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Fall 2015

FTA 3460

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FTA 3460 INTRO TO DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTION

Spring 2015, M-W: 3:30-4:45 PM, PAC 319

INSTRUCTOR: Laszlo Fulop OFFICE: PAC 327 Phone: 504-280-6809

OFFICE HOURS: M-W: 2:00 – 3:30 PM, T: 2:00 – 5:00 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a production-oriented class that will introduce students to the medium of documentary film. By the end of the semester, each student will make a five-minute short documentary film while learning about all the major aspects of the medium, from the idea and development to production and postproduction. We are also going to watch and analyze clips from various documentary films to understand the range of possibilities in style and technique in the contemporary documentary film.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to

- produce (write, shoot, and edit) a short documentary film
- critically analyze and evaluate any documentary film
- identify a few major filmmakers and trends of the history of documentary film

READING AND VIEWING MATERIAL will be provided by the instructor or by the students.

RECOMMENDED INTERNET SITES:

<http://www.documentary.org/>

<http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/>

<http://topdocumentaryfilms.com>

STUDENT CONDUCT

- **No computer use or cell phone use in the classroom. That means LAPTOPS must be turned off. Take notes in a notebook.**
- **Cell phones must be turned off or silenced with vibrate off and put away before class begins.**
- **No eating in class.**
- Students are expected to bring a spirit of respect and enthusiasm to the class discussions. Students do not need to agree with everything that is expressed, but their responses must be courteous.

ATTENDANCE

This is a highly interactive class, therefore **attendance is mandatory!** At the same time, we all know that emergencies do happen. Because of this, no points will be taken off for the first two absences from class. Please use these two absences very carefully, when you feel sick or for other unexpected emergencies.

The third and each following absence will reduce the student's final grade by 3 points each.

After a total of 15 absences the student will get a final grade of F for the class.

Missing a class when a project is due will automatically reduce the student's grade by 3 points even if this was the first class the student missed in the semester. Make sure you come to these classes, even if your project is not ready, to watch your peers' work and give feedback!

Being late: A five-minute grace period is allowed before a student is marked late. Three “late”-s make up one absence. After thirty minutes, a late student is considered absent. Leaving early is considered a “late,” leaving more than 30-minutes early will be considered a missed class.

DEADLINES

In this class students learn professional discipline, as well. Being a successful professional revolves around meeting deadlines. Assignments, exercises, and presentations must be turned in/held on the date due. **Late assignments will be penalized 15 points for the first three days (starting from the date and time when it was due) and 3 points for each additional day they are late.** E.g. If you bring in your project after class, not by the time class starts (when it is due) you will lose the 15 points. No assignment will be accepted after being more than one week late. This is also a fairness issue, since students who are doing the work on time deserve to get better grades than those who are late (i.e. unfairly have more time to finish their projects).

PROJECTS:

For each of these following items a handout will explain the details and the grading.

1. **Exercises:** Two short (1-2 minutes) production exercise that will familiarize students with the equipment and provide the “warm-up” for the final project.
2. **Class Presentation:** Each student will present a documentary film to the class.
3. **Film Festival Paper:** You are required to attend the [New Orleans Film Festival](#) (October 14-22) for at least one documentary film (or group of short documentary films screening), or panel discussion on documentary, as part of your grade. You will submit a min. 500-word paper discussing a documentary film (or several short films) or panel(s).
4. **Final Project:** Each student will produce, shoot, and edit a 3-to-5-minute documentary.

EQUIPMENT CHECKOUT AND USE:

You are encouraged to use your own equipment (camera and editing system) for all projects. Editing must be done with Avid, FCP, Adobe Premiere, or other professional software. The use of consumer-quality editing system (like iMovie) is not allowed, since this software doesn't allow you to manipulate picture and sound separately. Films edited with this type of basic consumer-level software will not be accepted.

