FILM 20P: Introduction to Production Technique
UCSC Department of Film & Digital Media, Summer 2014
Tuesday & Thursday 9:00am – 12:30pm, J Baskin 165
Section: Tuesday 1-2, J Baskin 165

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Office hours: Tuesday 1-2 or by appt   Office hours: Tuesday 1-2 or by appt

Cameras do not make films; filmmakers make films not by adding more equipment or personnel but by using what you have to the fullest capacity. The most important equipment is yourself, your mobile body, your imaginative mind and your freedom to use both.

~ Maya Deren

This class is designed to introduce students to the production processes of visual and aural, time-based, creative work. Students will work on numerous creative projects: performed, written, photographed and created digitally. With an emphasis on low-budget, independent film and video making, we will study all aspects of production from idea generation, conceptualization and scripting through post-production. Assignments will emphasize creativity, visualization, collaboration, research, and production organization. Presentation of ideas in both the written word and visual media are integral to the production of creative media and form the basis of the assignments for this class.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To demystify the creative process and help you develop your own voice
- To develop skills to design and execute visual works with excellence
- To advance a sophisticated level of artistic literacy in creating and viewing
- To foster a constructive process for giving and receiving meaningful feedback
- To foster the collaborative spirit necessary for the production of crew-based work
- To expand our understanding and appreciation of production aesthetics, techniques, and technologies

Texts:
The required readings are available at the Bay Tree Bookstore. Reading assignments are listed in the schedule below and should be completed before the class listed.
- Tom Schroeppel, *The Bare Bones Camera Course for Film and Video.*
- coursepack: PDFs available on ecommons

Equipment:
You are responsible for providing your own camera, image processing, and digital media storage as well as signing up for equipment access via SLUGFILM: http://slugfilm.ucsc.edu. 1GB of server space is allocated to every 20P student. Instructions for access forthcoming.

Equipment available for check-out is listed on the back of this syllabus. Equipment and facilities should be treated carefully and conscientiously.
Check-out time: Thursday 12:30 – 2:30
Check-in time: Tuesday 12:30 – 2:30
* The first day to *check out* equipment is July 26 *The last day to *return* equipment is July 22

Projects & Evaluation: * **Each project includes a process paper of no longer than 1 page.**
Participation: 17%
Bare Bones Test: 10%
ecommons quizzes on assigned readings (8%)
Exercise 1: Portrait Project (2 parts): 10%
Exercise 2: Directing and Performing: 10%
Exercise 3: Study of a Space (2 parts): 10%
Exercise 4: Sound and Image: 10%
Exercise 5: Writing a Scene: 10%
Final Project: Slideshow Compilation or Short Film (due week 5): 15%

• Evaluation of creative assignments will be based on: originality, craftsmanship /technical proficiency, aesthetics, structure, and whether or not the assignment follows project guidelines.
• Students must complete each of the assignments in order to pass the class.
• Late assignments will not be accepted; missed exams will not be rescheduled, so please plan your time and commitments carefully. Any emergency situation or special condition should be discussed with the instructor as soon as possible.
• Incompletes for the course are NOT routinely given. Please assess your time commitments early in the term. An Incomplete will make you ineligible to proceed into another FILM production class until the "I" has been cleared the following quarter.

Schedule:

TU Jun 24
Introductions; Visualization Techniques, & Operations visit; Assign Self-portrait
20P assignment workflow: media storage, iphoto, garageband, imovie, idvd

TH Jun 26
Visualization Techniques Part II; Assign Directing
Reading: Barbara Hammer, "Risk-taking As Alternative Living/Art-making: or Why I Moved to the Big City."
Project: Self-Portrait due
*First day to check-out equipment

TU Jul 1
Acting, Casting, Directing, Drama, Stereotypes; Assign Portrait of Another
Reading: David Mamet, "Where Do You Put The Camera."
Project: Directing due
*Bare Bones Test due

TH Jul 3
Images in Sequence; Assign Study of a Space
Reading: Walter Murch, "The Rule of Six."
Project: Portrait of Another due

TU Jul 8
Sound+Image: Sound/ Listening Exercises; Working with Garageband; Assign Sound/Image
Reading: Anne Lamott, "Looking Around"
Project: Study of a Space due

TH Jul 10
Reading: TBA
Project: Sound/Image due

TU Jul 15
Reading: David Mamet, "The Mamet Memo."
Project: Writing a Scene due

TH Jul 17
TBA: Workshop as needed
Reading: TBA

TU Jul 22
Final Project Presentations & Discussion

TH Jul 24
Final Project Presentations & Discussion & Wrap-up.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECTS

PORTRAIT PROJECT IN TWO PARTS

Part I: Self-portrait
How do you see yourself? How do you want to represent yourself at this moment in time? What can you express about your values, desires, or sense of the world through image alone?

