

Documentary Production Practic

COMM-4425

Fall 2020 Section 01 3 Credits 08/12/2020 to 12/05/2020 Modified 09/01/2020

Description

Part film-production workshop and part study in film-history and aesthetics â this skills-based class explores through action the methods, strategies, tools, and processes of non-fiction film communication.

Requisites

Prerequisites:

ENGL 1102 Minimum Grade: C and COMM 1154 Minimum Grade: C and COMM 3353 Minimum Grade: C and (COMM 4405 or COMM 4406 or COMM 4407)

Corequisites:

Contact Information

Instructor: Christopher Renaud

Email: crenaud@westga.edu

Office: Virtual and HUM 143

Email is preferred.

Please make an email appointment for a virtual visit.

GoogleVoice for emergencies only: 470-729-1990.

Office Hours

ONLINE: By request, between 10 AM - 6 PM, with 24 hours notice

Please email to set-up an online office hours appointment (call or video chat), and suggest a time that works best for you (ideally, between 10 AM and 6 PM, with at least 24 hours advance notice).

Audio call or video chat are both available; I can GoogleMeet, GoogleVoice, Zoom, FaceTime or Skype. Please indicate your preference in your email.

Also, please outline or give a head-up of what you'd like to discuss. The more information I have before hand, the more effective our meeting will be.

Meeting Times

Our scheduled face-to-face time is Mon* or Wed* from 2 PM-3:15 in Anthropology G15.

PLEASE NOTE: We will be meeting ONLINE for the first few weeks of the semester, predictably THROUGH THE WEEK AFTER LABOR DAY. I will provide at least one-week's (two if possible) notice when face-to-face meetings will begin.

* ASSIGNED MEETING DAYS: To maintain USG and UWG's COVID-19 safety guidelines students will meet exclusively on either Monday or Wednesday as assigned by the instructor. Masks and social distancing will be required in accordance with USG/UWG's

current guidance.

Students will be notified by email and classlists posted on CourseDen in advance of our first face-to-face session. You will have the opportunity to request re-assignment of days if needed. I will accommodate these requests to the degree that I can strictly maintain no more than 10 students per meeting, per USG COVID safety guidelines.

Students may not and should not attend the opposing day's session for any reason. Once made, these day assignments will be definitive and permanent for the semester.

You are responsible for your own attendance, participation, engagement and for keeping up with our material. I will note online/face-to-face attendance solely for the purpose of required administrative reporting.

If you need help determining what you may have missed, please refer to CourseDen or contact a classmate - then check with me.

Materials

Documentary Film: A Very Short Introduction

Author: Aufderheide, Patricia

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Edition: Paperback, 176 pages

ISBN: 978-0195182705

Availability: <https://www.amazon.com/Documentary-Film-Very-Short-Introduction/dp/0195182707>

Price: Kindle: \$7.99 Paperback: \$10.75 Audiobook: \$11.99

This entertaining but serious book is compact and on-point - covering the history and ethics of documentary film-making.

USB 3.0 Hard Drive (1TB or larger)

This is a capstone class, and documentaries can have high shooting ratios. Consider seriously whether its time to buy an additional hard drive.

If you have somehow managed to avoid buying a hard drive, now is the time.

As a media professional in training, you should be responsible for managing your own data files and storage. This is a reasonable expectation for a **one-time purchase** that will serve you throughout your degree program. You should not want to entrust your valuable files to anyone else.

A 1TB or larger USB 3.0 hard drive can be found at all box retailers (Target, WalMart, Amazon, etc.) for around \$80. Generally, paying \$20 more will double the amount of storage. I recommend at least 2TB if you can afford it.

Thumb drives and SD cards are not generally recommended - as they are expensive for the amount of storage you get, are easily lost and you will end up filling it quickly anyhow. Buy a real hard drive.

Treat your drive kindly. It contains a delicate ceramic and metal parts. Gently unplug the cables when not using. Lay it flat, how gravity wants it to be.

Price: \$85

Headphones for editing and mixing

An audience will instantly define your work as amateur or professional based largely on what they hear. Your ability to hear what you are actually creating depends on having decent headphones to hear clearly with (or larger speakers if you're working from home).

Some kind of headphones will be required for doing intensive audio editing and mixing.

When we are on campus, you can check out headphones from checkout for a 48 hour period.

OPTIONAL: If you're serious about audio and production, perhaps it's time to ante up for a decent pair you can call your own and rely upon. You want them to be comfortable for long periods, have neutral sound coloration, noise cancellation is a bonus. Avoid flash, go for performance.

