1. **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**
Video Field Production is a course on single channel television production and post-production. We will cover all stages of the process, from writing a proposal through to completing post-production. Critical readings, screenings, writing and discussion will complement hands-on technical instruction. Content, expression, and communication will be emphasized as much as technical skills involving camera, lighting, audio, and editing.

2. **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**
a) To become a competent director, cameraperson, sound recordist, and editor in video.
b) To learn to access your creative and directorial "voice"; to learn more about your creative capacities, personal sources of creativity, interests and inspirations.
c) To experiment with a variety of working modes: Individual/collaborative, long term/short term, subjective/objective, conventional/experimental.
d) To cultivate and develop a vocabulary to discuss aesthetic, thematic, and artistic qualities of media projects.
e) To explore, through screenings and readings, the social history and unique artistic attributes of the video medium.
f) To Improve Your Level of Media Literacy. Learn to read the values and messages embedded in media.

3. **COURSE ACTIVITIES:**
Your course work will include a number of short projects to be done individually or with a partner; cycle of tutorial lessons non-linear editing (Final Cut Pro optional; Avid required); your participating in several exercises that will be shot and edited in groups; production of a Final Project; and written work including proposals, responses to readings and screenings, and self-evaluations.
General Production Assignment Guidelines:

1) Plan carefully and get started early. There is no better teacher than experience, and the more time you spend shooting and editing, the better you will become at it.

2) The exact length of your piece does not matter. Some projects might be only a few minutes; others ten, fifteen, or longer. Make your project the length that works best for it on its own terms.

3) Carefully consider your sound design. If you want to make a silent piece, make this a deliberate decision before going into production. If using sound, do not shoot and edit for picture only and then add a soundtrack as an afterthought. Consider sound an integral design element of the piece. In all sound pieces, you MUST include some audio that you have recorded yourself. Pieces with a music–only soundtrack will not be accepted.

4) Let mistakes be your teacher. There is no better opportunity to learn from your mistakes than while in school. Often one makes exciting discoveries through mistakes. Keep your mind, eyes and ears open!

Course Theme: *Symphony of a City*

Over the course of the semester, we will be exploring the theme of urban portraiture through works in experimental, documentary, and narrative genres. Use of these genre categories is not meant to suggest that the lines of separation are always entirely distinct; projects often blend or merge genres, and you are encouraged to explore this notion. As time permits, we will also explore installation and non–linear works that use video. The urban portrait is a long tradition in film and video, from Walter Ruttman’s 1927 classic “Berlin: Symphony of a City” (1927) to contemporary television series from “Seinfeld” to “The Wire.” Through the semester we will be viewing clips from Ruttman’s and other related films.

Editing Tutorials

By the time you enter this course you should have at least a base–line proficiency with Final Cut Pro. If you feel you need a refresher on basic operations, you are welcome to attend the tutorials offered for Video I students – I will send out a schedule by the third week of the semester. I will be providing instruction on more advanced–level operations in Final Cut in class, as well as instruction in Avid. Avid tutorials will be scheduled as possible, depending on the availability of tutors.

Optional Avid Editing Exercise: “Sure Thing”

To help facilitate your learning of Avid software, you will be provided with a script and raw footage from “Sure Thing,” a short urban comedy written, directed, and shot by two students from this class a few years ago. For this exercise, you will edit your own version of this project on Avid, either on your own or with a partner. The script is somewhat incomplete, the footage imperfectly shot, and some of the acting
is weak – i.e., this project will give you many decisions and problem-solving opportunities as editors! You are also responsible for audio mixing and design – if you want to add music and/or sound effects, this will be up to you. Once we have viewed your completed edits, we will view the original producer/directors’ cut.

Production Journals
You are required to keep a Production Journal in a three hole, loose-leaf style notebook. The notebooks will be collected once at mid-term and again at the end of the semester for evaluation. They should include the following: written responses to reading assignments and designated in-class screenings; your written preparation for your directing exercise and your self-evaluation of the completed work; written proposal for your final project; written response to your rough-cut screening; written evaluation of your completed final project. All writings should be typed and carefully written. You may also include notes, scripts, storyboards, drawings, notes, personal writing, photographs, etc.

