COMM 3353-01: FUNDAMENTALS OF FILM PRODUCTION (CRN 10915)
Spring 2014   Mondays 5:30-7 PM & Wednesdays 9:30-10:50
Anthropology G15 (Lab Classroom) and G10 (Studio)

INSTRUCTOR: Christopher Renaud
Office Hours: M-T-W-Th 1-4 PM and by appointment
Contact: crenaud@westga.edu (preferred – not D2L)

COURSE OVERVIEW
The goal of this workshop course is to provide students with a technical, conceptual, and theoretical introduction to the processes of storytelling with moving images and sound. We will utilize the three tiers of media production:

1. **Media Literacy** – means the critical consumption of media and critical thinking about mediated programs. Media products are constructed objects which require analytical deconstruction.
2. **Organization and Technical Skills** – the three phases of filmmaking - preproduction, production, and post – each require planning and precise execution, usually in collaboration with others.
3. **Aesthetic Expression** - media production requires creativity and adaptability to constraints.

REQUIRED MATERIALS
- **Headphones** with 1/8th inch connector – the common kind you already own – for monitoring sound while shooting and privacy while editing
- **Class 10 SD Card**, 16GB or larger – your personal card for use in camera.
- **Portable USB 2.0 or 3.0 Drive** – your personal drive for editing, storage, workstation flexibility and project archiving. Can be labeled for Mac or PC (we will restructure your drive to work on either).

* These items are one-time purchases for Mass Communications students in production courses. They will serve you through and beyond graduation. If you have these specific items already, there will be no need to purchase them again. Also keep in mind that the textbook for this class is one of the most inexpensive you will buy in your college career, around $15.

MASS COMMUNICATIONS LEARNING OBJECTIVES
This course meets Learning Objective II. Students will demonstrate understanding of paramount economic, ethical, legal/policy, theory/research, social, and technical issues facing convergence journalism, film and media arts, and public relations industries, as well as the role of the principle personalities and stakeholders within the context of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, media competition, media convergence, diversity, and social responsibility.

MASS COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
1. Students will understand and apply basic concepts of image construction, sound recording and editing to the production of audio-visual media.
2. Students will develop the ability to communicate clearly using edited images and sounds with accuracy and clarity.
3. Students will develop proficient use of technology to produce visual and audio messages for mass media within varying aesthetic, style, technical, ethical, and legal considerations.
4. Students will develop skills in the writing, development, planning, and execution of short film & video projects.
5. Students will develop skills in the critical analysis of effective audio-visual communication in a workshop environment.
ASSIGNMENTS

Two tests of terms and concepts (10 each) 20
Portrait Assignment 10
Preproduction Assignment 5
Music Video 10
Scene Remake 10
Final Project 20
Final Portfolio of your work 5
In-Class exercises/participation* 20
TOTAL 100

PARTICIPATION – ATTENDANCE – PRESENCE

... are so important to this class (and beyond) that we need to speak about them for a minute.

Participation does NOT mean showing up for class. Participation means actively engaging with the work we look at, with in-class assignments, and with workshops. This is primarily a hands-on workshop, with much group work. It requires active participation from everyone.

A key value of this course is that real learning happens from listening, from thinking, from asking each other questions, and from analyzing your own and your classmates’ mistakes (and successes). It is not a multiple-choice course based on reading and lecture. If you are not in class, you are not participating, you are not learning, and you do yourself a disservice, which spreads rapidly to affect others in your group. You will find it difficult if not impossible to catch-up and regain your mojo. You will find this to be true in workshop courses throughout our department.

Filmmaking is a group activity in which being present (fully in the moment), active contribution, preparation, follow-through and dependability are essential personal qualities. Without them you cannot be successful in any aspect of the industry. If you don’t feel these describe you, you will need to cultivate those qualities in this class.

In connection with these values, you will quickly lose points from your final course grade for lack of participation: 4% per class missed, with no limit.

