Rutgers Center for Digital Filmmaking 211

Courses Offered

Please note that all of courses indicate, “open to 211 majors only”, if you wish to request an SP# please contact Karina Daves at karina.daves@rutgers.edu

Video Editing, 1 credit [07:211:100]

In this course students will learn the fundamentals of video editing with Final Cut Pro 7, Motion 4 and Soundtrack Pro for both documentary and fiction narratives. Through hands on practice, students will learn how to shape existing footage into thoughtful and creative pieces. Students will learn a professional work-flow that will guide them through the many stages of video editing, which include capturing and organizing footage, the editing of film clips into a comprehensive whole, and the process of exporting media for online viewing and DVD creation. Students will develop not only the technical skills required for video editing but also a theoretical framework that encourages them to explore the ways in which story and meaning can be generated through the use of a visual language. This course cannot be taken alone. It must be accompanied by another film course at the same time or student has to provide film course they have taken in the past to qualify for this course.

Intro to Fiction or Digital Storytelling, 3 credits [07:211:192 or 01:351:309]

This course provides students with the opportunity to put basic film theory, language, grammar and dramatic structure for the screen into action to produce original 4-8 minute digital stories. The first part of the semester focuses on narrative structure for the screen as well as film grammar and language used to create film narratives. Specific attention is paid to how frame, lighting, composition, placement of dialogue and sound along with editing choices affect and drive digital narratives. We will be editing our digital stories with Final Cut Pro editing software. Students not familiar with the software should consider registering for one of the Video Editing Labs that are offered to all students through the Mason Gross School of the Arts.

Intro to Doc or Documentary Filmmaking for Writers, 3 credits [07:211:191 or 01:351:314]

Documentaries are the creative selecting, organizing and presenting of factual material. In this class, we will explore how recorded material [images, sounds and dialogue] from the real world and real people become the ‘words’ we use to shape a documentary story. Students will learn how to conduct an interview, a fundamental component to documentary filmmaking. This process allows the storyteller behind the camera to establish a relationship with a real life character. Students will be trained to be good listeners for it is with the recorded words of a real life character that students compose their stories. We will be editing our digital stories with Final Cut Pro editing software. Students not familiar with the software should consider registering for one of the Video Editing Labs that are offered to all students through the Mason Gross School of the Arts.

Cinematography, 3 credits [07:211:120]

In this class, students will work with high definition and digital still cameras to learn composition, lighting, lenses, filters, and electricity. Students will study the language of film with a focus on visual storytelling. Students will become proficient in technical aspects of shooting digital cinema, both for documentary and narrative scenarios. Students will also expand their knowledge of art history and cinema history. In the final classes students will bring these techniques together by shooting, editing and color correcting a Narrative Scene.

Script to Screen, 3 credits [07:211:205]

This course allows students to use video technology to enhance the development of short 3 act/5 scene 18-22 page screenplays. Throughout the semester, this unique screenwriting process will allow students to create “video drafts” of three select scenes providing storytellers with the opportunity to explore and imagine ways that visual composition, frame, lighting and spoken subtext drives narrative above and beyond the word on the page. This interaction between writing and production as part of the screenwriting process allows the screenwriter to explore how contextual and visual language run parallel with spoken word. By using the video camera as a creative writing tool that focuses on visual storytelling the screenwriter’s written dialogue becomes more efficient, deliberate and effective. Students will be expected to present 5 written scenes in class for peer review. Students will also be expected to present 3 ‘video drafts’ of scenes in class for peer review.

Digital Field Production, 3 credits [07:211:212]

In this dynamic course the emphasis is placed on group field production and the individual responsibilities of a producer, director, cinematographer, lighting and sound technician in all stages of digital film production. The course will consist of lectures, reading assignments, in-class demonstrations, workshops, and field assignments. Students will learn how to prepare for shoots collaboratively and how to produce assignments of high quality with limited resources.
Advanced Cinematography, 3 credits [07:211:220]
Advanced Cinematography is an intensive hands-on production experience, intended to serve as a venue through which students will expand upon the skills they have acquired through Cinematography. In this course, students will learn the ins and outs of advanced HD cinematography and explore the various aspects of digital acquisition, compositing and projecting. Students will think critically and creatively about how to apply shooting techniques in diverse fields such as commercials, music videos and narrative/documentary film.

Animation 2D, 3 credits [07:211:230]
This course introduces the basic terminology, concepts and principles of 2D animation intended to illustrate or reinforce narrative concepts. This course covers three distinct techniques within the 2D animation: animating for the web, stop motion animation, and 2D vector-based animation. While focusing on technical aspects of 2D animation, this course takes into consideration the historical perspective, current technologies, and applications of animation within documentary and fiction film.

Directing for the Screen, 3 credits [07:211:291]
The intent of the course is to teach the film director’s craft and give the student hands-on experience as a director with the emphasis on the scene as building block of the narrative. To do this, instructor will provide scenes from published plays and published screenplays that have not been made into films. This one semester course will consist of classroom instruction and discussion about what a director and actor look for in a script and how they interpret that script to bring it to life. Students will learn how a director develops a text based on meaning and theme and how a director works with actors from the standpoint of motivations and beats of action. These thematic choices then inform all of the subsequent choices a director makes including blocking, composition, lighting, costume, props – all the way through editing both picture and sound. Given the premise that a film director is the filter through which all the other creative contributions pass, students will learn the fundamentals of acting, videography, lighting, sound and editing. Students are expected to invest several hours a week outside of class as they will produce, direct and edit their own material and assist on their classmates’ productions.

Special Topics in Digital Filmmaking, 3 credits [07:211:295]
This class will explore in depth a unique topic in filmmaking. Topic determined by the division

Advanced Documentary Filmmaking, 3 credits [07:211302]
In this intensive course, students will produce their own short nonfiction films. Students who have taken Advanced Cinematography and who demonstrate both, proficiency with camera and professional equipment protocol will be allowed to check out the SonyFS100. Students are trained to think creatively, professionally and are challenged to rethink preconceived notions of documentary practices. Students will have the opportunity to assume the role as film director, camera operator, sound recordist and editor.

Webseries Filmmaking, 3 credits [07:211:306]
This course gives students hands-on experience as producer, writer, director and editor of their own web-based serialized narrative. Students will learn how to conceptualize and structure a web series. The students will write two screenplays (or documentary treatments): the Pilot and Episode #1. The students will gain theoretical and practical experience in producing, directing and editing as they work to complete these episodes through preproduction, production and post-production. By the end of the semester students will complete two episodes and gain confidence in multi-media expression by creating their own internet-based narrative series that can be viewed by the public.

Animation 3D, 3 credits [07:211:330]
This course introduces the basic terminology, concepts, and principles of 3D animation. It is designed to remove the complexities of modern digital 3D development tools by examining each segment individually and reinforcing it with in class workshops and weekly assignments. This course takes into consideration the historical evolution of 3D animation, the current technologies, and applications of animation within documentary and fiction film.

Advanced Directing: Short Film, 3 credits [07:211:391]
The advanced course is designed to enable students to produce from conception to completion an 8-15 minute short fiction film. This course will give students hands-on experience as a director as they work to finish a short film through pre-production, production, and post-production. The first part of the semester will focus on the directors’ work of preparing the script for production. Then, before production starts, students will complete video drafts of scenes from their screenplay. Students will shoot their short film, and then present numerous versions in class. By the end of the semester students will have produced, directing and edited their own 8-15 minute short film that can be sent out to film festivals.

Directing the Doc, 3 credits [07:211:392]
This intensive course has been designed to train young filmmakers to think about non-fiction filmmaking from a director’s perspective. The goal is to capture beautiful, meaningful footage despite the chaos that may surround a typical documentary production. This course will teach students what documentary filmmakers look for when developing documentaries; this includes an understanding of the dynamics of light and how it can be manipulated and controlled within a vérité setting; how editing shapes narrative structure; how to record quality audio in the field, and above all, the relationship between the documentary director and the people who are featured in the film.