COM344  Spring 2013  
T 6:00-8:45PM / Winston 201H  
SYLLABUS/ FILM PRODUCTION

Dr. Sarah Stein  
Winston 201V Office Hours: T 4:00-6pm; and by appointment  
E-Mail: sstein@ncsu.edu  
Media Lab Manager: Robert Bell rthell@ncsu.edu 919-513-7472  
Media Lab Hours: 8am-5pm  
course website: to be announced

REQUIRED TEXTS  (at NC State Bookstore and area bookstores):  
Cinematography: Theory and Practice 2nd edition by Blain Brown  
Cinematography 3rd Edition by Kris Malkiewicz and M. David Mullen  
The Bare Bones Camera Course for Film & Video (2nd ed) by Tom Schroeppe

RECOMMENDED TEXT:  
In the Blink of an Eye by Walter Murch

REQUIRED MATERIALS:  
1 mini-DV (hour long) Cassette  
16mm Film Raw Stock (this will be covered in class)  
External Hard Drive—LaCie 160GB (or larger) Firewire 400 & 800

COURSE OBJECTIVES:  
We live in a culture inundated with visual images and messages. Learning how those images are produced, and how juxtapositions of visual and audio cohere into effective narratives gives you greater understanding of the power of visual representations. This course is designed to provide you with the fundamentals of film production; from this process you will gain both practical skills as producers of an art form central to our culture as well as the analytical means to be critical consumers of the media environment in which you live.  
Students will learn to script, shoot and direct films. You will learn this in part by hands-on productions, and also by viewing feature films. Filmmaking is more than anything an art of IMITATION. You learn by looking at what others (including the greats) have produced. You will be using 16mm Arriflex S cameras and equipment standard to the motion picture industry. Lectures and labs will teach the fundamentals of camera operation, lighting, and editing (on Final Cut Pro nonlinear computer editing software). All final films will be completed on Final Cut Pro and transferred onto DV cassettes. Each student will produce two film projects, both of which you will script, shoot, and edit. You will also be assigned certain filmmaking topics to illustrate by bringing in scenes from your favorite feature films to analyze for the class (see Participation Grade section below).

LEARNING OUTCOMES. By the end of the course, students will be able to:  
1. identify the communicative elements inherent in the formal elements of film (lighting, camera angle, etc) and their interaction with the content (or story) of the film;  
2. demonstrate knowledge of the technical and aesthetic requirements of 16mm film production & of scripting, storyboarding, editing;  
3. evaluate the effectiveness of the content and form of their own films and those of others in the class;  
4. assess the strengths and weaknesses of different examples of filmmaking;  
5. discuss the formal, communicative dimensions of diverse genres of cinema;
6. interpret the narrative impact of formal elements of scenes from student-led discussion of films; &

7. demonstrate interpretive and critical thinking skills through discussion of visual forms of communication in other forms of digital media

**CAMERA & LIGHTING TUTORIALS:**

You will be tutored by Robert Bell, the Media Lab’s Technical Manager, in groups on the basic operation of the camera and of the lighting tools (Tel.: 513-7472; rtbell@ncsu.edu). Robert has constructed an online camera tutorial that must be completed BEFORE you take the face-to-face camera tutorial with Robert in the lab. The 2 lab tutorials are required before you will be allowed to take any equipment out. Students are required to successfully complete the Camera Tutorial with Robert before they will be allowed to check out cameras to shoot, and required to successfully complete the Lighting Tutorial before they will be allowed to check out lights for the 2nd film.