Life happens; I understand this. Know too, that you can’t participate, contribute or remain in sync with the class if you are not here. You will have one excused absence this semester. Each after that an absence is simply an absence, with no distinction between excused or unexcused.

GRADES WORK LIKE THIS

A = 90 - 100%  B = 80 – 89%  C = 70 – 79%  D = 60 – 69%  F = 59% or below

You earn your grade, by earning points on assignments and exams. This begins with a zero. You must build your grade up from there. Your grade is not a reflection of how much I like you or how good of a person you are. Grades are evaluations of your performance on the assignments in this course.

Most assignments have multiple phases. You will not be able to earn high grades if you do not follow all the instructions to the letter, and stick to the deadlines provided.

GRADING

Work will be graded and returned as promptly as possible. When delivered in a timely manner, and in the correct format, this should happen within 2 weeks. Where possible, a grading rubric will be provided. Like with all things – the more you put into the class, the more you will get out of it, and more likely than not, the higher your grade will be.

*In-Class exercises/participation
LATE ASSIGNMENTS: I reserve the right to not accept late assignments. If a late assignment is deemed acceptable, it will be severely penalized (think 15%-40%). If you are late with an assignment, don’t wait for me to start grading to find out you didn’t turn anything in - TELL ME and I will try to help you get it done.

OTHER CLASS VALUES

Our classroom values align directly with professional values and expectations throughout the industry.

Promptness: We start at 5:30 pm on Monday and 9:30 am on Wednesday: We will be moving between the Mac Lab (G15) and the Studio (G10) so make sure you know where class is and show up prepared and on time. “If you are not early, you are late” – tardiness will effect your participation.

Being “Present”: Doing things unrelated to the class during class-time (e.g. sleeping, emailing, surfing the web, not paying attention, “multi-tasking”) will directly affect your participation grade.

Cell Phones: Cell phones have no place in this classroom whatsoever. Turn them off before you enter the room and put them completely away. If I see your cell phone you will be considered absent for the day (-4% off your final grade). NO EXCEPTIONS. If I see your cellphone twice in a class, you will be considered absent twice for the day. (-8%). There is no limitation to this and no exceptions will be made.

“ASK THE A.D.” If there is something pressing you need to deal with, inform me at the start of class. If you have done this, only then leave the room to deal with the matter. If you need to leave the room for another reason, please come to me before you leave the room. Do not abruptly exit as this is highly disruptive to the class.

Food and Drink: These are new facilities with expensive equipment. No food or drink will be allowed in the classroom, edit suites or studio at any time. No exceptions.

Equipment Checkout: We will follow the checkout guidelines and policies which will be provided in a separate handout. Late returns of equipment will affect your ability to checkout equipment for this and other Mass Communications classes, and will likely impact your grade, or pass the course.

NOTE

Making movies takes time, and it takes diligence, commitment and effort. Rushing WILL produce unsatisfactory results, as will doing things at the last minute. Both will be easily apparent. As a newbie, the only skills you currently possess are time, effort and creativity. Happily, these are essential. The most common mistakes students make in this class are spending an insufficient amount of time on a project, and putting in an inadequate amount of effort. These are very avoidable, as well as unacceptable, and will be graded accordingly (for better and for worse).

MY ROLE

I will endeavor to guide your study of the course material, to summarize basic concepts, to provide interesting examples and context, and to facilitate a lively classroom. My goals as an instructor are to help you sharpen your skills, lead you to understanding and help to shape you into strong filmmakers. You contribute to these goals by asking questions, insuring that your questions are answered by asking follow-ups, and applying yourself with hard work and diligence.

I look forward to working with you this semester.
The last day to Drop/Add this class with a refund is January 12th at midnight. This may impact your ability to receive financial aid. After Feb 26th you may only withdraw, with a “W” for the course. See the Registrar’s site [http://www.westga.edu/registrar/802.php](http://www.westga.edu/registrar/802.php) for more information.

**FINAL CLASS MEETING/SCREENING (“Exam” Period) – FINAL PROJECT and PORTFOLIO DUE**
Monday, Apr 21, 5:00-7:30 pm
We WILL meet for this class period, and you are required to attend as for any exam.

