Syllabus

Course: **Fundamentals of Video**
Course Number: EMS110 - 01
Credits: 3
Department: Communication, Media & Theater Arts

Instructor: Dave Anderson   **Office**: G-310   **Phone**: (413) 586-2579
E-Mail: anderson@crocker.com   Office hours after class, or by appointment

Course Description

This course focuses on video as a means of visual communication. Through screening and discussion of video and film, as well as group and individual projects in shooting, composition, sound and editing, the course will cover such topics as: how images create meaning; designing and planning a production; alternative styles of camera work; use of sound; and effective editing. Emphasis is placed on how video can be used to convey meaning in such areas as narrative, video art, multimedia and documentary. No prior video experience is necessary; however, access to a video camera is required.

Course Objectives

When you have successfully completed this course, you will be able to watch movies analytically and see the factors that persuade us and capture our attention. You will be able to create your own short movies that communicate about real-world events, or creative works that convey aesthetic qualities and feelings. You will understand how commercial motion pictures are produced, and how plots and characters hold our interest. You will gain experience with basic video technology in cameras and computer editing.

Assessment Tasks

Through visual and written assignments, you will be asked to demonstrate your abilities through these tasks:
- ♦ write short scenarios that communicate an experience through vision and sound;
- ♦ find places with some particular quality, and capture that quality with your camera;
- ♦ capture activities through a series of persuasive shots;
- ♦ edit your raw camera footage into a finished production, with music and text;
- ♦ analyze commercially-made films by writing about their main persuasive techniques;
- ♦ create a music video that demonstrates one of several different approaches;
- ♦ analyze the central concepts and forces that drive a commercially-made movie;
- ♦ produce a short movie that communicates a person having some kind of experience.

Required Course Materials
There is no required text for this course – I will provide handouts. You must own (or have access to) a video camera; the necessary cables and charger; and a cheap pair of headphones for audio editing. In addition, a Flash drive can be quite useful for storing and transporting your work. You must know how to perform the basic functions of recording and playing back video on your camera. Having a copy of your owners' manual is highly recommended.

For anyone serious about this subject, I recommend two supplemental books:
- *Practical DV Filmmaking*, by Russell Evans, Focal Press, 2002
- *Film Directing Shot by Shot*, by Steven Katz, Michael Wiese Productions, 1991

Attendance Policy
Since there is no assigned text, nearly all of the information needed to complete this course will consist of class lectures and handouts. Therefore, attendance will strongly affect your performance. You may miss a maximum of three classes – after further absences, you may be dropped from the course. If you are ill for an extended period, or have some other difficulty in attending classes, contact me at your earliest opportunity to discuss the situation. You are responsible for all information given during class, whether you are here or not.

Arriving late or leaving early may count as an absence. Absence and tardiness will be noted on class attendance sheets, and will count against your final grade.

Due to the large amount of work which will be required for the final project, approximately the last two weeks of the semester will be devoted to work sessions in the classroom or an open lab (see the schedule). Attendance is not taken for these sessions – students must assume responsibility for getting the Final Project done.

Grading
All work must be turned in on time to receive full credit. One letter grade is deducted for each class elapsed after the due date. No work will be accepted more than one week late.

Your final grade will be based on the following:

- Final video project: 30%
- Individual video projects: 30%
- Writing assignments: 30%
- Participation / attendance: 10%

Plagiarism

Students are expected to do their own work – turning in someone else's work as your own is grounds for being dropped from the class. Students may work in pairs or small groups, in which case all group members must be named on the material passed in.

It may be appropriate at times to include video or still pictures you found on the Internet or other sources in work you turn in. In this case, clearly identify such material in the credits at the end of your movie.

Submit Only Current Work

Unless you get permission from me, all video work turned in should be shot within the time period of the class – don't turn in work shot previously. And turn in material from a shoot only once, unless told otherwise in the project description.

Keep Video Projects In Good Taste

I treat my students as adults, and a small amount of violence and/or profanity is acceptable in class work. In general, keep your work to a "PG 13" or better standard of acceptability – assume it will be seen by a wider audience than the class. Avoid subjects or behavior that may be offensive. This applies to music lyrics as well as video.

Do Your Work On HCC Computers

Computers in the Electronic Media Center must be used for project work. You are responsible for making your video project load and play in the classroom! I will give you what assistance or advice I can, but I can't be responsible for engineering a solution for cameras producing movies that won't play in class.

Take Responsibility for Your Equipment

You are responsible for knowing how to operate your camera. While I will offer what assistance and advice I can, there are too many cameras on the market for me to know how to operate all of them. You must know how to make your camera perform the basic functions. You must also have all the necessary cables and components. HCC has no cameras that students may borrow.

Put your name (or at least your initials) on any camera gear, cables and flash drives you bring to class. I cannot be responsible for equipment left unattended in the classroom or the editing areas.

Use Classroom Computers Only for EMS110 Course Work

It's difficult to conduct classes when students aren't paying attention. The computers are provided strictly for work related to Fundamentals of Video. Do not use them for other course work, to finish late work, or for your own entertainment. Points may be deducted from your grade for violations of this policy, and your computer turned off.