Reading Discussions
A number of the assigned readings warrant additional discussion in class. Pairs of students will lead the discussion on one of the readings during a class session. This may require additional background research on the subject, and you should show supporting clips of carefully chosen material – consult with me if you need ideas. Plan for 15–20 minutes total for your discussion and clip presentation. You will be graded on your presentation and discussion leadership.

Final Projects:
You will each produce a final project either on your own or with a partner. Groups of more than two are possible, but you will have to clearly present the role of each group member as part of your production proposal. The genre and subject matter are for you to determine, and with prior approval, you may expand on one of the class exercises to become your final project. Extensive and thoughtful planning and pre-production will be emphasized on all projects, which you should begin early in the semester.

Keep in mind that this is a lot to accomplish in one semester and that you will have to schedule your production and editing time carefully so as not to fall behind. Plan to put in considerable time outside of class working on your projects.

Grading:
- Exercise #1 – Experimental 10%
- Exercise #2 – Documentary 10%
- Exercise #3 – Fiction 10%
- Mid-Term Journal evaluation 10%
- Reading discussion leadership 10%
- Written proposal for your final project 5%
• Oral presentation/'pitch' for your final project  5%
• Final journal/production book  5%
• Final Project, rough cut  5%
• Final Project, fine cut  30%

100%

Recommended Texts:

Directing the Documentary by Michael Rabiger (available in the campus bookstore – chapters referred to in the syllabus are from this book).
Avid Editing, A Guide for Beginning and Intermediate Users by Sam Kauffmann
Avid Xpress DV 3.5 Editing, published by Avid Educational Series
Final Cut Pro for Mac OSX, by Lisa Brenneis
The Focal Easy Guide to Final Cut Pro 5, by Rick Young (a very good small volume, $25)
Film Directing Shot by Shot, by Steven D. Katz (excellent chapters on storyboarding and visualization for the screen; available from Michael Wiese Productions, 818 379–8799)
In the Blink of an Eye: a Perspective on Film Editing, by Walter Murch
The Conversations: Walter Murch and the Art of Editing Film, by Michael Ondaatje
On Directing by David Mamet
Single Camera Video Production, by Robert B. Musburger ($25, campus bookstore)
Developing Story Ideas by Michael Rabiger

On–line resources:
http://kcet.org/explore–ca/departures/
www.lib.unc.edu/house/mrc/pages/mediaLab/t–FCP.html (Final Cut Pro tutorial)
www.adamwilt.com/24p/ (guide to 24p cinematography and the Panasonic DVX100B camera)
www.mandarinpictures.com/stephenzinn/ (explanation of 24p)
www.kenstone.net/fcp_homepage/fcp_homepage_index.html (Ken Stone’s FC Pro)
www.avid.com/exchange/forums/4292/ShowPost.aspx (Avid Editing blog)
http://joern.free.de/tips.html (The Art of Avid Editing)
www.creativecow.net (discussion forum on production and post–production issues)
www.2–pop.com (Digital Filmmaker’s Resource Site)
http://www.unc.edu/~unclng/public–d.htm (about Public Domain)
http://fairuse.stanford.edu/Copyright_and_Fair_Use_Overview/ (Fair Use and Copyrights)
http://creativecommons.org (alternative forms of copyright)
www.archive.org (archival materials, many available for free download)
www.footagefarm.com (low cost archival materials)
www.filmsound.org/

4. COURSE CALENDAR:

Week 1: September 2 – Course introduction and goals.
- Screenings: Berlin: Symphony of a City, by Walter Ruttman (excerpt)
  La Ciudad/The City, by David Riker (excerpt)
  Radio Diaries at www.radiodiaries.org/newyorkworks-home.html
  Departures at http://kcet.org/explore-ca/departures/
  abecedarium: nyc at www.nypl.org/abecedariumnyc

- Introduction to Exercises 1&2: In Exercises #1 and #2 you will pick a specific urban environment or character – a block, a store, a restaurant, or a person -- and will make two portraits of the same subject using different two different formal strategies.

