

**DOCUMENTARY VIDEO PRACTICUM  
COMM 4346 CRN 27011  
SPRING 2018**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Nakisha Acosta

**OFFICE HOURS:** After class or by email

**LOCATION:** Chemistry and Computer Science Building, Room 1.0204

**DATE AND TIME:** Tue 4:30 – 7:20PM

**EMAIL:** [ntacosta@utep.edu](mailto:ntacosta@utep.edu)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This advanced documentary video production course is for students who have taken COMM 2342: Introduction to Video Systems (or who have had sufficient previous video production experience). Classes and labs will consist of lecture and group discussion of theory and techniques of documentary video production based on assigned readings and in-class screenings; and individual and group documentary films, with an emphasis on recent American television and theatrical documentary films.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

A student can expect to learn the ins and outs of creating a short documentary film from concept to finished work. The course will cover different types of documentary filmmaking, preproduction packages, budgeting, script writing, crew roles, directing the actor, interviews, and the necessary postproduction work needed in order to finish a documentary. Each student will have written and directed a documentary by the end of the course.

**DIGITAL MEDIA PRODUCTION SEQUENCE OUTCOMES:**

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate disciplinary knowledge  
Assessment tool: Final paper in FILM 1390  
Standard: 80% will receive an A, B, or C grade on final paper
- Apply communication theories to communication events  
Assessment tool: Final paper in COMM 3371  
Standard: 80% will receive an A, B, or C grade on final paper.
- Evaluate and employ various research methods  
Assessment tool: Final exam in COMM 4372  
Standard: 80% will receive an A, B, or C grade on the final exam
- Demonstrate knowledge and skills in digital media preproduction and production

- Perform competency in the preparations, processes, and practices of beginning and completing a digital media production project
- Perform competency in a variety of digital media production environments such as in a studio and on location
- Perform competency in using production hardware and software
- Assessment tool: film project in COMM 2342
- Standard: 80% will receive an A, B, or C grade on film project
- Demonstrate aptitude in storytelling techniques in terms of postproduction
  - Perform competency in conceptualizing, evaluating, and implementing filming and editing techniques
  - Assessment tool: Final exam and film project in COMM 3343
  - Standard: 80% will receive an A, B, or C grade on final exam and film project
- Demonstrate the ability to produce a film combining conceptual, creative, and technical skill sets
  - Apply all three phases of production
  - Aggregate various forms of communication to create a topical basis for a documentary film project
  - Pursue assorted outlets and venues to showcase a film
  - Assessment tool: Final exam and film project in COMM 3346
  - Standard: 80% will receive an A, B, or C grade on their final exam and film project

**ATTENDANCE:**

Attendance is Mandatory. Your attendance and participation are integral to the class curriculum. It is imperative that you attend class regularly and on time. Everyone is allowed one emergency absence. After that point your grade will be dropped one full letter grade for any unexcused absence acquired thereafter. Likewise, a student will be dropped after three unexcused absences. An unexcused absence is any absence without valid documentation explaining the reason for missing class. An excused absence will have valid documentation explaining why the student was absent. It is under the discretion of the instructor if an absence can be considered excused. Students will be considered absent if they are not present for roll call at the beginning of class. Likewise, if a student leaves during class the student will be considered absent. Students must be reliable when working in groups. Filmmaking is a group effort, and your fellow filmmakers will depend on you to be present, and willing to work hard for their projects. Take an interest in your group members' projects, and they will reciprocate.

**GRADING:**

If you come to class regularly and on time, take your assignments and screenings seriously, and participate in the class discussions, (i.e. asking questions, and sharing your opinions) you can expect to do well in this class.

Completion of a group project, preproduction package, and final video are required in order to pass this class. No late work will be accepted.

Grading Scale: 100

100 – 90 = A

89 – 80 = B

79 – 70 = C

69 – 60 = D

59 and below= F

### **GRADING BREAKDOWN:**

Attendance: 10%

Participation: 10%

Group Project: 20%

One-on-One Preproduction Meeting: 10%

Preproduction Package: 20%

Final Video: 30%

### **REQUIRED READINGS:**

*Making Documentary Films and Videos*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

Barry Hampe

This textbook is available in the UTEP bookstore.