In this project you can be whoever you want to be and you don't need anyone other than yourself, so you can take as much time as you want to experiment and explore.

Experiment with types of shots (Wide Shot, Medium Shot, Close-up, etc), camera angles, light sources, texture, color, contrast, and form. Think about how you can use reflections, diffusion, shadows, props and costume, and the history of other images, etc. If you want to use text, think about how you can incorporate it into the image itself (ie. hold up a piece of paper, write on a mirror in the background, etc.) Plan on shooting at least 30 images. Remember that you do not need to be physically in the shot.

You will turn in 1-3 images **on a single sheet of photo quality paper and upload your images to ecommons**. If using multiple images, think about the sequence of the images and make deliberate choices about how the images compliment or contrast with each other, or progress in terms of mood, self-revelation, etc. Be as creative and deliberate in how you compose the frame of the page as you were with each individual image: Landscape or portrait orientation? Frames within the frame? Scale?

Text/verbal introduction: Introduce yourself, your experience, your goals, whatever you think is important, relevant, thought provoking to share! You will read at least part of this aloud to the class. If your introduction is not typed, it should be both legible and *a deliberate formal choice*. Think about Form: Do you want to introduce yourself through a story, poem, letter, script, essay, list? How/does the form you choose reflect something about you that might not be communicated otherwise? How/does it compliment or contrast with your self-representation through images? No longer than 1 page.

Part II: Portrait of Another/Image and Text
Working **collaboratively,** choose a subject, either a member of your crew, another classmate, or anyone from the wider world. Choose a person you find compelling *and* who is willing to be your subject. Spend at least an hour with your subject without a camera planning a strategy for your portrait.

What does it mean to make a portrait of a person? What is the relationship between the portrait-maker and the portrait subject, and how is this relationship manifest in the portrait? Define your stance towards directing your subject – are you trying to spontaneously capture your subject without intervention or are you creating images that are more staged? What can you convey about the essence of a person in just a few images and words?

I. Photographic Portrait
Using your still camera, create a series of images that you think reveal something essential about your subject. Shoot as many images as you want, though you will only be selecting 5 for your

presentation. Think carefully about framing and composition as you did in your first project. You can show your subject's face in no more than one (1) image. Be creative about how you work with this constraint – you may make a portrait showing other parts of your subject's body, or without showing your subject at all.

II. Text Interview
Create five simple questions that you would like your subject to answer. You may conduct your interview in writing or verbally. If you conduct your interview verbally, it is highly recommended that you make an audio recording of the interview so that you can accurately record the exact words used by your subject.

One of the skills of a good interviewer is thinking of questions that can get your subject to reveal something interesting, honest, vulnerable, intimate, or unexpected. Try to devise questions that will allow us to see what is engaging about your subject. You may decide whether to conduct the interview before or after the shooting.

III. Presentation
Your finished portrait presentation will consist of 5 images and 5 pieces of text (in words, phrases or sentences). You may create a paper portrait where you attach printed stills and corresponding text to each page, or you may upload your portrait digitally. Whichever method you choose, you must create an ordered sequence with a beginning and end, and it needs to be clear which image corresponds to which piece of text. Think about the relationship between the images and the text. Do the images simply illustrate the text or can you think of a more interesting way for the two components to relate? How do the images change when they are set next to text?

DIRECTION & PERFORMANCE
You will be working in groups of 3: (1) director and (2) actors

The process is as follows:
1. Invent a relationship between two characters (co-workers, siblings, lovers, roommates, etc.)

2. Devise a given circumstance that bring these people together (funeral, waiting for a bus, date, etc.).

3. Re-work the script, if necessary (you are allowed to rearrange the words so long as you do not add words or remove them).

4. Give the words a fresh new context. Find an action for each generic word that puts it into a dramatic context. For this exercise, it is important to transform these words from generic dialogue into the context of actions.