  The first “experimental” piece will explore the optical qualities of light, lenses, and vision. All of your shots in this act should be from reflections, refractions, lens flares, abstract close-ups, looking through layers of glass, lens flares, etc. For example, if you show a wide shot of an urban landscape, it must be shown as a reflected off of some other surface or as entirely out of focus. Alternately, you could show the comprising pieces of a wide shot presented as a series of abstract close-ups. Use natural or available light only! Each person must do Exercise #1 his/herself. Due date: October 14.

  Exercise #2 will be a non-fiction piece that will portray the same subject using a “documentary” approach (we will discuss this tradition in class). This piece must include voice that you have recorded yourself. It is recommended that you work with a collaborator (pick one of your subjects from Exercise #1). Due date: November 18.

  In both exercises, be attentive to audio. Try to create a ‘musical’ or ‘symphonic’ score edited from found sounds of the urban environment. You can use music but must also include field sounds that are recorded and edited together with as much thought to content and pacing as are the visuals.

  Unless you choose to do the “Sure Thing” editing project, you must edit one of these pieces on Avid.

Assignments – Read the article and visit the websites listed below. Write reactions in your production journals to each:
Reading: “Cybermural: The Web As The Wall,” article from the NY Times, 8/12/07
www.radiodiaries.org/newyorkworks-home.html
http://kcet.org/explore-ca/departures/
By Jon Gartenberg)

Week 2: September 9 – Camera basics
• Introduction to the SONY PD-150, PD-170, and Panasonic DVX100b digital
  camcorders.
Readings from textbook (Rabiger): “Introduction and Historical Background”;
“Preproduction” chapters.
Readings from handout package:
• “Notes of a Signifyin’ Snap Queen”, article by Marlon Riggs
• “Berlin: Symphony of a City”, by Allan James Thomas
• The SONY PD-150 and PD-170 cameras
Write reactions in your production journal to the Riggs piece.

Week 3: September 16 – Sound recording: microphone selection and use
• Reading Discussion/screening: Marlon Riggs
• Editing tutorials begin this week. Please remember to attend the section to which
  you were assigned.

Readings from textbook:
"Production" chapters
Readings from handout package:
• “Film Editing – a hidden art?” – article by Vinca Wiedermann.
• “Speed,” an article from The New Yorker magazine by Oliver Sacks
• check out the Audio-Technica Guide to Microphones:
  www.audio-technica.com/cms/site/9904525cd25e0d8d/index.html
Write reactions in your production journals to the Wiedermann and Sacks
pieces.

Assignment: Write a preliminary draft of your proposal for your final project. State
as clearly as possible what your project is going to be about (content). If there are
particular considerations you have concerning form, you can also address these, but
lengthy descriptions of plots, lighting schemes, etc. are not necessary. Give your
project a title and refer to it by that title in your proposal. If you have several
different ideas, write a proposal for each. Apply the questions in the “Preproduction
Summary” from the textbook to each idea. First draft due September 23; final
draft due October 7. (if you place your proposal in my mailbox or send by e-mail
earlier, I’ll be able to provide you feedback sooner).

Week 4: September 23 – Intro to Avid
• an introduction to Avid DV Express Pro and the “Sure Thing” editing project.
• Reading Discussion: Wiedermann and Sacks articles
• Preliminary drafts of Final Project Proposals due.

**Assignment:** Prepare a final draft of your project proposal, **including a production and post-production schedule.** This is a graded writing assignment, **due on October 7.** Each person or group will present their project proposal to the class in the following weeks. Consulting “When You've Found a Subject” (from "Preproduction Checklist " in the Rabiger textbook) can be very helpful.