We can vouch for these clean, neutral, workhorse 'phones, the same ones we have in checkout: <https://www.amazon.com/Sony-MDR7506-Professional-Diaphragm-Headphone/dp/B000AJIF4E>

Price: Free to \$99

Adobe Creative Cloud (including Audition and Premiere)

ON CAMPUS: You will have on-campus, swipe-card access to our Anth G15 classroom, which doubles as a computer lab when class is not in session. Scheduled classes take priority for use of the room; you should **not** try to nor expect to use the lab when a class is in session.

Anth G16 and G18 editing suites are available at half-capacity (max two users, no guests).

Generally expect that your work should load up reliably when using the same computer that created it. See below.

HOME INSTALLATION: Our campus has arranged with Adobe to allow full, free use of Creative Cloud on your home computer for school work only and during this semester only. An additional handout will give more detailed information.

Availability: G15, G16, G18, Library and Home License

Price: Free

Outcomes

1. Students will **understand** the basic history of non-fiction filmmaking.
2. Students will **analyze** and understand the strategies, techniques and rhetorical functions of non-fiction film genres. They will Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information (ACEJMC SLO 2)
3. Students will **understand** effective research skills and sources for non-fiction filmmaking.
4. Students will **practice** the production strategies and editing techniques of non-fiction film genres. They will **apply tools and technologies** appropriate for the communications professions in which they work. (ACEJMC SLO 12)
5. Students will **practice** and **develop** communicative skills appropriate for a production workshop setting. They will **value** and **practice** clear communicative skills both in written analysis and in giving and receiving feedback in a workshop setting.
6. Students will **develop** their understanding of the medium's function as a means of communication and creative expression. They will **think critically, creatively and independently.** (ACEJMC SLO 7)

Evaluation

Criteria

BUILDING YOUR GRADE:

We work on a simple **100 point system**. You build your grade starting from **0 points**. 100 points = 100 percent = A

Most assignments are worth **10 points** - equivalent to a full letter grade for the semester. **Missing assignments** immediately **limit your final grade**.

In evaluating your work, especially your creative audio production work, I'm looking both for **quality, creativity and polish**, but also to discern clear evidence of **engagement** with the material, as well as **good faith** attempt to understand and incorporate concepts from the material back - not to mention **feedback** from myself and others - into your work.

There will be a strong emphasis on balancing **creativity, organization** and **following instructions** per the industrial model.

CREATIVITY, APPLICATION, QUALITY:

My assignments generally have a **few, small constraints** to stimulate and foster your **creativity** - but all will include **specific delivery parameters** you will need to follow **exactly**. These allow for 1) **collaboration** through clearly organized systems (that's how its done in the industry) and 2) so that I can **easily find your work** to grade it.

DELIVERY OF ASSIGNMENTS:

In the professional world, you are asked to deliver files within **very specific parameters** of file type and naming. You will set up a GoogleDrive portfolio early in the semester, for which you will provide Share access to me. The naming and organization of assignment files and folders will follow a pattern and is crucial to me finding your work.

The naming pattern is generally: 4405 FA20 *PROJECT#*Your Name ASSIGNMENT NAME - with each CAPITALIZATION and SPACE important.

Misdelivered work, by definition, cannot be graded. If you follow my system, I shouldn't have to (nor will I) search exhaustively to find work that should have been delivered per instructions. You are responsible for , and will be evaluated on, the organization of your GoogleDrive portfolio where you turn in your creative work.

FEEDBACK, DISCUSSION & RESPECTING OTHERS:

Respectful and honest dialogue is expected. This includes the workshop discussion of each person's creative work, which is dear to them, but which you may see more objectively. You have a collaborative hand in creating the safe space for that dialogue. Offer the sort of feedback you yourself would like to receive - and consider giving feedback as important a **professional and personal skill** as any other - and one that is likely to determine your success working in a collaborative industry.

This course - and by extension, your participation - intends to **honor and reflect the diversity of persons and viewpoints** we contribute, while often acknowledging those times when the products of our cultural history have not. The goal is safe, open dialogue, including real talk for an assumed audience of mature adults.

ATTENDANCE:

You are not graded on attendance, but your **participation** is expected and evaluated - both in the quality of your work and responses, and the completion of assigned exercises, viewings, quizzes, etc.

In my experience, there is a direct correspondence between the amount of time and energy (participation) given to the course, and your final grade. Please calibrate your expectations accordingly.

I look kindly upon improvement over the course of the semester, as well as perseverance and communication.