**PRODUCTION ASSIGNMENTS:**

1) **Video Production Exercise** – 1 minute Character Study—TEAM project. Because the medium of film is so technically demanding, I do not have much time in the first few weeks of this class to focus on image composition, shooting so that you have choices in editing, and basic editing principles. Many of you have gained these in digital video introductory classes, but everyone can use a review. This will be the only TEAM project you’ll produce this semester. It will be shot Exterior light only and silent. The description is on a separate handout. 25 Points

2) **Film Viewing Written Exercises** – You will view assigned films, in the theater or at home. You will then write a 1 page discussion of 1 production element in the film that will be assigned in class. You will meet with the other student who was assigned your element during the beginning of the 2nd class period to merge your observations and then present to the class in that session. Pay particular attention to what you know about the story through the “lens” of your production element at the beginning and at the end of the film. Your individual written observations will be handed to the instructor in that class. Categories to be observed and discussed: lighting; wardrobe; editing; camera composition & movement; set design; music score & sound effects. 25 Points

3) **Film Project 1** – Narrative Film—Individual project. You’ll tell a short story and learn the basics of shooting and visual continuity, even as you learn dramatic structure in its simplest form. This first Project will be ONE MINUTE in length. You will be shooting MOS (silent) film and you may add if you choose ONE audio track during the editing process. This is an EXTERIOR DAYLIGHT-only shoot, with NO ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING.

You will script this piece using the storyboard method on one of the templates provided. The storyboard can be drawn by hand but it may also be shot using the a digital still camera, then transferred directly to the Final Cut Pro, where it can be assembled in order to be screened for the class on Final Cut Pro. All storyboards will be “pitched” to the class as a whole. If you wish to, you may shoot a version of this film first on a Digital Video camcorder and transfer it to Final Cut Pro. This rough video version will not be graded and will only be used by you.

As part of the 1st Film Project, you will complete pre- and post-production notes and camera logs, and turn them in with your fine cut of Film 1. Project I – 150 pts
3) Film Project II—Narrative Film—Individual project. You’ll produce a 2-3-MINUTE film, a fictional narrative or documentary as you choose, but subject to instructor approval. You will be shooting MOS (silent) film and you may add if you choose up to as many audio tracks in editing as you wish. This film MUST use ARTIFICIAL LIGHT in at least some of the scenes. A storyboard must be submitted, and a shot list is a very good idea. For the storyboard, you can choose either to draw it or to shoot it on a digital still camera.

As part of the 2nd Film Project, you will complete pre- and post-production notes and camera logs, and turn them in with your fine cut of Film 2.

Project II – 250 pts

QUIZZES:

As listed on the Class Calendar, there will be 7 quizzes in COM 344. QUIZ 1-7 are based on the reading materials assigned per week. There will be no Mid-Term or Final exams. Each quiz will be given at the start of class, at 6:05pm and will last until 6:35pm. There will be no makeup quizzes, nor if you are late, will you have extra time to take them.

Each quiz is tied to the specific reading assigned for that class period. You cannot shoot and edit film without being proficient in the basics covered in each chapter assigned. You will not be allowed to take the production equipment out until you have shown a clear grasp of the contents of the chapters as well as competency of the skills exercises. The quizzes will be in the multiple choice and true-false format. The lowest graded 50 pt quiz will be dropped in the final tally of all the quiz scores.

5 Textbook Quizzes – 50 pts each
2 Textbook Quizzes – 100 pts each

PLEASE NOTE: NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED. NO MAKEUP QUIZZES WILL BE GIVEN. PLAN YOUR TIME CAREFULLY.

PARTICIPATION GRADE/ PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE:

Filmmaking is fundamentally a collaborative art. That means that how you act toward other production team members, how you take care of equipment, and the respect you show for your own and others’ work are intrinsic to your success as a filmmaker. The instructor will assess your professionalism with regard to attendance, respect for equipment and your fellow filmmakers, adherence to rules for equipment loans, and general cooperation and participation. EQUALLY, learning how to analyze and evaluate your own films and others’ films is fundamental to developing as a filmmaker. If you miss the sessions in which we look at rough cuts and final cuts, for example, you are missing some of the most important educational moments in this class. Missing a rough cut or fine cut screening will result in an automatic reduction of 50 pts from your final grade.

