

## **COMM 299: SYLLABUS**

### **Themes in Film and Intermediate Digital Media**

**John Felice Rome Center**

Fall 2019

Wednesdays | 2:00pm - 5:00pm

Prof. Mariarosy Calleri

Email: mcalleri@luc.edu

Office Hours: Wed. 1:00pm - 2:00pm

#### **Course Description**

COMM 299 "Themes in Film and Intermediate Digital Media" is a hands-on introduction to writing, directing and editing short narrative films, documentaries, promos and music videos. Students participate in the development, production, direction and post-production of a short subject from five to ten minutes in length.

This class has no pre-requisites besides the desire to learn how to make a film and get familiar with digital media production.

This course introduces students to the technical, conceptual, and aesthetic skills involved in video production placing an emphasis on using the audiovisual language to fullest capacity of artistic expression. In addition to the multiple skills and concepts involved with writing a script for a specific film genre and planning a video production, the course also introduces students to the principles and technologies of lighting, audio recording, sound mixing, and non-linear digital video editing. Special focus is given to producing content for successful web distribution.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

On completion of the course students should be able to:

- Develop a script and a production schedule for a video project
- Assess audiovisual quality standards
- Identify film genres and characteristics of different audiovisual narratives
- Communicate ideas, concepts and stories using the artform of video making.
- Understand the different phases of the entire filmmaking and digital media production process.
- Produce a short narrative, documentary, music video or promo for DVD and web distribution.

#### **Required Text / Materials**

Suggested readings found at the IC library.

#### **Attendance Policy**

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy. Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student.

- For all classes meeting once a week, students cannot incur more than one unexcused absence.
- For all classes meeting twice a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.
- For all classes meeting three times a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.



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This course meets once a week, thus a total of ONE unexcused absence will be permitted. Unexcused absences beyond these will result in a lowering of your final grade: *the final course grade will drop by 1% for each additional absence.*

**Note:** course attendance is based on prompt class attendance, preparation and active participation in class discussions.

### **Assessment Components**

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|--|-----|
| • Participation                                  | 20% |
| • Midterm (screenplay and preproduction package) | 40% |
| • Final Film Project                             | 40% |

### **Grading**

94-100: A  
90-93: A-  
87-89: B+  
84-86: B  
80-83: B-  
77-79: C+  
74-76: C  
70-73: C-  
67-69: D+  
60-66: D  
59 or lower: F

### **Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable at the JFRC and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago's guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola's standards here: [http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicintegrity.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml). You are responsible to comply with the LUC Student Handbook.

### **Late or Missed Assignments**

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor.

### **Accessibility Accommodations**

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.

## Course Schedule

**Sep 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Week One – Introduction.** Overview of main film genres and differences between documentary and fiction. Screening of previous student films for class discussion about themes, visual styles, locations and elements that are easily accessible for projects to be filmed in Rome. Brainstorming of story ideas. Students will group into teams.

Assignment: Students write a one-page proposal with the theme, genre and story they'd like to develop into a film.

**Sept 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Week Two – From the idea to the storyline.** Students' presentations of ideas for film. Each student will read in class the one-page paper describing the story and topic he or she would like to work on, and via review, group projects will be chosen from those ideas. Getting familiar with scriptwriting, learning the fundamentals of writing a storyline and a screenplay. Students will work in groups on the development of the storyline and its characters.

Assignment: Students work in teams to develop the chosen storyline, max 3 pages, and main characters' bios.

**Sept 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Week Three – Visit to Cinecittà Studios** to understand the secrets of Great Italian and International Cinema. **Note:** this field study will take place at 3pm after the Papal audience.

Assignment: Each film team researches and selects an example of film to use as reference and model for their project.

**Sept 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Week Four – From the storyline to the final script.** Class presentation of group projects: storylines due. Each group will show some examples of films they want to use as reference models for their project. Script breakdown and analysis: we'll learn how to create production schedules and shooting lists from final scripts.

Assignment: Each team starts writing the screenplay for their film project, max 10/12 pages according to industry standards explained in class.

**October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 Week Five – Camera, light and sound class.** Learning the grammar of film language. Overview of directing and editing styles through video examples. Hands-on exercises on camera, light and sound recording.

Assignment: Each team writes a production schedule based on their completed screenplay.

**October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Week Six – Class presentations of pre-production materials. Midterm.** Screenplays and production schedules due. Class discussion and Professor's final feedback on pre-production materials before shooting. Film teams will set up casting calls and research sets and locations for their projects.

Assignment: Each team schedules auditions and goes on location scouting to check light and sound on set.

**FALL BREAK OCTOBER 11-20, 2019**



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**October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 Week Seven – Casting, Rehearsals and Location Scouting.** Film teams will audition fellow students, JFRC staff or external people and will do some rehearsals to choose talents and extras for their projects.

**October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Week Eight – Start of Production phase.** Film teams go out to shoot and are required to check in before end of class to screen dailies for feedback. Every group has to show 3 to 5 minutes of video footage in class.

Assignment: Each team shoots the scenes written in their script.

**November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Week Nine - Shooting.** Students will continue shoot on set or location and check in before end of class to present the work they've done.

Assignment: Each team completes the shooting of the scenes written in their script.

**November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Week Ten – End of shooting phase.** Film teams complete shooting and start importing video material in the editing system with Final Cut Pro. They learn how to edit with Final Cut Pro.

Assignment: Students log their footage.

**November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Week Eleven – Start of Postproduction phase.** Film teams start the editing of their projects under the supervision of the Professor and of a professional editor.

Assignment: Each team starts the editing of their film in Final Cut pro using the basic tools.

**November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Week Twelve – Editing.** Film teams are required to show in class rough cuts in process for feedback. Every group has to show at least 3 to 5 minutes of edited footage for feedback. Students learn how to use advanced editing tools as key-frames, match color etc...

Assignment: Each team refines the editing of their film in Final Cut pro using the more advanced tools and effects explained in class.

**December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Week Thirteen – Final films due.** Students work on sound mix – sound is very important for film quality standard and sound work is included in final grade. Film teams are required to polish their video projects adding transitions and if necessary color correction and special effects. Final films must have titles and complete credits.

Assignment: Each team completes the editing of their film and exports the final project for public screening at JFRC Students' Film Festival.

**December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Week Fourteen - Final screening at JFRC Students' Film Festival.**