

Documentary Filmmaking

Instructors: Alice Carron & Daniel Tillman

DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

This course in Documentary Filmmaking will explore the creative, technical, and practical aspects of creating a documentary film. Students will receive hands-on instruction in conducting background research, concept development, preproduction analysis, production development, post-production, and distribution. The final project for the course will be a short documentary film. Documentary filmmaking can help us learn about the world around us, and share that information with others. Through this course students will begin to explore the exciting world of documentary filmmaking.

The course will have a lecture component, computer lab component, and field sessions, and will be based out of the GMU, Fairfax Campus.

Learning Objectives:

1. Discuss the history and evolution of documentary filmmaking.
2. Understand and describe the fundamental principles of documentary filmmaking.
3. Explain the ethical limitations of documentary filmmaking.
4. Engage in the basic steps of documentary filmmaking.

Field Experience:

Students will actively engage in the entire range of documentary filmmaking activities, in the classroom, in workshops, on the George Mason campus, and in the surrounding areas. Working in groups or as individuals, students will explore how to use a short documentary film to articulate a concept and defend that point of view.

Prerequisites: None.

Required Materials:

Hampe, Barry. (1997) *Making Documentary Films and Reality Videos*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

OPTIONAL: Prince, Stephen. (1997) *Movies and Meaning, An Introduction to Film*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

A journal.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Day	Topic	Readings / projects due Readings are done prior to class.
Monday Jan 9	<p>Morning</p> <p>Introduction to Documentary Filmmaking.</p> <p>Afternoon</p> <p>Historical Background</p>	<p>Hampe: Chapters 1 & 2, p. 1-29</p> <p>Hampe: Chapters 3 & 4 & 5, p. 30 – 68</p>
Tuesday Jan 10	<p>Morning</p> <p>Concept development</p> <p>Afternoon</p> <p>Concept development.</p> <p>Starting to develop your project. Ideas to realization</p> <p>Storyboarding / Concept maps</p> <p>Treatment / synopsis</p>	<p>Hampe: Chapters 6 & 7 & 8 & 9, p. 69 – 118</p>
Wednesday Jan 11	<p>Morning</p> <p>Preproduction Analysis I</p> <p>Afternoon</p> <p>Introduction to camera</p>	<p>Hampe: Chapters 10 & 11 & 12, p. 119 – 163</p>
Thursday	<p>Morning</p> <p>Introduction to editing</p>	

	<p>Afternoon</p> <p>Individual / team meetings</p>	
<p>Friday Jan 13th</p>	<p>Morning</p> <p>Preproduction Analysis II</p> <p>Afternoon</p> <p>Time to work on / revise midterm project</p>	<p>Hampe: Chapters 13 & 14 & 15, p. 164 – 198</p> <p>Midterm Project due by 5:00 pm</p>
<p>Monday Jan 16th</p>	<p>Morning</p> <p>Mid-term test</p> <p>Afternoon</p> <p>Production Development I</p>	<p>Mid-term test</p> <p>Hampe: Chapters 16 & 17 & 18 & 19, p. 199 – 246</p>
<p>Tuesday Jan 17th</p>	<p>Morning</p> <p>Production Development I</p> <p>Afternoon</p> <p>Documentary filming</p> <p>Ongoing consultations</p>	<p>Hampe: Chapters 20 & 21 & 22, p. 247 – 276</p>
<p>Wednesday Jan 18th</p>	<p>Morning</p> <p>Documentary filming</p> <p>Afternoon</p> <p>Post production / editing</p> <p>Documentary filming continues</p> <p>Ongoing consultations all day</p>	<p>Hampe: Chapters 23 & 24 & 25, p. 277 – 314</p>

<p>Thursday Jan 19th</p>	<p>Morning</p> <p>Post production / editing</p> <p>Documentary filming continues</p> <p>Afternoon</p> <p>Post production / editing</p>	
<p>Friday Jan 20th</p>	<p>Morning</p> <p>Final exam</p> <p>Distribution</p> <p>Afternoon</p> <p>Film festival</p>	<p>Hampe: Appendix, p. 315 - 318</p> <p>Final exam</p>

GRADING PERCENTAGES

- 10% Attendance/Participation
- 10% Homework Exercises
- 10% Class quizzes
- 10% Midterm Test
- 15% Midterm Project
- 10% Final Test
- 10% Filmmaking Journal
- 25% Final Project: Short Documentary Film

The final project is a capstone exercise, requiring the student to apply what they have learned through a short documentary film. The short documentary film should articulate a clear concept/thesis, and defend that point of view. The grade will reflect the quality of the analysis and presentation, and the impact on the class audience at the last meeting. Whether the instructors agree with the point of view will have no impact on the grade.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTORS

Alice Carron is Founder & CEO of Artreach Productions. Artreach produces movies, multimedia, and live events. Ms. Carron has served as Executive Producer for numerous programs, including those sponsored by NASA, FAA, USAF Centennial of Flight, Women's Memorial Foundation at Arlington National Cemetery, New England Air Museum, Seattle Museum of Flight, Texas Women's University, George Mason University, University of Madrid, College of the Bahamas, and more. She has a Graduate Degree in Visual Technology and Arts Management from George Mason University.

Daniel Tillman is Technical Director for Artreach Productions. Directing credits include "Journey to Mars: A 3D Exploration", "Fire In The Ocean: The Women of Andros Island", "Learning to Recognize Contour Signatures", and "Junkanoo 2002: A Three-Part Series". Editing credits include "Blue Horizon", "Above & Beyond: 100 Years of Women In Aviation", and all movies directed. Cinematography credits include "Navajo Women Warriors", "Blue Horizon", "Tattoo Sky", and the fictional short "Polish", Winner of the Award Winner For Innovation and Daring, 2002 Fayetteville Film Festival. Military training includes Parris Island Marine Boot Camp and Marine Combat Engineer School. He has a Master's Degree in Architecture from Virginia Tech.