You are expected to attend EVERY class. You may not come late to class, nor leave early. You are expected to participate with energy, enthusiasm, and preparedness. The time is tight in this course because you are learning film production AND digital editing. In the film business itself, people who are late or indifferent or goof-offs NEVER get re-hired. And word travels VERY fast.

Part of your participation grade will be determined by the quality of the contributions you make to the analysis of your classmates’ and your own films during rough cut and fine cut screenings in the classroom. Much of the learning of filmmaking happens through those kinds of critiques and analyses, so it’s very important that you are present and that you participate. It is not
sufficient (though necessary) to only come to class—you are required to participate fully as well. **Participation points are assigned based on both those requirements.**

Participation/ Professional Conduct -- 100 pts

**ARRANGED LAB TIME:**

You will be doing the majority of your production work outside regular class time. Consequently, it will be necessary for you to be available (for skills exercises, equipment check-out, and editing) during many daytime hours beyond our usual class time. All of these activities will be under the supervision of the technical manager, whose hours will be 8-5pm M-F. The Media Lab will be open 8-5pm M-F and available except when a production class is in session in that room.

**FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Each student is responsible for all costs of DV cassettes, external HD, 16mm film raw stock, processing, and video transfer (for digitizing to Final Cut Pro).

All students are also responsible for the welfare of the equipment. Participation in this course is your agreement to pay for any damages or losses to equipment that occur as a result of your negligence or carelessness. Every student must sign the production contract provided in the lab before taking out equipment, and you will be legally responsible for any repairs or replacement of equipment.

**THE EQUIPMENT/ EDIT FACILITY:**

- Food or Beverages may be permitted in the Winston 201H but ONLY at the conference table—NEVER at the computer workstations.
- Media Lab available only M-F 8am-5pm
- Signup sheets will be posted for equipment checkout and editing time.
- When in doubt, ask Media Lab Manager Robert Bell, 513-7472 <rtbell@ncsu.edu>, for help.
- Final Cut Pro is loaded on Apple terminals in the Digital Media Lab, 2nd floor East wing of DH Hill Library, open on weekends, 513-3855, reserve editing time online [http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/dml/](http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/dml/)

**TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR EDIT TIME:**

- A sign-up sheet will be posted for the editing stations. Please do not sign up for more than 3 hours per day of editing time. However, you are always welcome to use the editing terminals if no one else is working (with the understanding that you will relinquish your spot if the person who signed up arrives). Try to respect other classmate/producers’ needs, even as you work to complete your own projects.
- If you will use only a part of a session, let someone else know. It’s in your best interests for others to finish as efficiently as possible. Fewer editing means less competition for editing time.
- Only those people essential to the task of editing are allowed in the Media labs. I recommend no socializing, etc. A business-only atmosphere will be more conducive to your accomplishing your work.
- If you sign up for a session be there and use it. Don’t cancel at the last minute. If you must cancel, notify other groups until you find someone to use the time.

*Sharing a facility demands the utmost consideration for others.*
ABSENTEEISM:
This is a very intensive course as you will be learning highly technical skills and learning new ways to conceptualize and analyze visual media. Therefore, I am taking very seriously your instructions to be at every class, and to contribute actively and meaningfully at every class. Please review the NC State policy on excused absences at http://www.ncsu.edu/for_students/handbook/uni_pol/uni_policy.html (it’s the Student policy page: Search on “Attendance for excused absences”).

I will accept only one excused absence without a 50 pt grade drop. In every case, you will be personally responsible for getting notes on the missed material. As stated above, NO MAKEUP QUIZZES OR EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN; NO LATE PROJECTS WILL BE ACCEPTED. There are NO excused absences for a ROUGH CUT or FINAL CUT SCREENING—if you miss either, your grade will be reduced by 50 pts.

Please consult the following website for further information on University attendance regulations:
http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/courses_undergrad/REG02.20.3.php

OFFICE HOURS:
I will be available during regular office hours (WN 109); in addition, I am happy to meet outside my office hours with prior notice. Meeting with instructors outside of class is typically one of the most underutilized resources available to students. I keep office hours for you, so please take advantage of them. Come talk to me about your projects, readings, whatever.