> EXT. NIGHT – A SUBURBAN STREET
> In a beat-up 1974 Chevy, Ruth and Rob are listening to the radio and sharing a cigarette. Ruth is panicking, she tries again to start the car, but just hears the clicking of the solenoid and says, "nothing."

5. Identify the style or genre you are working with, and develop the scene accordingly.

6. Bring all necessary props. Do not pretend a bottle is candle. If you need a candle, bring one.

7. Count on spending at least 2 two-hour sessions working out the moments with your partners.

ORIGINAL SCRIPT:
A: Well"
 B: Well I'm here"
 A: So I see"
 B: Yes"
 A: Well"
 B: Is that all you can say"
 A: What do you want me to say
B: Nothing"
 A: Nothing"
 B: You don't trust me"
 A: It's not that"
 B: Then what"
 A: Nevermind"
 B: Stop it"
 A: What"
 B: That"
 A: I can't"
 B: Try"
 A: Is that better"
 B: This is hopeless"
 A: What's the matter"
 B: I don't know"
 A: You don't know

STUDY OF A SPACE

I. Location Scouting
Working in crews, scout around for a space (either interior or exterior) that interests you, one that is convenient, visually compelling, accessible, empty of people at times, and reasonably well illuminated. Pick a space that is easily identified as a single, whole space. Try to find an environment that offers a lot of possibilities for texture, contrast, color, and form.

Make at least two separate research trips to your selected space at two different times of day (with noticeably different light). Spend at least an hour in the space during each research trip, exploring possible images, camera angles, depth relationships, and framings in the space. Think about patterns of light and shadow, interesting compositions, and how to evoke a sense of the space as a whole.

II. Still Images in a Sequence — Creating Compositions
Return to your selected space with a still camera (digital, disposable, or other). Think about how to create a visual portrait of a space through still images in sequence.

PROJECT RULES:

1. Working in crews, shoot at least 30 pictures of your space. You will only be turning in six of these photographs, so try alternate compositions of the same subject.
2. Shoot at two different times of day – you must include at least one picture from each time of day.
3. Use only available light – no flash. (Long exposures are, of course, OK.)
4. Shoot for composition and content.
5. Shoot ONLY horizontal format shots.
6. Include at least 4 of the following composition types:
   - a primarily vertical composition
   - a primarily horizontal composition
   - an image which uses focus [depth of field] to attract our attention to the object/person
   - an image that abstracts its subject through de-contextualization [for example, an image of a billboard or sign which is fragmented to spell a new word, or an extreme close up on a texture, object, or pattern]
   - an image which contains foreground, midground, and background
   - a frame within a frame
   - an image that creates a relationship between positive and negative space

7. Edit your images down to six!
8. Present these photos by attaching them to an 8.5 x 11 inch page(s) that has your names on each page and identify the compositional type under each photo. OR mount a page on your website, and turn in the URL.
9. If you are printing from a digital camera, use only photo paper and turn in "photo quality" prints. Do not crop or cut the prints. Do not "fix" your images in a photo editor. THIS IS A CAMERA EXERCISE.

II. WRITING: A STUDY OF A SPACE
Individually, write a 2-3 page essay about a PLACE. This is an observational assignment and should be based on what you see, hear, smell and experience. Look for the events, characters, and images that animate the space – it's your job to tell an interesting story, to provide structure and coherence. Write in a nonfiction prose style using complete sentences, trying to be as specific, descriptive, and visual in your writing as possible. You may use small amounts of dialogue overheard if it's appropriate, but don't allow dialogue to dominate the writing. Do not interview anybody. This is a writing exercise designed as 'pre-production' research. Think of this as a short story, a piece of non-fiction that will be adapted for the screen. It is not a screenplay and should NOT be formatted as one. This is a WRITING assignment—drafts should be proofread for spelling and grammar!

SOUND AND IMAGE
A silent video clip or clips will be provided for you to use as raw material. Using GarageBand, Audacity or other audio editing software (or video editing software if you're more comfortable with that), design a soundtrack for the video footage provided. For this project, come up with creative and expressive ways of combining sound and image to create a new meaning for an image, establish a tone or mood, or otherwise create "added value." You may use sound effects from the Slugfilm sfx library (NOTE: you will only be able to access this database and download effects while you are in the Communications building), Apple Loops, sound effects from another source, or your own sound recordings (including voiceover and recorded voice effects) using either a video camera or another recording device / microphone.