Breakdown

Grade	Range	Notes
A	90 - 100	.5 point grace given
B	80 - 90	.5 point grace given
C	70 - 80	.5 point grace given.
D	60 - 70	.5 point grace given.
F	59.5 and below	.5 point grace given.

Assignments

- While we are online, my intention is to signal to you what's coming before any actual assignment is made by blocking it in under **CourseDen Announcements** first.
- Assignment **handouts** and specific **instructions**, once made, will appear as **hyperlinks**.
- If there is **no hyperlink**, I have not posted that part of the assignment/handout yet. You'll see (forthcoming) to mark the place where the hyperlink will appear.
- Rest assured that these will be coming. You don't need to email me to ask if you've missed something because there is no hyperlink.
- If an assignment was signalled or promised but not hyperlinked in these Announcements, I came up with a better plan! - or had my own circumstances to deal with - and the assignment was dropped or shifted forward to the next week.
- No hyperlink, no assignment.
- You can use the **weekly groupings** of assignments under CONTENT as a quick checklist of your progress.

- You will **always have sufficient time** to complete the assignment (as determined by the instructor). If adjustments are required, they will always be in your favor.

Our assignments are categorized below.

Production Exercises (60 points/percent)

This course features **four major production exercises**, that build upon each other, to teach you the fundamentals of good sound recording and mixing, and the creative manipulation of sound for narrative and emotional impact. These will form the majority of your work and your grade this semester.

One of these will be a **final creative project**, due at the end of the semester, in conjunction with a short **self-evaluation essay**.

Your finished production work this semester will be eligible for our public, end of semester **Student Showcase**, in which the best production work of the semester will be screened and awards given.

Thus, you are encouraged to finish your assignments to the degree that they can stand on their own as **independent work**, with a title and your name credited as author.

Written Responses (30 percent)

These are often a set of questions, attached to a particular film viewing, designed to guide you towards important concepts and ideas to consider. They will be provided as a "blank" Word document with the questions inside. Use Word's text and color formatting controls to make your answers visually distinct from the questions. The more on-point and expansive your answer, the more credit will be given.

There will be two of these over the course of the semester at **10 points each**.

Extra Credit, if it is given this semester, will come in the form of an additional viewing questions assignment for 10 points.

Self Evaluation Essay (10 points)

This **short essay** summarizing what you learned this semester and how you implemented it creatively will be due along with your final creative project.

Schedule

Our schedule is still in progress, but you can expect and should plan for **some combination of viewing/listening, reading and/or production work every week**.

Our assignments will be found in our **Home/Announcements page** on CourseDen.

- Please check **CourseDen Announcements** for our weekly assignments.
- There will be **one announcement per week**, edited with updates as needed.
- I will reset the announcement notification if major updates are made.
- Assignments will also be **organized by week** under CONTENT.
- You will always have **plenty of time** to complete your assignments (5-7 days).
- You are expected to **keep up with due dates and deadlines**.
- To allow for a broad range of contingencies, know that our assignment dropboxes will **remain open** until near the end of the semester. My assignments are designed, in sequence, to expand your understanding and skills. It's better to complete a late assignment than not do it all.

* Course Policies and Resources

COVID SAFETY: Students are expected to wear masks and socially distance according to [current USG/UWG policy](https://www.westga.edu/coronavirus-info/return-to-campus/student-life.php).
(<https://www.westga.edu/coronavirus-info/return-to-campus/student-life.php>)

CONDUCT: Our classroom, whether in person or online, will be a safe space for a diversity of persons, identities and thoughts. Students are expected to respect differences, find common ground and be accepting of each other. Comments of intolerance,

including prejudice or bullying, will not be tolerated, nor will any other form of harassment. See the student code of conduct for more information.

PLAGIARISM: It is assumed that all work offered by you will be created by you, and only you. Proper credit should be given to both ideas that come from other people, as well as direct quotations of their words. An informal reference to a speaker/author is better than no citation at all. Work that has been plagiarized in any way will be given a zero and reported to the university for further action. In extreme cases an immediate failing grade for the class will be given.

MATURE CONTENT: As a college-level course in an environment designed to ask you to examine and articulate your own views, some of this material may be personally challenging. Film examples used in this course are meant to represent the breadth and diversity of cinematic expression and adult human experience. I am sensitive to these concerns, while maintaining that examination of sometimes challenging material is important to our study of culture. If you anticipate having an issue with this at any point in this semester, please speak with me privately and we will discuss alternative arrangements.

MY ROLE

I am fundamentally - as an instructor and human being - committed to helping you – to understand concepts, principles, software, technology and creative techniques.

