

TFM 122 16mm Film Production
Fall 2005
Com 153 Monday 1-5:40

Prerequisites: Admission to the TFM program. Previous or concurrent enrollment in TFM 110 (Scriptwriting). Transcripts or proof of registration required.

INSTRUCTOR: MARK FREEMAN

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Instruction and practice in the basic techniques of 16mm film production. This workshop combines lecture/demonstration with student exercises and assignments. Instruction in equipment use will be combined with discussions of technique, style and approach. Peer cooperation and evaluation will be an important part of the workshop process.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this course students should be able to:

- * Identify and understand the formal elements of moving image art.
- * Understand the technical processes of film.
- * Write a basic treatment describing the essentials components of a production.
- * Write, Shoot and Edit an original 16mm (non-sync) sound production

EVALUATION

Attendance and Participation (includes PA hours)	10%
2 Short Films ---Approximately 1 minute in length	
#1 Portrait of Place Abstract/Experimental/Documentary	15%
#2 Narrative Writing/Indoor	15%
Midterm	20%
Treatment for Final Project	10%
Storyboard and/or Script Extra Credit	3%
Final Cut Pro Exercise	5%
Final Project Approximately 3-5 minutes	25%

Final grades will include A-F with +/-

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS 103

Final Cut Pro Workshop

Each student must complete an editing exercise and present it to Greg Penetrante. **This assignment must be completed by Week 7.**

DUE DATES FOR ALL FILM PROJECTS ARE FINAL. LATE PROJECTS RECEIVE REDUCED CREDIT.

REQUIRED TEXTS

JONES GUERRILLA FILMMAKERS MOVIE BLUEPRINT
FREEMAN INTRO TO 16MM FILM (SP'05)
ASCHER FILMMAKER'S HANDBOOK REV & UPDATED 99
BRENNEIS FINAL CUT PRO HD FOR MAC OS X : VISUAL QUICKPRO GUIDE

Resources on-line

http://homepage.mac.com/directors_notebook/downloadboards.html

<http://www.easycasting.com>

<http://www.filmaker.com/dumps/>

<http://www.findsounds.com/>

<http://www.freeplaymusic.com/>

<http://www.mandy.com>

<http://www.nowcasting.com>

<http://www.saulbass.net/psychostudio/>

<http://www.showbizjobs.com/>

<http://www.sounddogs.com>

<http://www.studentfilmmakers.com/>

<http://www.withoutabox.com>

Checkout Resources

Sound Effects Library

Royalty Free Music Library

Cost

Each student should budget \$300-400 for production costs.

Groups

At the first class meeting you will divide into groups of three. These groups will work together to produce projects 1 and 2. It is essential that you choose group partners whose schedules and availability for production and postproduction coincide with your own

You will have the opportunity to create new working groups for the Final Project.

Filmmaking by necessity and tradition is based on teamwork and collaboration. There will be a good deal of overlapping responsibilities. Consider the key creative tasks: writing, directing, production management, cinematography, picture editing and sound design. Be extremely judicious in selecting your crew, balancing skills, talents and personalities. Beware of brittle artistic egos, immaturity, or simple incompatibility. Remember, you will work intimately and intensely with everyone on your crew.

When (not if) problems develop... try to resolve them with clear communication. As much as possible avoid blame. Focus on creating solutions that will allow you to move forward and successfully complete your work. Feel free to contact me for advice and, if necessary, for intervention.

Contracts

Each production group is required to submit a typed contract, signed by each member of the group, specifying who is to pay how much money, how it is to be paid and by when. The contract should be clear and should also anticipate the possibility of a budget over-run.

Production Assistant Logs

Each student is required to volunteer for a minimum of 10 hours as a production assistant on an intermediate or preferably upper division project **not** related to the productions of this class. (For example TFM 123 projects are not eligible for PA hours.) Students should maintain a log describing the dates and hours worked as well as the duties performed. The log should be signed by the producer or director of the production. This signed log is due at the last class meeting.

Each hour not completed reduces the final grade by 1 point.

Note About Stunts, Safety and Liability

Anyone planning any effects or stunts, no matter how "safe," must have them approved in writing before attempting them. Release and waiver forms and liability forms are included in the class reader. Releases must be signed by each non-SDSU cast member, and liability forms must be filled out for all off-campus location shooting.

