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MART 508.01: Film Production

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University of Montana-Media Arts
film production
MAR 508/Sec 1, 4 credits Fall 2013
Course times: Tuesdays 9:10-11am
Location: McGill Hall

Course Syllabus

Instructor: Mark Shogren
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Telephone: 243 4534
E-Mail: mark.shogren@umontana.edu
Office Hours: Arrange

Course Description:

This course is a technical preparation course for students entering the Media Arts graduate program. The course will introduce students to basic digital video camera operation and maintenance, basic sound recording and editing, the Macintosh computer system, Capturing video into the Non-linear editing system Final Cut Pro, basic editing and exporting of projects to various media.

Course Expectations:

1. Attendance is mandatory. 3 unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.
2. Crewing for your production unit is mandatory. The creation of film/video projects are possible only through collaboration. Students will be evaluated on their level of participation in class and on shoots/meetings through peer evaluations.
3. There are no make-up exams or extensions given for projects or written work. All work must be turned in on time, typewritten, and in hard copy form. No e-mailed or electronic forms of work will be accepted.
4. You will be expected to meet with me and your production units outside of class time as needed.
5. All students are required to have a small fire-wire drive as described in class. Any student unable to purchase a drive must speak with me.

Course requirements:

1. weekend film fest%
2. shoot an action
3. chase scene
4. Mid-Term Exam / proficiency test
5. commercial project
6. *Final Project-includes production book/peer evaluations

Required Text:

The Filmmaker's Handbook by Steven Ascher and Edward pincus/Plume-ISBN 0452279577

Suggested Texts:

Gaffers, Grips, Best Boys., Eric Taub

Before you shoot., Helen Garvy, Dan Bessie

Producing the short film and Video., Peter Rea et al

Grading criteria for short film projects:

Clarity/articulation of character- All characters must be clearly defined in behavioral terms (actions they take). Characters needs, wants, aims must be clear and understandable to an audience. People should be able to relate to your characters.

Clarity/articulation of circumstances-Time, space and surroundings must be clear.

Story- all works must have a clear story that contains a beginning, middle and end.

Dramatic Conflict/tension- Characters must have a journey. In other words characters must have a need. Desire, aim and are somehow prohibited from satisfying it. This underlying tension must be evident in all scenes (though it can change) as much as is possible.

Writing- Use simple, brief and visually descriptive writing to describe and see what is happening. Don't explain or use plot points. The action should be explanation enough for the audience to understand what is happening. When dialogue is used, it should be action in words revealing the character/not explaining circumstances.

Camera-Think carefully about every frame of your story as to its value in the story telling. Camera movement, non-movement, framing, hand held, stationary etc. are used to strengthen the ideas in the story.

Editing- making the best possible piece with the footage you have regardless of your original intent.