BEING LATE FOR CLASS:
We have a limited amount of time. Be here as the class starts. If you are consistently late (more than 1X) I will start dropping your participation grade. Missing the bus or not finding a parking place is NOT a valid excuse for lateness.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Strict standards of academic honesty will be enforced according to the University policy on academic integrity found in the code of student conduct. NC State Students are bound to an honor code, which states: “I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this test or assignment." It is my understanding and expectation that a student's signature on any test or assignment means that you have neither given nor received unauthorized aid. Please consult the following website for further details on student conduct:
http://studentconduct.ncsu.edu/

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)
Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653. For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-01
INCOMPLETE AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Points earned for incomplete assignments will be reduced in proportion to the degree to which the assignment was completed. For example, an exam requiring three essays, with only one essay completed, will earn one third of the essay point total. Points earned for late assignments will be reduced by 50% if received within 24 hours of due date and time due. Assignments received later will not be accepted unless in accordance with the excused absence policy as referenced above.

INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY

Students will not be given a temporary grade of IN (incomplete) unless they have attended classes regularly for most of the semester, have completed at least 60% of required work, have missed required work as a result of factors beyond their control, and have submitted satisfactory documentary evidence. An IN grade not removed by the end of the next semester in which the student is enrolled or by the end of twelve months, whichever is earlier, will automatically become an F (unless the student can present a compelling, well-documented case for the extension). For the NC State policy on grading and IN grades, see http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-50-03

CREDIT ONLY POLICY

Requirements for Credit-Only: In order to receive a grade of S, students are required to take all exams and quizzes, complete all assignments, and earn a grade of C- or better. Credit-Only courses can only be included under the Free Elective category of the student’s curriculum. Conversion from letter grading to credit only (S/U) grading is subject to university deadlines. Refer to the Registration and Records calendar for deadlines related to grading. For more details refer to: http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-15

AUDIT POLICY

Requirements for Auditors: Auditors must consult with the instructor. For details refer to: http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-04

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

NC State University provides equality of opportunity in education and employment for all students and employees. Accordingly, NC State affirms its commitment to maintain a work environment for all employees and an academic environment for all students that is free from all forms of discrimination. Discrimination based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation is a
violation of state and federal law and/or NC State University policy and will not be tolerated. Harassment of any person (either in the form of quid pro quo or creation of a hostile environment) based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation also is a violation of state and federal law and/or NC State University policy and will not be tolerated. Retaliation against any person who complains about discrimination is also prohibited. NC State’s policies and regulations covering discrimination, harassment, and retaliation may be accessed at http://policies.ncsu.edu/policy/pol-04-25-05.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Writing and Speaking Tutorial Services: http://www.ncsu.edu/tutorial_center/writespeak/
Academic Policies: www.ncsu.edu/policies/sitemap.php#acad-pols_regs
University Career Center: http://www.ncsu.edu/career/
Disability Services Office (DSO): http://www.ncsu.edu/dso/
Adverse Weather: Complete information about adverse weather policies is available at http://www.ncsu.edu/human_resources/benefits/leave/adverseweather.php
Check email, news, the NCSU home page, or call 513-8888 for the latest information.

Optional Info on Career Services:

Syllabus Option 1

CHASS CAREER SERVICES:
Explore career options related to your major, make decisions about your major or minor, build resumes and cover letters, prepare for interviews, develop internship/job search strategies, maximize career fairs, and more. Make an appointment with your career contact, Jane Matthews (A-H) or Woody Catoe (I-Z), through ePACK. Career Development Center, 2100 Pullen Hall. careers.ncsu.edu

Syllabus Option 2

CHASS CAREER SERVICES:
CHASS Career Services are available through the Career Development Center, 2100 Pullen Hall. Your career contacts are: Jane Matthews (A-H) and Woody Catoe (I-Z). Make appointments through ePACK. careers.ncsu.edu