Experiment with GarageBand's track effects – how can you take a sound and alter it in an interesting way? Think about what kind of mood you are trying to establish with your sound design. How can you suggest a narrative and guide the viewing experience using your sound choices? How can you use sound to create a sense of space?

You MAY NOT make any cuts or edits in the video. You MUST use at least four separate tracks of audio. You MAY NOT use any prerecorded music in your sound design. You MAY use words you have taken from any written or audio source, and/or sounds you have either recorded in the field or collected from any audio source.

WRITING A SCENE
Write a 2-3 page TREATMENT for a short fictional film that takes place, at least partly, in the location you described in your STUDY OF A SPACE. Use your imagination to invent characters or invent fictional lives for people observed there. Shape your story so that it conforms to the needs of narrative — conflict, exposition, etc. Do not write in a specialized language or screenplay format. Give your story a significant ending. We will discuss style for this assignment in class.
This is a WRITING assignment—drafts should be proofread for spelling and grammar!

FINAL PROJECT: ILIFE MOVIE W/ SOUND
This is a 3 to 5-minute movie comprised of still images, in sequence, with a soundtrack. It must include a title and credit sequence.

With your images constructed and timed in iMovie, export the timeline as a Quicktime movie (titled, for example as, kerrie's 20P project.mov). Remember to export out of iMovie as 320x240. You may have built a rough soundtrack in iMovie, but you will be building another one in Garageband. When you import the Quicktime movie (kerrie's 20P project.mov) into Garageband, it will appear as a picture or video track.

1. Working in Garageband you can now create a soundscape
• Add sound effects—on screen/off screen/ diegetic/extra diegetic.
• Record a voice-over narration or produce voice effects for your movie. (Avoid trying to do "lipsynch" dialogue unless you are going for an aesthetic of deliberate failure).
• Do not use a commercial music track or any copyrighted music, or place a single piece of music that runs for the duration of the film; that is, no wall-to-wall music.

2. When you have completed the soundtrack, save it into iTunes (it will save as an MP3 file).

3. Import your Garageband soundtrack back into your iMovie project, synching it with your image track.

4. Export your movie to iDVD and burn it to disc. The exported movie should be full frame, 720x480.

5. Your Movie should be under 5 minutes. Label the DVD clearly with your name & title of project.

EQUIPMENT CHECKOUT AND RESOURCES:
Checkout: Communications Building, Room 123
fdmcheckout@ucsc.edu; 831-459-4062; SLUG FILM: http://slugfilm.ucsc.edu/

The following equipment is available on a first come first served basis:

Still Cameras
DKA201: Still Camera Kits - Nikon D40 DSLR (1)
DKA001-003: Still Camera Kits - Canon PowerShot G2 (3)

Audio
AKH121-124: Audio Kits - Olympus Linear PCM Recorder LS-10 (3)
AKH131-140: Audio Kits - Sony Linear PCM Recorder PCM-D50 (10)
SLA208: Transfer Room Locker 8 (1)

Video
VKW401 - Video Camera Kits - Flip Ultra - Handycam Video Kit (1)
VKW501 - Video Camera Kits - Flip Mino - Handycam Video Kit (1)
VKW601 - Video Camera Kits - Kodak Zi8 - Handycam Video Kit (1)

*Ask about available guidebooks.

Accessibility
I encourage any student with particular needs or anyone seeking disability accommodations to contact the Disability Resource Center: 831-459-2089; drc@ucsc.edu; http://drc.ucsc.edu, and to speak to me directly as soon as possible.

Email
I will be using ecommons to send course related emails: ecommons only works with UCSC email addresses. If you regularly use another email account, please make sure to set your UCSC account to forward messages to it.

Classroom courtesy
I reserve the right to prohibit use of electronic devices (except as arranged through the Disability Resource Center and used to accommodate particular needs) temporarily or permanently.

Academic Integrity
"Bad artists copy, good artists steal." ~ Pablo Picasso
 "It's not where you take things from—it's where you take them to."~ Jean-Luc Godard

This course is about developing your own creative voice. Believe in your own voice—if you are overwhelmed or uncertain about what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism in an artistic context, consult your TA and/or the Instructor. It is always better to err on the side of acknowledging other people than to fail to do so! You can read UCSC's policies here:
http://undergraduate.ucsc.edu/acd_integrity.