

Tompkins Cortland Community College
Master Course Syllabus

Course Discipline and Number: COMM 240

Year: 2024-2025

Course Title: Non Fiction & Fiction Field Production

Credit Hours: 3

I. Course Description:

This course is an intermediate-level fiction/non-fiction production course that emphasizes the production skills, storytelling concepts, and the legal and ethical framework for successful documentary and short story productions. Also covered are different stylistic approaches to the genre and concepts related to the video maker's "voice" within his or her work. The aesthetic focus is on creative authorship, personal vision, and the exploration of strategies and methods for transforming vision into reality. The technical focus is on increasing sophistication and skill within specific areas of field production: sound recording, camera work, lighting, production planning, and computer-based nonlinear editing systems. Short projects are completed. Prerequisites: COMM 111; COMM 140; prior completion or concurrent enrollment in ENGL 101. 3 Cr. (2 Lec., 2 Lab.) Fall and spring semesters.

II. Additional Course Information:

1. This is a required course in the Digital Cinema A.S. degree program.
2. Students will work on either a documentary and/or a short film as part of this class. They will need to write, cast, and work with a crew to create their short film.
3. Blackboard (the college's online learning platform) will be used for assignments, handouts, film clips, due dates, and grades.
4. Hard drive (at least 1 TB), over the ear head phones, SD card, and black 3-ring binder required.

III. Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Develop project ideas, treatments, and pre-production materials, and produce ideas into introductory-level professional video products.
2. Set up and use professional style video recording, lighting, and audio recording equipment at a beginning level in the field for electronic news gatherers (ENG) and electronic field production (EFP).
3. Edit digital media assets at a beginning level using industry standard non-linear editing software.
4. Evaluate video projects, critically think about ways to improve, and implement changes.

IV. Tompkins Cortland General Education Goals & SUNY Competencies

☒ Critical thinking

Media often address social issues, and/or can stir social unrest. Students will discuss the role media and filmmakers have in society. Students will view film and documentary clips and write short evaluations based on assigned topics. They will be expected to participate in critical analysis discussions in the course room. Students will be expected to add to the discussion via a round-robin session after clips.

☒ Social/Global Awareness

Students will watch and analyze documentaries and short movies as they compose their own. The global reach and immediacy of digital communication has forever changed the landscape of media. Student now need to understand their

role in an inclusive society. Students will be looking at features with an eye towards raising their awareness of diversity, power, and reporting.

☒ Information Management

Students will be working with computers using basic and more advanced research to locate, evaluate, and synthesize information from a variety of sources.

☐ This course does not address any of the above Goals/Competencies.

V. Essential Topics/Themes

1. Preparation of short narrative pieces for production (find, research, write)
2. Organizing a project and creating a production timeline and budget
3. Working as part of a production team to create a short non-fiction and/or fiction video (using advanced camera, microphone, lighting & editing techniques)
4. Working on a professional set in a variety of roles, including effective processes for working with actors
5. Performing advanced editing techniques (composition in motion)
6. Using scripts and logs to create a professional-level edited project
7. Editing video and audio clips
8. Exporting video

VI. Methods of Assessment/Evaluation

Method	% Course Grade
1. Professionalism, effort, & attendance	15-25%
2. Tests & assignments	40-50%
3. Project assignments (short films and/or documentaries)	30-40%

VII. Texts

Required:

Bernard, Sheila. *Documentary Storytelling: Creative Nonfiction on Screen*. 3rd ed. 2011.

Recommended:

Medoff and Tanquary. *Portable Video: ENG & EFP*. Focal Press, © 2016

Editions listed are current as of date of syllabus. More recent editions may be used.

VIII. Bibliography of Supplemental Materials

1. Browne, Steve. <i>Video Editing: A Postproduction Primer</i> . Woburn: Focal Press, 4 th ed © 2004.
2. Dancyger, Ken. <i>The Technique of Film and Video Editing: History, Theory, and Practice</i> . 6 th edition. Woburn: Focal Press, © 2019.

3.	Reisz, Karel and Gavin Millar, <i>The Technique of Film Editing</i> . Boston: Reissue of 2 nd edition. Focal Press, © 2010.
4.	Lutz, Catherine A., and Jane L Collins. <i>Reading National Geographic</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, © 1993.
5.	Mackendrick, Alexander. <i>On Filmmaking: An Introduction to the Craft of the Director</i> . Faber & Faber, New York, @ 2004.
6.	
7.	Murch, Walter. <i>In the Blink of an Eye</i> . Silman-James Press, California, 2nd edition @ 2001.
8.	Willis, Deborah. <i>Picturing Us: African American Identity in Photography</i> . Boston: New Press, © 1996.
9.	Willis, E. and Henry Aldridge. <i>Television, Cable, and Radio: A Communications Approach</i> . Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, © 1992.
10.	Zettl, Herbert. <i>Television Production Handbook</i> , 10th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Thomson Learning, ©2015

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IX: Other Learning Resources

Audiovisual
None specified
Electronic
Camera and editing lab.
Other
www.vimeo.com account (free membership)

Attendance Policy: To maintain good grades, regular attendance in class is necessary. Absence from class is considered a serious matter and absence never excuses a student from class work. It is the responsibility of all instructors to distribute reasonable attendance policies in writing during the first week of class. Students are required to comply with the attendance policy set by each of their instructors. Students are not penalized if they are unable to attend classes or participate in exams on particular days because of religious beliefs, in accordance with Chapter 161, Section 224-a of the Education Law of the State of New York. Students who plan to be absent from classroom activity for religious reasons should discuss the absence in advance with their instructors. See college catalog for more information.

Services for Students with Disabilities: It is the College's policy to provide, on an individual basis, appropriate academic adjustments for students with disabilities, which may affect their ability to fully participate in program or course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Coordinator of Access and Equity Services, to discuss their particular need for accommodations. All course materials are available in alternate formats upon request.

Academic Integrity: Every student at Tompkins Cortland Community College is expected to act in an academically honest fashion in all aspects of his or her academic work: in writing papers and reports, in taking examinations, in performing laboratory experiments and reporting the results, in clinical and cooperative learning experiences, and in attending to paperwork such as registration forms. Any written work submitted by a student must be his or her own. If the student uses the words or ideas of someone else, he or she must cite the source by such means as a footnote. Our guiding principle is that any honest evaluation of a student's performance must be based on that student's work. Any action taken by a student that would result in misrepresentation of someone else's work or actions as the student's own

— such as cheating on a test, submitting for credit a paper written by another person, or forging an advisor's signature — is intellectually dishonest and deserving of censure.

Several degree programs offer student learning opportunities (such as internships, field work, and clinical experiences) outside the standard classroom setting. As part of the learning process, students must understand and engage in conduct that adheres to principles guiding employment within the professional workplace. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, academic integrity, accountability, reliability, respect, use of appropriate language and dress, civility, professional ethics, honesty, and trustworthiness. Disciplinary action may be initiated for inappropriate conduct occurring while participating in any course-related project or event.
