following is provided to students and posted on blackboard learn to clarify the assessment process.

Final assessment for this course will be made from four separate elements:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Pitch and supporting documentation | TOTAL 30% |
| 2. Film project | TOTAL 40% |
| 3. Final examination | TOTAL 25% |
| 4. Class contribution | TOTAL 5% |

1. Pitch and Supporting Documentation

In class 4 of week 2, each student will have to present two “pitches” – possible story lines for the production of their individual film project.

These pitches will take approximately five minutes per story line and will be presented in front of the class. This will be given a total score out of 30%; and be made up of:

- 5% each for the quality of the idea x 2
- 5% for the quality of the delivery of the pitch to the class.
- A further 15% will be for the presentation of the idea on paper and supporting documentation. This documentation will include:
 - A one page Treatment of each of your two stories.

- Story board of one idea, the one you like the best.
- List of elements you need like locations, actors, for that film.

2. Film Project

Due to the small class numbers, the class will not divide into production teams of two or three to make their chosen film as is the usual case. Student instead will develop their own idea, research, script, direct and edit their individual film as an individual project.

However, should other members of the class wish to get involved and help in the production, this co-operation is encouraged as the film production process ideally requires the following:

- Director-writer
- Cameraman-editor
- Producer-sound recordist

The director/writer will be responsible for the completed film and all members of that production team will not be marked or graded in relation to this individuals project. They will only be marked on their own individual film project. The maximum mark for the film is 40%.

The film exercise is to make a film for YOUTUBE. The film should have a strong Australian influence and NOT be an American story shot in Sydney. The focus should be on difference, on comparison, on questioning known values, and on making the most of the Australian experience by challenging yourself and your current mindset. The chief exploration is: creative thoughts and ways, given the tools at hand, to experiment, express ideas and to explore cultural differences between what you know at home and what you find here. This is an important element to the film making process, much like a commercial brief to make a film or promotional presentation and marks will be deducted if this is not met.

REMEMBER, this is a film for the internet and part of the brief. Think how you can get thousands of hits by making a film that works for this medium. This is what you will be graded on.

3. Final Examination:

Each student will sit for a final examination. This will be made up of short questions, often with one word answers, multiple choice questions, short written answers and one longer, essay-type answer of about 250-400 words.

The weighting for this exam is 25%.

This 2-hour examination will be in the BU Sydney Central campus complex on Friday 1st March. Grades will be provided on the Boston University alpha scale: from A at the top down to D and F if appropriate. (See grading scale in a grid at the end of this course overview.)

It should be noted that as this course and the information and technical aspects of production will be new to most students, consideration will be given in the allocation of grades bearing this in mind. The film project is an effort to learn, understand and contribute, but most importantly to engage, and be creative.

4. Class Contribution:

Each student is expected to attend every class, be punctual and active within the classroom forum. Students must be on time, and may not bring food, including coffee into the classroom. (Water is okay). The program Academic Director imposes strict grade penalties for missing a portion of, or a whole class.

Students are encouraged to ask questions during lecture times and to actively participate and engage with the rest of the students.

A mark of up to 5% will be awarded for the degree of class participation of each student.

Final Grades

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	60-69
F	Below 60

Assessment Descriptions

Resources/Support/How to Succeed in This Course:

There is the opportunity for students to meet professors face-to-face either ahead of, or following class times; students can also make contact for longer meeting times via email or submit questions via email.

The way to succeed in this course is to keep reading along the time line of required readings. Being prepared for each scheduled class will mean students reap more from lectures, modules, and interactive class discussions. Time management is crucial to such success, as is an open and enquiring mind. Following advice contained in this course outline will also be of great value. When writing or presenting, it is crucial that students are guided by the Grading Criteria as a means to successful navigation of requirements. Professors are notified of students with documented disabilities or special needs ahead of first classes and offer assistance to these students in line with BU policy.

Community of Learning: Class and University Policies

Course Matters

Attendance at all classes is mandatory.

Any absence for medical reasons or other misadventure must be supported by a medical certificate or a letter offering a satisfactory explanation. Strict penalties apply, on a pro rata basis, for any unapproved absence. Missing one class without reason would attract as much as a 10% penalty.

Statement on Plagiarism

All students are responsible for having read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University program for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be "... expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the Dean".

Late Work

In general, there will be no extensions granted for any coursework. The exception is where there are clear and acceptable reasons for late submission. In this case a written statement outlining any serious illness or misadventure together with supporting documentation (e.g. medical certificates) must be provided or a strict penalty of 5% per day will apply.

1) Course members' responsibility for ensuring a positive learning environment (e.g. participation/discussion guidelines).