**Readings from textbook:** "Post-Production" chapters; "Lighting Instruments" and “Lighting Analysis”

**Readings from handout package:**
- “Creative Capital: An Insider’s Guide to Preparing Your Application"

**Readings from textbook:** "Lighting Instruments", and “Lighting Analysis"

**Readings from handout package:**
- excerpts from The Conversations: Walter Murch on the Art of Editing Film, by Michael Ondaatje.
- “Your Face in the Lights: The Secrets of Cinematography” (New Yorker article, October 20, 2003)

**Write a reaction in your production book to these pieces.**

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**Week 5: September 30 – Guest Lecturer on Location Lighting: John Miglietta**
- see John’s website at [http://www.jdmpromedia.com](http://www.jdmpromedia.com)

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**Week 6: October 7 – Avid editing, continued**
- Reading Discussion: Ondaatje and Cinematography articles
- Collection of Final Project Proposals

**Readings from textbook:** "Aesthetics and Authorship" chapters

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**Week 7: October 14 – Screening of Exercise #1**
- If you are editing at home and we are not able to watch your piece from the Central Storage System, have your piece cued and ready on tape or DVD. Write a journal entry evaluating the production.
- Presentation: history of documentary.
- Introduction of Assignment #2: **Documentary.** Using THE SAME location or character you used in Exercise #1, and produce a short documentary–style portrait. We will be discussing documentary tradition, format, and ethics in class. I would recommend your partnering with a classmate on this assignment.

**Project due date: November 18.**
Reading from packet:
www.blackmariafilmfestival.org/essay_2000.php ("Why We Make Documentaries: Reflections of a Producer" by Jacquie Jones)

Write a reactions in your production book to these pieces.

Week 8: October 21 – Presentation and verbal ‘pitches’ of Final Projects
Each producer or production team will have five minutes to make a verbal presentation about their Final Project. You should be prepared to ‘sell’ the class on the merits of your project, as if you are trying to get your project financed. Your presentation can include research materials, location or casting stills, reading of a section of script, or other supporting materials. Your presentation will count for 5% of your class grade.

• Reading Discussion: Jones article

Week 9: October 28
• mid-term collection of Production Journals.
• screening: Another Brother by Tami Gold

assignment: If you haven’t already, you should begin production of your Final Projects.

Reading from packet:
“Video Installation Art: the Body, the Image, and the Space-in-between”, article from Illuminating Video. Write a reaction in your production book to this piece.

Week 10: November 4 – Introduction to Assignment #3: Fiction. Produce a short piece that features an interaction between two people and follows the development of that interaction. Give each character a goal or objective. Consider action and reaction shots. Vary your shots and compositions so you are not simply intercutting two head shots. This piece must include at least some dialogue and field-recorded sound. Pay attention to continuity of movement; the 180° rule; each person’s dress; mannerisms, and relationship to objects and spaces around them. This will be done as an in-class shoot next week – November 11. You will work in groups of four: two of you will be responsible for writing, directing, shooting and recording sound; the other two will be responsible for acting, editing, and sound design. If it is possible, I recommend your shooting at an off-campus location (with proper permission!). Project due date: December 2.

• Reading Discussion: “Installation” article. Write a reaction in your production journal.

Reading from packet:
“The Dramatic Scene” from The Tools of Screenwriting (reading packet) – answer the questions at the end for the scene you plan to shoot for Exercise 3

Week 11: November 11 -- In-class shoot of Assignment #3

Week 12: November 18 – Screening of Exercise #2.
  • Write a journal entry evaluating the production.
Readings: “Copyright: Dead or Alive in the Digital Age”; “A Producer’s Guide to Music Clearance”; “The Many Meanings of ‘Fair Use’” Write reactions in your production journals to these articles.

Week 13: November 25 – Legalities of Production: releases, location permits, copyrights & licensing
For readings, visit the following websites:
http://www.unc.edu/~unclng/public-d.htm
http://fairuse.stanford.edu/Copyright_and_Fair_Use_Overview/

Week 14: December 2 – Screening of Exercise #3.
  • Write a journal entry evaluating the production.
  • screenings of rough cuts of Final Projects.
  • Reading discussion, continued: Copyright and Fair Use

Week 15: December 9
  • screenings of rough cuts of Final Projects.
  • Remainder of class: individual editing consultations.

Week 16: December 16
FINAL EXAM WEEK – we will meet at our usual time & place for:
  • Screenings of completed Final Projects.
  • Production Journals due today. You should include a written evaluation of your Final Project.