

**SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY  
COMM 5305 – Film Editing**

FALL 2015  
Tues/Thurs  
2pm – 3:15pm  
BAB 303

Bret Scott, Asst. Professor  
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Regular Office Hours:  
M/W 12-1, T/Th 11-12, walk-in basis  
All others by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Video Editing is the process by which moving images and sounds are placed together in a specific order for the purpose of telling a story. The form doesn't really matter: recapping the action of a *Call Of Duty*-style first-person shooter is the same job as building a 30-second advertising trailer, editing an episode of television, or cutting a fiction or documentary feature. The raw materials remain the same: moving images and sounds.

In this class, we will explore the basic elements of video editing, types of edits, effective editing patterns, and the artistic and philosophic underpinnings of same. We'll use Apple's Final Cut Pro X as our learning platform. The dirty secret of professional editing is that the platform (Avid, Final Cut, Adobe Premiere, Etc.) is merely a tool. The art and skill of editing is in the hands and mind of the editor, and the software merely brings about what's in the imagination of the artist. Everything else is just marketing.

This is an introductory course. Advanced topics, such as compressed output, motion graphics, and compositing, are beyond the scope of this class. Individual study of these topics is encouraged, but cannot be supported in-class, given the goals of the course.

**AS THIS IS A GRADUATE-LEVEL CLASS, I WILL EXPECT:**

A consistently high level of effort

Thoughtful consideration of your project

Though this class is independent study, I expect leadership by example – if the undergrads see you working, they'll work, too.

Editing is a time-intensive activity. This class, particularly the later projects, will require hours in front of the computer well beyond class time. For this reason, the readings end at mid-semester. Lab time will be available outside of class. Plan your schedule accordingly. Lab time will be available outside of class.

## **Communication Program Program Learning Outcomes**

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The graduating student will demonstrate:

1. Competency in public presentations, including the use of presentation technology such as presentation software, video, and audio.
2. The ability to analyze communication content for argument, including identification of major elements, such as claims, warrants, data, etc.
3. Competency in appropriate discipline specific written communication.
4. The ability to apply communication theory to the analysis of communication situations appropriate to each degree specialization.
5. Competency in the application of media technology including video, audio, and internet-based technology.

## **PREREQUISITES**

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None.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

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By the end of this class, students will:

- Demonstrate a working vocabulary of editing and filmmaking terminology
- Identify and justify significant variations in editing style and strategy – explain “why” a particular edit works.
- Demonstrate beginner-level mastery of Apple’s Final Cut Pro X
- Articulate the functions of editing as a storytelling tool.
- Evaluate and critique merit and functionality of editing patterns of various kinds of visual storytelling on a case-by-case basis.

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

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- 1) Terminology / Definitions Quiz
- 2) Mid-Term Paper – “The Murch Paper”
- 3) Trailer Editing Project
- 4) Freeform Editing Project
- 5) Scene deconstruction
- 6) Full participation in class discussion / critique

**Required Textbooks for this class:**

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*Apple Pro Series: Final Cut Pro X, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*  
 Weynand, Diana; Peachpit Press 2013

*In the Blink of an Eye*  
 Murch, Walter; Silman-James Press 2001

**Materials Required:**

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None

**CLASS DATES: Assignments and Deadlines**

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*Note that these dates and the details of each class are subject to change at the instructor's discretion*

Class	Date	Topics and Assignments
1	Aug 25	Introduction. Review Syllabus, Assignments, and Deadlines. Expected outcomes. Review of jobs in the editing marketplace
	Aug 27	Screening: Selected scenes from <i>The Cutting Edge: The Magic of Movie Editing</i> (Dir. Wendy Apple, 2004).
2	Sept 1	Screening: Selected scenes from <i>The Cutting Edge: The Magic of Movie Editing</i> (Dir. Wendy Apple, 2004). Reading: Murch 1-16
3	Sept 3	Definition of working terms. Examples – documentary, fiction, trailer. Reading: <i>Apple Pro Series: Final Cut Pro X</i> , Lesson 1; Murch 17-28
4	Sept 8	Introduction to FCP X Interface
5	Sept 10	DEMO: IMPORTING / ORGANIZING FOOTAGE HOMEWORK: Work through Lesson 1 Reading: <i>Apple Pro Series: Final Cut Pro X</i> , Lesson 2; Murch 29-51
6	Sept 15	Work through Lesson 2 in class.
7	Sept 17	DEMO: ASSEMBLY CUT HOMEWORK: Reading: <i>Apple Pro Series: Final Cut Pro X</i> , Lesson 3; Murch 52-72
8	Sept 22	Work through Lesson 3 in class. Review Mid-Term Murch Paper Assignment
9	Sept 24	DEMO: TRIMMING, MOVING, STACKING Reading: <i>Apple Pro Series: Final Cut Pro X</i> , Lesson 4
10	Sept 29	Work through Lesson 4 in class.
11	Oct 1	DEMO: EXPAND/DETACH AUDIO, L-CUTTING, J-CUTTING Reading: <i>Apple Pro Series: Final Cut Pro X</i> , Lesson 5
12	Oct 6	Work through Lesson 5 in class.