It is the responsibility of both the professor and all student members of the class to ensure a positive learning environment. It is thus understood that any member of the class who demonstrates behavior which undermines this positive learning environment will: firstly, be questioned and counseled regarding this behavior seeking a satisfactory outcome; secondly, upon further recurrence, be brought into the delivery of the class material in an effort to involve them more; lastly, in light of the behavior continuing, the student will be expelled from the learning space for the rest of the class, and receive a grade penalty according to BU Sydney protocols regarding absenteeism.

2) Attendance & Absences

Attendance at all designated sessions including those with Guest Speakers and field trips is expected. There are no optional absences from class sessions. Any student missing class without verifiable extraordinary reasons will receive a grade penalty according to protocols set down for BU Sydney by the Program Academic Director.

3) Assignment Completion and Late Work

Completion of all reading/viewing/writing tasks is expected. All written work must be submitted in hard copy through the BU Sydney Library by the time set down in the course outline. For some

assignments, an additional soft copy emailed to professors may be required, as indicated. Our policy on late submission of work is that, unless there is a verifiable extraordinary reason, there is a grade deduction, imposed amounts to 5% of the assignment grade per day which will be processed by the Academic Director.

All written work must be submitted in hard copy with signed cover sheet through the BU Sydney Library by the time set down in the course outline. For some assignments, an additional soft copy emailed to professors may be required.

- All students are required to sit examinations (without exception) but special times and spaces are made available to those students with documented disabilities, and special needs such as Religious Observance, and any other verifiable extraordinary reasons.

BU Sydney Policy adheres to the general BU campus policy of Religious Observance, which would fall under “verifiable extraordinary reasons” as mentioned in various places above.

4) Academic Conduct Statement:

All students attending courses under the auspices of BU Sydney must have read BU’s policy on academic honesty and understand the consequences of cheating or plagiarism. Within this course, all submitted written work is expected to be that of the individual and only class exercises are collaborative efforts, as indicated. Please see BU’s Academic Conduct Statement:

<https://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>

Students on a BU Program are advised that the penalty for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be “...expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the Dean”.

FILM PRODUCTION USING VIDEO – FT 352

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Final assessment for this course will be made from four separate elements:

1.	Pitch and supporting documentation	TOTAL 30%
2.	Film project	TOTAL 40%
3.	Final examination	TOTAL 25%
4.	Class contribution	TOTAL 5%

1. Pitch and Supporting Documentation

In week 2, each student will have to present **two “pitches”** – possible story lines for the production of the class film projects.

These pitches will take approximately five-eight minutes per story line and will be presented in front of the class. This will be given a total score of 30%; and be made up of:

- * 5% each for the quality of the idea x 2
- * 5% for the quality of the delivery of the pitch to the class.
- * A further 15% will be for the presentation of the idea on paper and supporting documentation. This documentation will include:
 - * A one-page Treatment of each of your two stories.
 - * Story board of one idea, the one you like the best.
 - * List of elements you need like locations, actors, for that film.

2. Film Project:

The three class members will research, script, direct and edit their own film.

Students can also choose to help other individual filmmakers in the class though this is voluntary. The ideal production crew consists of:

- Director-writer
- Cameraman-editor
- Producer-sound recordist

The individual student will be responsible for the completed film. Those volunteering will not benefit with marks for their co-operation.

The maximum mark for the film is 40%.

The film exercise is to make a film for YOUTUBE. The film should have a strong Australian influence and NOT be an American story shot in Sydney. I am keen on difference, on comparison, on questioning known values and of making the most of the Australian experience by challenging yourself and your current mindset. I am looking for creative thoughts and ways, given the tools at hand, to experiment, express ideas and to explore cultural differences between what you know at home and what you find here.

This is an important element to the film making process, much like a commercial brief to make a film or promotional presentation and **marks will be deducted if this is not met.**

REMEMBER, this is a film/video for the internet and part of the brief. Think how you can get thousands of hits by making a film that works for this medium. This is what you will be marked on.

3. Final Examination:

Each student will sit for a final examination. This will be made up of short questions, often with one-word answers, multiple choice questions, short written answers and one longer, essay type answer of about 250-400 words.

The total mark for this is 25%.

Marks will be provided on the Boston University alpha scale with marks from A at the top down to D and F. (And I hope there will not be many of these.)

It should be noted that as this course and the information and technical aspects of production will be new to most students, consideration will be given in the allocation marks bearing this in mind.

What I am looking for from students, particularly with the film project, is an effort to learn, understand and contribute, but most importantly to engage, be creative and have fun.

4. Class Contribution:

Each student is expected to regularly attend class, be punctual and active within the classroom forum. In this regard, I would be grateful if students could be on time, do not bring food, including coffee (water okay) and **NO HATS**. Students are encouraged to ask questions during lecture times and to actively participate and engage with the rest of the students.

A mark of up to 5% will be awarded for the degree of class participation of each student.

Let's make the class fun, let's learn something new and go away with a film that you are proud of and represents in some way, your Australian experience and would be fun on YOUTUBE. I hope you enjoy my class.