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES**
The University of West Georgia provides common language for all syllabi regarding policies, and those apply to this course. Please see the following link for more information:
[http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf](http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf)

**OTHER COURSE POLICIES**

**Americans With Disabilities Statement**
If you are a student who is disabled as defined under the Americans With Disabilities Act and requires assistance or support services, first please seek assistance through the Center for Disability Services. A **CDS Counselor** will coordinate those services, and provide you with the necessary documentation to give to me. Students who need accommodations for learning or who have particular needs **should then share these concerns or requests with me early in the term (no later than week 3 of the course)**. See the above link.

**Classroom Etiquette**
Exercising personal freedom is an appealing part of college life. In order to create an atmosphere where individual expression and social interchange are respected, please observe the following guidelines: (1) address each other with respect; (2) contribute to discussions often, without dominating them; (3) stay focused on the topic being discussed. Side-chatter is distracting and wasted energy that could be better shared with the class. Disruptive behavior in the classroom is not acceptable.

**Academic Dishonesty**
Academic dishonesty will NOT be tolerated in this or any other UWG course. It will result in failure on assignment(s) as well as possible disciplinary sanction(s) as stipulated by university rules. See the link above.

**Equal Opportunity Statement**
No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age, or disability, be excluded from employment or participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by The University of West Georgia.

**Affirmative Action Statement**
The University of West Georgia adheres to affirmative action policies to promote diversity and equal opportunity for all faculty and students.

**Contacting You**
You are expected to have access to your westga.edu account for all communication regarding the course. While you may find myself or other students through D2L-CourseDen, **I will reply to your regular westga account, not D2L.**

**Contacting Me**
If you have questions, don’t hesitate to ask them in class. Chances are other students will have the same question or concern. With a class of this size, it’s best if you ask your peers before e-mailing questions about assignments. **If you need to contact me, do not use D2L. E-mail me from your westga account at crenaud@westga.edu.**
BUYING TIPS FOR REQUIRED MATERIALS

Class 10 SD card – minimum 16GB (about $20). These go in the cameras to capture your footage.

USB Hard Drive
Portable storage for your editing and backing up your work. Can be labeled for Mac or PC.

These cost around $60-$99

You can find these at Walmart, Target, BestBuy, NewEgg.com or Amazon.com

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

The SD card and USB Hard Drive have separate uses.

The SD card is erasable media, used temporarily for recording purposes only, inside the camera. It is not meant for editing or storing finished work - though you may find it useful for quick transfers of small files.

When you have shot your footage you will transfer the contents of the card to the USB hard drive for editing and longer term storage. You will need this to store and edit your work on. This will ultimately give you the most flexibility (to work from any computer) and will give you a place to store materials for your portfolio. As a student in production classes this is a basic expectation and is an investment in your portfolio and your future. I will help you to make this drive readable by either Mac or PC.

Using the Trash to recover space: The “Trash” folder is simply a waiting area for files you wish to be deleted. It is a folder like any other folder. Files moved to the Trash will usually not be deleted until the Trash is emptied on the computer the drive or card is connected to. Cards are usually erased by formatting them in the camera.

Treat this drive carefully. Be sure to eject the drive from the desktop before physically disconnecting it. Store it in a padded case or it’s original box. UNPLUG ALL THE CORDS FOR STORAGE AND TRANSPORT.

Sooner or later all hard drives will fail. You should back-up important work to another hard drive or personal computer.

BE CAUTIOUS!

MISSING FILES/BROKEN DRIVES ARE NOT EXCUSES FOR NOT TURNING IN WORK.

You cannot edit if you cannot hear. Editing rooms have the potential to get noisy, so you need to have a set of headphones - both to hear and to keep the room as quiet as possible.

Like a hard-drive, a decent set of headphones is a worthwhile investment in your production career, but to start with, any headphones with the standard 1/8” mini plug will do, such as your iPhone or Android headphones.

You can begin with any headphones you already own.