13	Oct 8	DEMO: AUDIO: LEVELS, KEYFRAMES, FADES, ETC. Reading: <i>Apple Pro Series: Final Cut Pro X</i> , Lesson 6
14	Oct 13	Work through Lesson 6 in class.
15	Oct 15	DEMO: OUTPUTS of ALL KINDS Reading: <i>Apple Pro Series: Final Cut Pro X</i> , Lesson 7. <b>MID-TERM PAPER DUE AT START OF CLASS.</b>
16	Oct 20	Work through Lesson 7 in class.
17	Oct 22	DEMO: THE ART – SCENE DECONSTRUCTIONS Reading: <i>Apple Pro Series: Final Cut Pro X</i> , Lesson 8
18	Oct 27	Work through Lesson 8 in class.
19	Oct 29	MOVIE: TBD
20	Nov 3	Introduce trailer assignment. Screen examples
21	Nov 5	In-class cutting – Trailer assignment
22	Nov 10	In-class cutting – Trailer assignment
23	Nov 12	Rough Screening / Notes – Trailer Assignment
24	Nov 17	Trailer Assignment cuts due at start of class. Screen Trailer Assignment. Introduce freeform assignment
25	Nov 19	In-class cutting – Freeform assignment.
26	Nov 24	In-class cutting – Freeform assignment.
	Nov 26	<b>NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVING</b>
27	Dec 1	In-class cutting – Freeform assignment
28	Dec 3	DEAD DAY – NO CLASS (may I suggest you work on your cut?)
	<b>DEC 8</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM – 12:30-2:30pm BAB 303</b> Freeform cuts due at 12:29pm. We will screen as a class at exam.

## GRADING

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Assignments are valued as follows:

1) Quizzes	10%
2) Mid-term paper	25%
3) Trailer Assignment	15%
4) Scene Deconstructions	15%
5) Freeform Assignment	25%
6) Class participation/Attendance	10%

## **Grading Criteria:**

A = Exceptional. Demonstrates mastery of material beyond expectation. Professional quality of work. Highest level of scholarship.

B = Above average. Demonstrates mastery of material. Work is of better-than-expected quality, but not quite professional. High level of scholarship.

C = Average. Demonstrates proficiency with material. Work is of amateur quality. Ordinary level of scholarship.

D = Below Average. Less than proficient with material. Work shows errors, careless mistakes, or is just plain wrong. Poor scholarship.

F – Failure. Material incomplete. Work grossly negligent or incomplete. No evidence of scholarship present.

## **LATE PAPERS**

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Deadlines are an inescapable part of responsible, professional, adult life. Late papers will lose a letter grade for each day that the paper is late.

If you discover, *a week or more in advance*, that you have multiple deadlines converging on the same day, you may request a change in deadline> Such a change may be granted at the instructor’s discretion. Once the deadline has passed, it’s too late to ask for exceptions. Manage your time and deadlines wisely.

## **TARDINESS / ABSENCE POLICY**

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Attendance is 10% of your grade. That’s the difference between an “A” and a “B”...or an “F” and a “D.”

### **TARDINESS**

Class **BEGINS EXACTLY AT THE APPOINTED TIME**. It is your responsibility to be prepared to begin **BEFORE** the class starts.

Three instances of tardiness is equivalent to one absence. See below for the class absence policy.

**THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DENY ENTRY TO STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT PRESENT AT THE START OF CLASS\* – ON THE HOUR. PLAN ACCORDINGLY. ON-TIME is EARLY!**

\*Exceptions will be made only for those with classes located in RAS whose end time makes on-time arrival impossible.

Punctuality is essential in this business. Tardiness will not be tolerated.

Absence Policy, from the Sul Ross State University 2012-2014 Course Catalogue:

### **CLASS ATTENDANCE**

Regular class attendance is important to the attainment of the educational objectives of the University. Each instructor will keep class attendance records, and

the instructor's policy on class attendance will be explained at the beginning of the semester or term.

The instructors will drop a student from a course when the student has a total of nine absences. A student will be dropped for excessive absences in remedial courses after nine absences.

An absence is defined as non-attendance in fifty minutes of class; for example, non-attendance in a one and one-half hour class will constitute one and one-half absences and non-attendance in a three hour class will constitute three absences. An absence because of participation in an official University activity is considered to be an authorized absence.

### **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STATEMENT**

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*Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-171, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Telephone: 432-837-8203.*