This course requires students to participate in field trips, research or studies that include course work that will be performed off-campus. Participation in such activities may result in accidents or personal injuries. Students participating in the event are aware of these risks, and agree to hold harmless San Diego State University, the State of California, the Trustees of the California State University and Colleges and its officers, employees and agents against all claims, demands suits, judgments, expenses and costs of any kind on account of their participation in the activities. Students using their own vehicles to transport other students to such activities should have current automobile insurance

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NB: The class schedule calls for our first meeting to be 9/12 The third week of classes.

WEEK 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

THE CAMERA---Operation and Composition

Reading: Pincus Chapter 1-4

Jones Camera pp 300-346

Camera Test: Students must pass a hands-on camera and light meter test administered by the TA before they can check out equipment.

WEEK 2 CAMERA and PRE-PRODUCTION

Buy Rosebud

Learn to load 16mm Camera. Pass test with TA

Learn to use Light Meter. Pass test with TA

Reserve Camera, Lightmeter and Tripod

Purchase 16mm film and other supplies

Confirm members of your 3 person group

Make Shooting plan for Assignment #1

Choose a laboratory. Make payment arrangements.

Shoot Assignment #1 during the week

Assignment: Bring an example of a photo, ad, drawing, painting or video excerpt that you find visually exciting. Be prepared to discuss your example.

WEEK 3

SOUND

Reading: Pincus Chapters 9 and 10

Jones pp 285-298

See Reader

Splicer Demonstration

Film Commission Presentatiion

Valentin de las Sierras Bruce Baillie

Screen Rushes Assignment 1

WEEK 4

EDITING MECHANICS

Reading: Brenneis (Reference as needed.)

Continue to Screen Rushes Project 1

Editing Workshop

Screening: *Visions of Light* and/or *Film Noir*

WEEK 5

EDITING AESTHETICS

Reading: Pincus Chapters 12 and 13

EDITING SOUND

Reading: Pincus Chapter 15
Jones pp 398-431

Screening: Excerpts *Apocalypse Now* and/or *Brazil*

Treatment/Storyboard/Script due for Assignment 2

Editing Workshop

WEEK 6

LIGHTING

Reading: Pincus Chapters 5 and 11

Final Edit Assignment 1 Due

WEEK 7

WRITING---Treatments, Scripts, Storyboards

Reading: Jones pp 43-60 Note: Your scripts should **NOT** have sync dialogue.

Submit proof of completion of FCP exercise

MIDTERM

WEEK 8

Scripts and Pitch for Final Projects due

22 copies of treatment and evaluation sheet

WEEK 9

Rushes/Work-in-Progress Assignment 2

Pre-production Final Project

Revised Scripts due

CLASS 10
BUDGETING AND PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT
Reading: Chapter 8 and 17

Revised Scripts due

CLASS 11 WORKING WITH ACTORS
POST PRODUCTION and LABS Reading: Chapter 16 Appendices H and I

Final Edit Project 2 Due

CLASS 12
GETTING A JOB, DISTRIBUTION, FESTIVALS
Reading: Chapter 18
See Reader

**Rushes Final Project
Sign up for Individual Meetings**

CLASS 13 Meetings with each group individually

CLASS 14
FINAL PROJECTS DUE

FESTIVAL SCREENING 12/15/05 Don Powell Theatre

THREE FILM PROJECTS

GRADING POLICY

Content: What did you include? Is it appropriate to the assignment?

Originality: Is this an unusual approach? Are there new ideas or new ways of seeing here?

Risk Taking: Is the approach challenging? Is it difficult to execute? (High Degree of Difficulty)

Technique: How well is the production organized? How well is it shot? Composition? Camera Control? Focus? Exposure? Sound Quality?

Expectations

The class will include an emphasis on content including writing practice and story development. The best work is based on your personal vision, experience, passion and imagination. Explorations of character and human relationships are particularly encouraged. Resist the impulse for gratuitous inclusion of sex and violence. Parodying formulaic dramas or comedies is usually a dead end. The simplest and most predictable way of resolving dramatic conflict is blowing something up, setting something on fire and/or killing it/her/him/them. Extra credit for projects that manage to exclude weapons --- especially guns.

Production Book and Sealed Evaluations

For each project, each film production team will generate a detailed production notebook including information about shooting and post-production activities. The notebook will include:

contract
treatment
script and script revisions
*SDSU Film Shoot Evidence of Coverage
*SDSU Waiver and Release Forms
*San Diego Film Commission Form
storyboards
budget and revised budgets
receipts
equipment lists
crew and cast lists
signed releases
location information
camera log
sound spotting sheet
music release

* These forms must be prepared in duplicate and signed by the instructor. One copy is for the notebook, the other must be submitted to the appropriate office

For the FINAL FILM ONLY:

Each crewmember will include in the notebook a sealed envelope containing a confidential production report detailing the work of each member of the crew, as well as an evaluation of the production--its pluses and minuses. What did you learn? What was the best/worst experience? What would you do differently if you could? Advice for students who will take this class next semester? Suggestions for the prof?