I am also committed to guiding and pushing you towards make your very best work, and to help you articulate your thoughts and ideas to others in person and through your work.

In doing that...

- 1) to assign exercises and projects that will teach you both **technical skills** and their **creative application**
- 2) to provide **interesting examples** and **context**
- 3) to facilitate **stimulating discussions** and **fair assessments** of your creative work
- 4) to be **adaptive, responsive** to your needs – and available during reasonable hours.

The one thing I can't do is **read your mind**.

If I can modify my instruction in any way to help you learn better, please do not hesitate to let me know.

I expect this to be an engaging, perception-altering and productive semester ~

I'm looking forward to working with you.

College/School Policies

Mass Communications Degree Program Learning Outcomes

ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies: The Bachelor of Science degree program in Mass Communications is accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC), and the Department is committed to preparing students with the requisite knowledge and skills to be successful in the media and communications industries after graduation. The Department has adopted as its Mass Communications degree program learning outcomes ACEJMC's 12 professional values and competencies, known as 6 X 6 MASS COMM SUCCESS, that all graduates of an ACEJMC accredited program should be aware of and able to demonstrate as scholars and professionals in the discipline. For the detailed list of the ACEJMC professional values and competencies, see the [UWG Undergraduate Catalog \(https://catalog.westga.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=11&poid=1991\)](http://catalog.westga.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=11&poid=1991) or [ACEJMC - Standard 2. Curriculum and Instruction \(http://www.acejmc.org/policies-process/nine-standards/\)](http://www.acejmc.org/policies-process/nine-standards/).

6 X 6 MASS COMM SUCCESS

[6 X 6 MASS COMM SUCCESS
\(https://www.westga.edu/academics/coss/mass-communications/assets/pics/6x6_MC_Success_Graphic.JPG\)](https://www.westga.edu/academics/coss/mass-communications/assets/pics/6x6_MC_Success_Graphic.JPG)

(click to view image)

1. Freedom of Speech & Press
2. History
3. Diversity
4. Global Impact
5. Theory
6. Ethics
7. Think Critically & Creatively
8. Research & Evaluate
9. Write Effectively
10. Self-Evaluate
11. Apply Numbers & Statistics
12. Apply Technology

Film & Video Production Degree Program Learning Outcomes

Overview: The Bachelor of Science degree program in Film & Video Production is designed to train graduates in the field who are agile, adaptable, and able to employ their skills in an array of roles from entrepreneurial content producers to on-set film work, both above and below the line. It will provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the machinery at work behind media production and distribution, along with a set of tangible, marketable, and transferable skills for an array of positions within the infrastructure of film and content production. The FVP degree program learning outcomes include:

1. Demonstrate critical thinking, aesthetic awareness and technical proficiency in the production and assessment of audio-visual film work.
2. Understand all phases and roles of film production in order to help formulate career goals.
3. Understand the various potentials of film as both a commodity for a targeted audience, and an act of authorship and creative expression.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of cinema in a global society.

Institutional Policies

Academic Support

Accessibility Services: Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given. For more information, please contact [Accessibility Services \(https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/accessibility-services.php\)](https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/accessibility-services.php).

Center for Academic Success: The [Center for Academic Success \(http://www.westga.edu/cas/\)](http://www.westga.edu/cas/) provides services, programs, and opportunities to help all undergraduate students succeed academically. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6280 or cas@westga.edu.

University Writing Center: The [University Writing Center \(https://www.westga.edu/writing/\)](https://www.westga.edu/writing/) assists students with all areas of the writing process. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6513 or writing@westga.edu.

Online Courses

UWG takes students' privacy concerns seriously: technology-enhanced and partially and fully online courses use sites and entities beyond UWG and students have the right to know the privacy policies of these entities. For more information on privacy and accessibility for the most commonly used sites, as well as technology requirements visit the [UWG Online](#)

[\(https://uwgonline.westga.edu/\)](https://uwgonline.westga.edu/) site.

Students enrolled in online courses can find answers to many of their questions in the [Online/Off-Campus Student Guide \(http://uwgonline.westga.edu/online-student-guide.php\)](http://uwgonline.westga.edu/online-student-guide.php).

If a student is experiencing distress and needs help, please see the resources available at the [UWG Cares \(http://www.westga.edu/UWGCares/\)](http://www.westga.edu/UWGCares/) site. [Online counseling \(https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/index.php\)](https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/index.php) is also available for online students.

Honor Code

At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing.

The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student's conduct record at UWG.

Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student's account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions. For more information on the University of West Georgia Honor Code, please see the [Student Handbook \(https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpsa/handbook-code-of-conduct.php\)](https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpsa/handbook-code-of-conduct.php).

UWG Email Policy

University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG e-mail account. The University considers this account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. The purpose of the official use of the student e-mail account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the student's responsibility to check his or her email.

Credit Hour Policy

The University of West Georgia grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of one hour (50 minutes) of in-class or other direct faculty instruction AND two hours of student work outside of class per week for approximately fifteen weeks. For each course, the course syllabus will document the amount of in-class (or other direct faculty instruction) and out-of-class work required to earn the credit hour(s) assigned to the course. Out-of-class work will include all forms of credit-bearing activity, including but not limited to assignments, readings, observations, and musical practice. Where available, the university grants academic credit for students who verify via competency-based testing, that they have accomplished the learning outcomes associated with a course that would normally meet the requirements outlined above (e.g. AP credit, CLEP, and departmental exams).

HB 280 (Campus Carry)

UWG follows University System of Georgia (USG) guidance: http://www.usg.edu/hb280/additional_information# (http://www.usg.edu/hb280/additional_information)

You may also visit our website for help with USG Guidance: <https://www.westga.edu/police/campus-carry.php> (<https://www.westga.edu/police/campus-carry.php>)

Mental Health Support

If you or another student find that you are experiencing a mental health issue, free confidential services are available on campus in the [Counseling Center](#). Students who have experienced sexual or domestic violence may receive confidential medical and advocacy services with the Patient Advocates in [Health Services](#). To report a concern anonymously, please go to [UWGcares](#).

ELL Resources

If you are a student having difficulty with English language skills, and / or U.S. culture is not your home culture, specialized resources are available to help you succeed. Please visit the [E.L.L. resource page](#) for more information.

COVID-19

Proctored Exams/Online Instruction: Students should be aware and plan ahead for the possibility of having to complete all courses and/or exams online or in a proctored environment. This means talking with your instructors about what minimum technical requirements (software and hardware) will be required should your class move online or a student's personal needs dictate. This also includes making plans for internet access at whatever location participation may occur.

Virtual or in-person proctored exams, if your instructor should require them, may result in an additional cost to the student. Please discuss these details with your instructor or see the information provided here.

Face Coverings: Effective July 15, 2020, University System of Georgia institutions, including the University of West Georgia, will require all faculty, staff, students, and visitors to wear an appropriate face covering while inside campus facilities/buildings where six feet social distancing may not always be possible. Face covering use will be in addition to and is not a substitute for social distancing.

Face coverings are not required in campus outdoor settings where social distancing requirements are met. Anyone not using a face covering when required will be asked to wear one or must leave the area.

Reasonable accommodations may be made for those who are unable to wear a face covering for documented health reasons.

Student FAQs: For more information about UWG COVID-19 guidance for students visit the [Student FAQ webpage](#) (<https://www.westga.edu/student-services/health/coronavirus-info/return-to-campus/students-faq-return-to-campus.php>).

Additional Items

BIG PICTURE STUFF

This will be an intensive hands-on workshop. Expect and plan for a combination of reading, listening, writing or computer-based creative work every week.

Learning is knowing the history. Whether you are prepared to acknowledge it or not, your work fits into a history of other similar work. Knowing something about this history makes you more informed about your place in it, and provides direction towards new terrain.

Learning is doing. A significant amount of learning happens *outside of class*, as you work on assignments and exercises.

Learning new software and tools requires significant time. Factor this into your schedule to complete assignments. Doing assignments means applying concepts (both technical and abstract) to your own work and process, but also **empowering yourself to experiment, find solutions and take risks.**

This class values both skills development and creative exploration. To the greatest degree possible, you will be evaluated **objectively** in this class. I will provide rubrics as often as possible. Yet, the remaining **subjective** portion of a grade tends to look favorably towards those projects that wander into unfamiliar territory to explore the possibilities of the medium.

Success here depends on your own drive and engagement, the time you devote, and an interest in discovery. We want to talk about your discoveries in class.

Discussion. Speaking **precisely, genuinely and frankly** about what you or others have created, or what you have experienced through others' work, is crucial to this and **every** production course. We'll have daily discussion that relies upon your input. Your silence will be

loud. Risk speaking, especially when you feel unsure. If you are a shy person, I'll endeavor to provide a safe environment for you to speak.

At this level, your classes are developing material for your **portfolio** and for **internship** opportunities. The work you make in this class should be geared for **public viewing**, ie. outside of this class. We will have an end-of-semester **public screening** of your work from this class.