

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY
COMM 2306 - Basic Video Production

SPRING 2025

Tues/Thurs

2-3:50pm

MoCap soundstage

Bret Scott, Associate Professor

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Regular Office Hours:

MWF 11am-12pm walk-in.

All others by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Video Production is the process by which a moving image is committed to a media meant to preserve the image for later editing and playback. The primary difference between video and film production is that in video the capture media is electronic rather than chemical. Technological advances in the last decade, however, have led to the imminent demise of film as an image capture media, so video – digital video – is the thing.

In this class, we'll be looking the use of the camera as a storytelling device, how to light scenes, when and how to motivate camera movement, basic editing, and the definition of cinematic design.

All of this applies equally to both video game design and filmmaking. I was present on the day Microsoft first introduced the Xbox to retailers. The VP doing the introductory presentation said, "Our goal is to make Xbox and the games you play on Xbox more immersive than the movies." And to a degree, Microsoft and Sony and the companies designing for the console platforms have succeeded.

To match a movie's immersive quality (must be able to match in order to exceed), we must first understand HOW a movie becomes immersive. This class will teach those techniques.

Production is time and labor-intensive. You are expected to participate in weekend work, and you will have late nights in the editing lab. You will be warned of deadlines well in advance. Plan your schedule accordingly.

COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

Student Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to meet one or more of the program learning outcomes applied to all Communication majors.

At the end of this course:

- 1: Students will be able to analyze communication content for argument, including identification of major elements, such as claim, warrants, and data.
- 2: Students will be able to effectively construct messages appropriate to audience, purpose, and context; including electronic media technologies.
- 3: Students will be able to apply Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts to the analysis of communication situations.

Communication Program

Marketable Skills

1. Informative and Persuasive Speaking
2. Audience-centered Writing
3. Critical Analysis
4. Research
5. Effective Message Construction Using Technology

PREREQUISITES

None. This is an introductory-level course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this class, students will:

- Demonstrate a working vocabulary of filmmaking terminology
- Understand and implement the three-act structure and basic character motivation
- Develop the skills of visual storytelling
- Identify and justify strategies for camera placement
- Demonstrate beginning mastery of Apple's Final Cut Pro X /Adobe Premiere Pro
- Demonstrate beginning mastery of studio lighting technique
- Articulate the function of and need for a moving camera.
- Evaluate and critique merit and functionality of various kinds of visual storytelling on a case-by-case basis.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

- 1) Terminology / Definitions Quiz
- 2) Peer Critiques for each project.
- 3) Lost and Found Exercise
- 4) Character through Action exercise
- 5) Short Project 1
- 6) Short Project 2
- 7) Vagabond Exercise
- 8) Group Project
- 9) Full participation in class discussion / critique

Required Textbooks for this class:

NONE.

Materials Required:

Leather Gloves (not cotton) suitable for work. Lights are hot and can easily burn you without gloves. Students without gloves will not be permitted to participate.

SAFETY RULES:

Making movies is an inherently dangerous occupation. Serious injuries or even fatalities are a very real risk if proper procedures are not followed. The following is a list of absolute rules – **NO EXCEPTIONS. DON'T EVEN ASK.** These rules are in place because bad things have happened in the past. Don't be the "special" student who thinks he or she is too talented/smart/lucky to get away with something. Any film that violates these rules will not be shown, footage will be deleted, and an automatic "F" entered for the assignment.

- 1) Safety first, last, and always. **Anyone** (crew or cast) may stop **any** shoot at **any** time to address perceived risk, without fear of retribution. If you see a risk, you are **REQUIRED** to stop the shoot and address the issue. Don't make assumptions. That's how people get hurt. **ALWAYS BETTER TO BE SURE and SAFE.**
- 2) No open-toed shoes on set.
- 3) No gloves = no work that day and a grade of 0.
- 4) No filming in a moving car. Ever. Period.
- 5) No weapons of any kind on screen. This means guns, knives, swords, spears, bow/arrow, clubs, nun-chucks, **OR ANY KIND OF IMPROVISED WEAPON.** For example, a chair, if thrown or swung at a person, is a weapon, and throwing a chair is a stunt.
- 6) Stunts require prior permission from instructor and, if permitted, require an approved stunt coordinator.
- 7) Children and animals require studio teachers/wrangers. No exceptions.
- 8) No defenestration (breaking real glass windows). See me for sugar glass sources.
- 9) No open fire on set without prior instructor permission and a fire marshal on set.
- 10) No filming in boats. Period.
- 11) Water scenes (in a pool/lake/river) require a production plan approved in advance by the instructor and a certified lifeguard on set.
- 12) Nothing dies for a film. Not a bug, not an animal, not a plant, and most especially not a person. Nothing should die for make-believe, ever.
- 13) 12-hour day, including travel time, is the hard limit. Not one minute more. If a shoot exceeds 12 hours, the footage from that day's shoot will be deleted/not permitted to be used in the cut.

RULE OF THUMB: IF YOU HAVE THE SLIGHTEST INKLING THAT THERE MAY BE SOME KIND OF RISK TO WHAT YOU'RE PLANNING TO SHOOT, ASK FIRST! THERE ARE NO DUMB QUESTIONS WHEN SAFETY IS INVOLVED.

CLASS DATES: Assignments and Deadlines

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

Class	Date	Topics and Assignments	Location
1	1/16	Introduction. Review Syllabus, Assignments, and Deadlines. Expected outcomes. Safety Review. Determine Screening Time	
2	1/21	Screen <i>Lost and Found</i>	
3	1/23	Lecture: Characters, Action and the Three-Act Structure	
4	1/28	Post <i>Character Action</i> Exercise	
5	1/29	Screen <i>Character Action</i> Exercise Intro <i>Short Project 1</i>	
6	2/4	Lecture: Sound and Music	
7	2/6	Lecture: Sound and Music	
8	2/11	Post Production <i>Short Project 1</i>	
9	2/13	Post Production <i>Short Project 1</i>	
10	2/18	Screen <i>Short Project 1</i>	
11	2/20	Screen <i>Short Project 1</i>	
13	2/25	Lecture: basic coverage, lighting and lenses	
14	3/27	Lecture: basic coverage, lighting and lenses	
15	3/4	Post Production <i>Short Project 2</i>	
16	3/6	Post Production <i>Short Project 2</i>	
17	3/11	Moving the camera	
18	3/13	TBD	
19	3/17- 3/21	SPRING BREAK. GO DO SOMETHING YOU'LL REGRET FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE. Even though it seemed like a good idea at the time...	
20	3/25	Screen <i>Short Project 2</i>	
21	3/27	Lecture: crew positions	
22	4/1	Lecture: crew operations	
23	4/3	Red Camera	
24	4/8	Crew Operations Practical	
25	4/10	Studio Lighting	
26	4/15	Studio Lighting	

27	4/17	Pre-production, <i>Group Projects</i>	
28	4/22	Group Project Production	
29	4/24	Group Project Production	
30	4/29	Group Project post	
Final	TBD	FINAL EXAM: SCREEN GROUP PROJECT	

GRADING

Assignments are valued as follows:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1) Terminology / Definitions Quiz | 5% |
| 2) Peer Critiques for each project. | 5% |
| 3) Lost and Found Exercise | 5% |
| 4) Character through Action exercise | 10% |
| 5) Short Project 1 | 15% |
| 6) Short Project 2 | 20% |
| 7) Group Project | 25% |
| 8) Attendance / participation in class discussion | 15% |

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

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

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.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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.