PA Hour reports are also due with the final film.

A copy of each project must be also be included in an end of semester compilation tape. (Please see the TA to arrange this.)

TIMELINE

“On-time” and “on-budget” are the keys to successful professional filmmaking. When confirming the particulars of your own schedule plan carefully. Be sure to factor in time for shipping and/or driving to and from the lab.

Remember Freeman's Invariable Laws of Scheduling:

1. Something will always go wrong.
2. Everything always takes twice as long as you think.
3. Even if you allow "twice as much time" (see law two above), it will still take twice the time you've allotted.

PLAN AHEAD. BE FLEXIBLE. DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE. DEADLINES COUNT.

FILM #1- OUTDOORS

Purpose:

- a) To familiarize you with 16mm cameras.
- b) To familiarize you with different ways "reality" can be represented cinematically.
- c) To fix and put into practice your understanding of shot nomenclature.
- d) To develop your eye for composing a moving image.

This film should be between 1 and 2 minutes long. You will discover that working short is very unforgiving in the sense that one weak shot can bring down the entire effort; every shot must pack a punch. Think of the economy of a short poem. Your group should agree on the approach, create a storyboard, shooting sequence and a clear production plan. For each shot, all three students should study the image through the viewfinder before shooting. Discuss the shot before shooting it! Take turns shooting.

Content

This film is a portrait of place (outdoors). (People are secondary.) It can be a real or imagined space or environment. You can use a single location, or multiple locations that are thematically related. Sound can be natural and/or constructed with or without narration or voice over. You can personify the place or use it as the setting for a heard but unseen human drama. Pay special attention to composition, focus, depth of field, framing and angle of view. This piece can be abstract and experimental ---an exploration of pure form, or more narrative in structure.

Suggested locations: Flea market, amusement park, zoo, outdoor cafe, pier, construction site etc. (Be especially creative if you choose a trolley station. Pre-production is essential. Study your location before filming. Consider the light at different times of day. Gauge the ebb and flow of activity. Listen carefully and record as many appropriate sounds as possible. Capture the life and spirit as well as the style of your location.

You must incorporate CUs, MSs, LSs and ELSs in your film.

Be sure to explore and exploit the essential visual components of filmmaking:

1. Shape
2. Value and Exposure
3. Movement

Technical Requirements

Shoot outdoors with available light. Each group will shoot 100'-200' of Black and White Reversal film. Use Plus-X Reversal 7265 - **ASA 100 outdoors**, or, if you shoot in low light, use Tri-X Reversal Tri-X 7266 **ASA 200 outdoors**. You will work only with natural light.

Use a tripod. Do not shoot handheld. Do not move the camera, pan or tilt. Do not use the zoom - place the camera where you think it best frames your shot.

Run off 5 feet of film at beginning of the roll after closing the camera chamber. Be sure to run off at least 5 seconds of film before "action" and after the end of each shot.

Editing

Each group will edit their footage into an approximately one minute film. Students will synchronize sound tracks including music, effects and voice. A wall-to-wall music track is not encouraged. Neither is a voice over that tells us everything that we're shown. Sound should add additional levels of meaning. Consider contrasting sounds and images as a creative possibility.

Give the film to Greg or James for transfer to mini DV. Digitize and edit on Final Cut Pro.

For this assignment you must use straight cuts only. No fades, dissolves, slow motion or other effects. Do not crop or otherwise digitally manipulate your footage.

FILM ASSIGNMENT #2 - INDOORS

PURPOSE

- a.) To sharpen your sense of viewpoint. This means much more than p.o.v. - it means the "attitude" or "feeling" conveyed through your aesthetic choices.
- b.) To develop your sense of the relationship between the aesthetic choices you make and "attitude" or "feeling" conveyed by these choices; to develop your control of film language.
- c.) To develop your understanding of the connection between "mise-en-scene" and editing -- the way you shoot will critically affect the way you edit.
- d.) Coverage: To emphasize the need to properly cover your event.
- e.) To develop an "ear" for effective screenwriting.

You must turn in a completed treatment and/or script and/or storyboard before proceeding with the production of this project. This project must include one or more characters shot in an interior environment with lights. **Voice over is expected and can be interior monologue, off-screen voices or third person narration.** Don't tell us things we can see for ourselves on the screen. The writing should add to or change audience perceptions. Good writing and direction are critical to the success of this production.