You must use your own hard drive (7200 rpm USB 3 external hard drive) for editing and archiving your footage. The computers in the PAC lab are old, as is the ISIS system, therefore they are unreliable. We are changing the whole system at the end of the semester. At 9 AM THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, AVID/ISIS WILL BE SHOT DOWN FOR UPGRADE AND NOT AVAILABLE ANY MORE THIS SEMESTER! ALL PROJECTS AND FOOTAGE LEFT ON THE SYSTEM WILL BE LOST!

If you use UNO equipment and editing facilities, by taking this class you are accepting responsibility for all equipment you will be using in the course. The equipment room guidelines are available in the Equipment Checkout Room and on the Department's websites (Sharepoint).

Any student who damages or loses gear will be responsible for the repair or replacement of that equipment. The student's account in the Equipment Room will be locked to further equipment checkout until the equipment is repaired, replaced, or paid for. The student will have a hold placed on their UNO registration account until the equipment is repaired, replaced, or paid for. In addition, **equipment returned late will trigger a reduction of 5 points off your final course grade (or every team member's grade) per each occurrence.**

Avid/ISIS:

Username: 3460

Password: promank2

Workflow:

If you are **shooting with your own camera, but you want to edit here at UNO**, you must have a workflow checkout with the Media Transfer center and the Avid/ISIS system. In order to get permission to do your project this way, you must email me this message:

I have shot test footage with my own camera, transferred is to ISIS, and edited a test sequence with Avid and everything works fine.

Electronically Signed: Your Name

Make sure you have permission to shoot at any location you are using. If you choose to shoot your project inside a campus building always ask the building manager prior to shooting. The building supervisor for the PAC building is David Hoover (FTA main office, PAC 307) or Missy Bowen, PAC 331.

GRADES: All projects and exams are 100 points. Your final grade will be calculated using the following formula:

Exercise 1 (The Place):	15 %
Exercise 2 (The Interview)	20%
Class Presentation:	10 %
NO Film Festival paper	10%
Final project:	<u>45 %</u>
	100 %

Your points for the classes you missed will be deducted from these final points (see attendance).

Scale: A 91-100; B 81-90; C 71-80; D 56-70; F 0-55

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. **Submitting any material that is not written by you (e.g. partially or fully copied text or text fragment from the work of other students or the Internet) will draw a 0 for that assignment. You will be reported to the University and you may face much stricter penalties, as well.** Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for further information. The Code is available online at <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu>

Accommodations: It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability

to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. For more information, please go to <http://www.ods.uno.edu>

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1 Syllabus. Intro to class and overview. Equipment and labs. What is a documentary?
Start Exercise 1

Week 2 Work on Exercise 1.

Week 3 Work on Exercise 1. **Class Pres 1**

Week 4 Labor Day – no Monday class. Exercise 1 is due (Wednesday, February 4).

Week 5 Start Exercise 2 **Class Pres 2**

Week 6 Work on Exercise 2. **Class Pres 3**

Week 7 Work on Exercise 2. **Class Pres 4**

Week 8 Exercise 2 is due (Wednesday, October 7). View Ex. 2.

Week 9 Start working on Final Project. NOFF starts.

Week 10. **Mandatory visit to NOFF**

Week 11 Working on Final Project. **NOFF paper is due, Wednesday, October 28.**

Week 12 Shooting the final project/consultations. **Class Pres 5**

Week 13 **Shooting must be done by this time. Footage is due (Monday, November 9.).**

Week 14 **Rough cut is due (Monday, November 16).**

Week 15 **Final Project is due (Monday, November 23). Thanksgiving Break.**

Week 16 Final adjustments to the projects. Last class.

9 AM THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, AVID/ISIS IS SHOT DOWN FOR UPGRADE AND NOT AVAILABLE ANY MORE THIS SEMESTER! ALL PROJECTS MUST BE OFF THE SYSTEM!

Exam week. **Screening during scheduled Final Exam time: 3 – 5 PM, Wednesday, December 9. Attendance is mandatory.**

This syllabus is subject to change.