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Group Project:** Each group will shoot a short 5 minute documentary on an APPROVED subject. Each student will perform a different task on the project, and the group as a whole will edit the video. The project must be completely finished with a proper sound mix, and end credits by the due date. We will watch the projects in class.

**Preproduction Package:** The student will create a preproduction package that will include a treatment, script, shooting schedule, budget, and crew / cast list. This needs to be in a folder or have a spiral binding.

**One-on-One Preproduction Meeting:** I will meet with each student one week before the preproduction package is due. I will check to make sure everything is being done properly, and help answer any questions you may have.

**Script:** Each student will write a two – column script for their 10 minute final project. The subject must be approved by the professor.

**Final Video:** Each student will screen their finished documentaries during the last two classes of the course. The video should not be longer than 10 minutes in length, and should have gone through a proper sound mix, edit, and export.

## **Requirements**

Each student should have an external hard drive with at least 50 GB available for this course.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence. In all matters of intellectual pursuit, UTEP faculty and students must strive to achieve excellence based on the quality of work produced by the individual. In the classroom and in all other academic activities, students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty is an affront to the pursuit of knowledge and jeopardizes the quality of the degree awarded to all graduates of UTEP. It is imperative, therefore, that the members of this academic community understand the regulations pertaining to academic integrity and that all faculty insist on adherence to these standards. Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Proven violations of the detailed regulations, as printed in the *Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP)*, and available in the Office of the Dean of Students and on the homepage of the Dean of Students at [www.utep.edu/dos](http://www.utep.edu/dos), may result in sanctions ranging from disciplinary probation, to a failing grade on the work in question, to a failing grade in the course, to suspension or dismissal, among others.

## **CASS POLICY**

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu). Or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at [www.sa.utep.edu/cass](http://www.sa.utep.edu/cass). CASS Staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: This course calendar may change at any time under the discretion of your instructor. Chapters should be read before the class date in which they are assigned.

### WEEK 1

**JAN. 16** Course introduction and syllabus. Create groups for first assignment

### WEEK 2

**JAN. 23** Readings: Chapters 1-4  
Explanation of crew roles  
We will watch a variety of short documentaries.

### WEEK 3

**JAN. 30** Readings: Chapters 5-9  
Producing a documentary

### WEEK 4

**FEB. 6** Readings: Chapters 10-15  
Visual evidence, interviews, and documentary ethics  
Each group will tell the class their chosen documentary subject and receive feedback.

### WEEK 5

**FEB. 13** Each group will meet with me to discuss their topics, their shooting schedules, and any further guidance needed for the first project. **All groups should be shooting their documentaries this week.**

### WEEK 6

**FEB. 20** Readings: Chapters 16-20  
Documentary writing, research, structure, and script.  
We will watch rough edits of each group's videos and give feedback.

**WEEK 7**

**FEB. 27**      **Screening of completed group projects.** This will be your first grade for the class.  
Continuing Chapters 16-20.

**WEEK 8**

**MAR. 6**      Readings: Chapters 21- 23  
Scheduling, preproduction, and filming.  
Approve topics for final project.

**WEEK 9**

**MAR. 13**      **SPRING BREAK**

**WEEK 10**

**MAR. 20**      Readings: Chapters 24-29  
Directing, selecting and directing actors, and working on location.  
Schedule one-on-one meetings.

**WEEK 11**

**MAR. 27**      One-on-one meetings. Bring all components of your preproduction package with you.

**WEEK 12**

**APR. 3**      **PREPRODUCTION PACKAGE DUE**  
**We will watch a few award winning short documentaries and discuss**

**WEEK 13**

**APR. 10**      Post Production

**WEEK 14**

**APR. 17**      Protocols of production, safety laws, acting and shooting regulations.

**WEEK 15**

**APR. 24** Copyrights and licensing.

**WEEK 16**

**MAY 1** **SCREENING OF FINAL FILMS**  
**STUDENTS 1 - 12**

**WEEK 17**

**MAY 8** **SCREENING OF FINAL FILMS**  
**STUDENTS 13 - 24**  
**CLASS IS FROM 4:00 - 6:45 PM**