Use the camera as a tool for cinematic interpretation. You will create meaning through your creative decisions about lighting, camera placement, lens choice, coverage, movement, and continuity planning. Carefully analyze the dramatic (or comedic) situation to determine the best aesthetic choices. Be especially careful to motivate camera moves. You may track, dolly, pan and tilt, but avoid zooms. Handheld camerawork is permitted if it yields results superior to a tripod shot--- that is the inherent unsteadiness adds to the meaning and "grace" of the shot.

Use no more than two rolls of Tri-X Reversal. Final running time should be 1 to 2 minutes.

FINAL FILM PROJECT

The recommended length for the final project is 3-5 minutes. Each student in the class will write and pitch a script for a final project. The class will choose 7 scripts (from the 21 submitted) to be produced as final projects.

Students will then form new 3 person production teams. Please note that the projects are collaborative. It is **not** true that the screenwriter will be the director of the film, or have more than an equal voice in the creation of the film.

Script

Each student will prepare a Treatment and/or Script. A treatment is a brief narrative description of the production. A script may be in A-V form (see reader) and include the sequences of audio and visuals for the entire film. Storyboards are encouraged. Your treatment must address the following concerns:

WHAT --- the story and plot

WHO --- the characters

WHERE --- setting, costume, period

WHY --- do we care

STYLE --- dramatic or comedic; genre; formal or realistic

Be sure to make a copy of your treatment and/or script for every student and the instructor. Also make 22 copies of the script evaluation form so you can record your ratings of all submitted scripts.

Your two to three minute pitch should include:

Your Name
Title of the Production
Concept and highlights of major sequences
Your personal motivation and
ENTHUSIASM/PASSION for the film

The main distinction between this assignment and the first two film assignments is that they were designed to familiarize you with the basic elements of filmmaking, whereas the final project requires that you synthesize these elements into a more complex production.

I am especially interested in the scope of the problems you take on and how creative you are in solving them.

Shoot your film in black and white negative. Plus X Negative 7231 Daylight 80 Tungsten 64 or Double X Negative D 250 T 200 [Color negative may be permitted, if you make a compelling case that color is essential to your production.]

Sound must be mixed from at least three tracks --- dialog, FX and music. **Uncleared, copyrighted music will not be permitted.** See reader for information regarding telecine transfer procedures.

SCRIPT EVALUATION FOR FINAL PROJECT

Working Title

Evaluate each component on a scale from 0 to 10

PLOT STRUCTURE _____ Points

Will it sustain your interest? Is there a strong beginning, middle and end?

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT _____ Points

Are the characters compelling? Believable? Are you emotionally connected to the characters?

DIALOG/VOICE OVER/NARRATION _____ Points

Does it ring true? Is it appropriate to the character, setting, and time?
Is the piece too talky? (Award full points for films that will succeed with limited dialog.)

VISUAL EXCITEMENT _____ Points

Is the story told visually?

ORIGINALITY _____ Points

Is the project unusual? Bold? Does it explore and test forms and techniques?

FEASIBILITY _____ Points

Is it "doable" within the time and budgets proposed.
Are the sets, locations, talent and costumes likely to be available.

YOUR INTEREST _____ Points

How much would you like to work to work on this film?

BONUS POINTS (No more than 10) _____ Points

How likely is this to be a better than average (5) film?
Consider passion, resources available, budget, and intrinsic interest and appeal of the subject matter.

TOTAL POINTS (80 Possible) _____ Points

SURVEY

TFM 122 16mm Film

NAME _____

AGE _____ (circle) FROSH SOPH JR SR

EMPLOYER _____

Successful collaboration in groups means working together outside of class. Please describe the days when you are most free and evenings and weekend times when you are **NOT** available.

I am interested in learning about making NARRATIVE film, DOCUMENTARY film, and EXPERIMENTAL film. [Circle all that apply.]

Comments:

In the space below list three specific topics you would like to have covered during this course.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are your career goals?

Describe your previous production experience, if any.

Do you have previous tapes or films you'd be willing to screen for the class? If so, please describe and include the year of production and running time.

OVER PLEASE

What do you expect to gain from this course?

What do you feel makes a course "work" for you? What makes a course a good learning experience?

Do you generally feel comfortable participating in class discussions?

Do you like collaborating with others on group projects?

Give an example of a film or filmmaker you consider "great." Why?

Other comments or questions:

