

## **EMF 461: Documentary Film & Video**

Fall 2011 Mon & Wed 2:00 - 3:15 pm Media Center Room 009

### **Instructor: Dr. David Reiss**

Office MC 212

CELL: 301-806-2843

Email: dreiss@towson.edu

#### Office Hours:

MON 12:30-2p by Appointment

TUE 12:30-2p Drop In

WED 12:30-2p by Appointment

THU 12:30-2p Drop In

All required readings will be handouts or online via Class Website:

**<http://www.davidreiss.com/FALL2011DOC.html>**

#### Suggested Texts:

Hubris-Cherrier, Mick. Voice and Vision: A Creative Approach to Narrative Film and DV

Production. Focal Press/Elsevier, 2007.

Final Cut Pro 7: Visual QuickPro Guide (Paperback) by Lisa Brenneis.

ISBN-10: 0321636813 // ISBN-13: 978-0321636812

All required readings will be handouts or online at:

**<http://www.davidreiss.com/Fall2011DOC.html>**

The course begins with 4 weeks of intensive theoretical learning combined with “hands-on” workshops of DSLR HD Video Camera, Lighting, Location Sound recording, and FCP Editing in the 2 HD suites. During this period, students will read relevant texts on film theory and view documentary films. This affords students the singular chance to watch and dissect a film, and then discuss the thinking behind the creation of that work with the filmmakers themselves. Simultaneously, the students will be listening to lectures on various aspects of film preproduction, story and treatments, theory, reading relevant texts, and completing a series of preliminary assignments. These assignments help each student learn to:

Research stock footage and archival material of all kinds

Learn about how to envision a story that can become a film

Write and create a strong story

Combine many elements to create a whole picture (narration, visuals, audio, quotations, etc)

The overall goal of the program's first month is that by the time students pick up a camera or sit down at to edit, they will have learned – from practice, from study, from lectures, from professionals – how to best tell a true story, by using the complicated blend of elements that make up a documentary film. Simultaneously, while they're learning the technical tools, students are completing individual assignments, which are practice for the real film they will soon make.

Month 2 we move Pre-Production for the Final Film, and continue workshop mode in the classroom w/ the Canon 60D DSLR HD Video package w/ double system Audio recording, and the VML Final Cut Pro HD Suites. These next 4-weeks are devoted to advanced techniques and technical training, shooting and editing assignments.

Months 3 & 4: During the last two months of the course, students will shoot and edit a short 7-12 minute documentary film from script to screen.

#### REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

1-VML approved External Hard Drive w/ Firewire 800 and 7200 RPM speed for HD.  
1-Professional Headphones per VML recommendations.

REQUIRED SUPPLIES: 4-5 DVD-R Discs

#### GEAR

For All Course Video projects we will share the TWO (2) DSLR Canon 60D HD camera packages, with audio and lighting equipment. Final Film WEEKLY checkouts will be allowed ONLY if scheduled and approved by the instructor ahead of time.

A newly updated VML guide will be issued and reviewed on the proper procedures for checking out equipment and using the VML Final Cut Pro editing workstations.

MEDIA DRIVE: ONLY A VML approved FireWire Media Drive (7200 rpm w/ FW 800) is acceptable for this and future EMF production courses. This will allow you to take your projects and edit them on any of the Media Center's Apple-based Final Cut Pro Studio stations, or any off campus Mac w/ FCP, either on a laptop or desktop system. NO USB Drives allowed!

EMF GOOGLE GROUP LIST SERVE: All EMF students are required to join the EMF Google Group List Serve at <http://groups.google.com/group/TowsonEMF>. This will guarantee that you receive daily postings regarding digital media, video, film, and audio production topics including festivals, special screening, guest speakers, film/video crew needs, internships, and jobs.

Use this email address (TowsonEMF@googlegroups.com) to post your own messages to the group. The main page will also archive all posts.

**EMF ID CARDS:** EMF IDs MUST be obtained in the equipment cage (MC 007) during the first weeks of the term by presenting a valid Towson photo ID (your OneCard), passing a written policy test, and presenting proof of production class enrollment. Validation of production class enrollment is obtained via production instructor signatures on the bottom of Equipment Use and Loan Agreements (which will be distributed by your instructor). NO Valid EMF ID – NO Equipment Access.

Students must present their valid EMF ID Card each time they check out equipment or use EMF facilities. No other ID will be accepted. NO EXCEPTIONS!

Should violations of policy occur, students are required to surrender their EMF ID upon request by ML Supervisor, ML Assistant Supervisor, or ML staff. Please see “Media Labs Handbook”.

### **CLASS POLICIES**

No EATING or DRINKING is permitted at ANY time in the EMF classroom. The ONLY exception is a beverage bottle you can CLOSE and SEAL, and use occasionally.

#### **ATTENDANCE:**

This class meets ONCE a week for 15 weeks and attendance is mandatory. This is a vigorous advanced film production course with in-class workshops, multiple screenings, in-class assignments and discussions, so you will need to be sure you make it to every class.

Each unexcused absence will result a one full grade lowering of the final grade. More than three unexcused absences will result in a failed grade in the course. A written note from qualified individuals is required for absences resulting from illness, family emergency, etc. The instructor may allow absences in certain situations, but only if the student has talked with the instructor beforehand. For Emergencies the instructor can be notified via cell phone. The responsibility of making up for missed classes will be solely on the student.

#### **LATENESS:**

Since most of the class is commuting – I ask EACH of you to safely TEXT or CALL my cell phone – 301-806-2843 W/ Name in text/message, if you are going to be late. This is the ONLY acceptable way of coming into class late. PLEASE do everything you can – like leaving early to anticipate parking, and get here ON TIME – as we’ll be covering key topics at the start of class.

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

CELL PHONES are NOT Permitted to be used at ANY time in my class. PERIOD. If you a text in my class you will be asked to leave the classroom.

If you must use your laptop for NOTE TAKING, be advised that any activity OTHER than note taking is not tolerated – PERIOD. We’ll be screening work in class and the

laptops screens are a distraction for OTHER students. During screenings laptops must be closed.

EVERYONE needs to be FOCUSED on the FRONT of the class. Recent research findings indicate that some college students who multitask during class perform at the same level as those who NEVER came to the class, and my doctoral research <http://www.cjlt.ca/index.php/cjlt/article/view/164/154> has shown LEARNING requires a SINGULAR FOCUS for remembering information.

#### ASSIGNMENTS:

Students are expected to complete assigned exercises before class on the due dates listed in syllabus or as announced in class.

LATE WORK is NOT accepted without prior arrangement w/ instructor.

#### PARTICIPATION:

Students are expected to participate in class critiques, discussions and exercises with undivided attention.

#### DISABILITY POLICY

This class adheres the Towson University Disabilities Policy. If you have a documented disability, please see me right away after the first class privately, so we discuss how to best accommodate your specific needs.

#### PLAGARISM

The EMF department has a published statement on Plagiarism, and Towson University has statements on both Academic Dishonesty and Student Academic Integrity, all of which pertains to your work in this course. ALL WORK must be newly created for THIS COURSE.

#### CIVILITY CODE

All EMF students, staff, and faculty are committed to collegial and academic citizenship demonstrating high standards of humane, ethical, professional, and civil behavior in all interactions.

EMF places a priority on learning. We value the inherent worth and dignity of every person, thereby fostering a community of mutual respect. Students have the right to a learning environment free of disruptive behaviors. Faculty have the right to define appropriate behavioral expectations in the classroom and expect students to abide by them. Faculty have the responsibility to manage and address classroom disruption. Staff have the right and responsibility to define appropriate behaviors necessary to conduct any university activity free of disruption or obstruction.

The use of offensive, threatening or abusive language, writing, or behavior will not be tolerated and can lead to academic dismissal. Further information about civility can be found in Appendix F of the university catalog.

**SCHEDULE:** Managing your schedule is critical for this course, and anticipating other course conflicting projects due dates.

**GRADING POLICY**

The grade of A is awarded for excellence. An A student turns in all work on time with consistently excellent standards of quality, creativity, and original thinking. This person is fully engaged in the content of the class and performs exceptionally in presentations and critiques.

The student shows superior knowledge and practice of the basic and advanced content of the course.

The grade of B+ is awarded for VERY Good Work: students who have consistently completed all work on time and in a high quality manner. The work shows creative thinking and care in presentation. The student has mastered all of the basic and most of advanced content of the course.

The grade of B is awarded for Good Work: students who have consistently completed most work on time and in a high quality manner. The work shows some creative thinking, and care in presentation. The student has mastered all of the basic and some of advanced content of the course.

The grade of C is earned when most class work is turned in and the student has participated in to some extent. The student has mastered all of the basic and none of advanced content of the course.

The grade of D or F is given for work that is incomplete, late, and/or does not demonstrate mastery of the basic material of the course. This grade is below average or failing work in the class.

**Course Evaluation/Grading**

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>POINTS</u>
Final HD Documentary Film	50
HD Interview EDIT Segment	25
Stock HD Video Shoot	15
Written Assignments	10

## **Written, Practical, and Final Projects: MON or WED DUE Dates**

### **Written Assignment #1: Shooting Script**

*DUE September 12th*

This first assignment is meant to give students their first crack at putting together a short (two-minute) “film” telling some kind of story. But, this “film” will not actually be comprised of moving images. Rather, find photographs or other visual materials (advertisements, books, archival images, etc) and tell the story of your choice, backing it up with visuals. An example of the shooting script’s structure should be as follows:

Timecode	Narration	Visuals Reference
00:00	Here you write your narration, timed out in the left hand column under timecode – so if it takes 6 seconds to speak this narration, then the left column BELOW this one will read 00:06.	Description of photograph 1 which visually portrays what you’re saying in the narration on the left.
00:06	Here you’ll put the second line of narration. If it takes 8 seconds to speak this narration then you’ll add the 8 seconds to the previous 6 and end up with 14, indicated below left.	Description of photograph 2, which visually portrays what you’re saying in the narration on the left.
00:14	Etc	Etc.

Remember, you can choose any topic that interests you. Put your photographs and visual materials in order, with a numbering system that makes sense so it’s easy to follow on the shooting script itself. Time it out with a watch to make sure the time-code is accurate and that the piece is exactly two minutes long. You may find yourself with a job one day where you need to be this accurate; so make sure that you follow the time requirements.

### **Written Assignment #2: Treatment for Final Film**

*Due WED September 19th*

Everyone must submit a treatment for a final documentary film, as well as pitch their film idea to the class. The written assignment is a one- to two-page description of the story you plan to tell. It is a thought paper, and can really be any length, but for this assignment’s purposes, 1-2 pages will suffice. Your treatment should contain a short description of the project you plan to do, some background on the subject, give a sense of how you will tell the story (e.g. the storyline), detail the kinds of materials you are going to access for the project, and give some thoughts on who you will interview. *It’s somewhat of a sales piece, a way to put your best foot forward in introducing a film you want to make.*

### **Written Assignment #3: Identifying and Securing Locations.**

*Due MON October 3rd*

But before you can ever go out and shoot anything, you need to “pre-produce” a location – and that is what this assignment is about.

Each student must “pre-produce” two (2) locations, one indoor and one outdoor to ADD to their final film treatment. You’ll need to write up a paragraph about each location. Pre-producing means that you need to obtain information about that location (what it is, what happens there), and you need to say what kind of thing you would shoot if you were to go there. For example, if shooting in a pottery studio, you’d explain that you’d be shooting people working on the wheel, loading a kiln, etc., and explain whom you would interview there. Also, call the person responsible for these locations and make sure it would be OK (hypothetically) if you were to come for two or three hours and shoot video for a class, interview people, what have you. Try to secure visually interesting locations, where there is action of some kind. PICK locations that would end up being used in a final film if your idea is chosen to shoot.

### **Practical Assignment #1: Interview Edit Segments**

*DUE MON September 26th*

In teams of 2, you will edit a 1 – 2 minute segment picking ONE EMF Professor Interview and B-roll w/ NAT Sound.

You can DOWNLOAD the MEDIA from HD Suite 1 & 2 for LOGGING purposes – but please EDIT footage TOGETHER in either HD Suite 1 or 2.

Especially look to include AUDIO Natural Sound to break up Interview flow. NO MUSIC. Mix final tracks w/ Firewire Mixer as Control Surface for FCP Mixer!

Use HDMI Intensity pro card and LCD HD Monitor for Color Correction.

### **Practical Assignment #2: DSLR HD – Stock Video Shoot**

*DUE MON October 3rd*

Everyone individually will be able to check out overnight and shoot with one of the TWO (2) Canon DSLR packages a variety of HD footage, and edit down their images to a :30 segment. NAT Sound must be recorded and used.

Shots must include:

EXT DAY nature shots: WS, MS, & CU.

TIMELAPSE: Either Sunrise or Sunset of city or nature

MACRO: Flower or Leaf

SKY: Using Polarizing Filter

*Final DVD Project must include a shot list.*

## **FINAL DOCUMENTARY HD FILM**

**Pitches:** *DUE: MON September 26th*

Based on your Final project Treatment and Location assignment -You will each pitch your final project story ideas. Following each pitch will be a short discussion with the class and another Professional about your Story, Characters, Locations, Audio and Visuals of the Film.

The class will decide which 4-5 topics look like the best stories, and will be allowed to select preferences for the final documentary film projects. break into 4-5 groups to create the 4-5 pitches.

**Location Scout Report:**

*DUE: MON October 3rd*

Each student will scout 2 locations. 1-EXT and 1-INT, type up details in report.

**Pre-interviews –**

*DUE: MON October 3rd*

Each team of students will pre-interview potential film characters and type up details and questions.

**HD Production: October 3rd thru November 14th**

Final Film Principal Photography Interviews and Visuals.

Teams will shoot their final films in ONE (1) full week check out: TUE PM to TUE AM during starting October 4<sup>th</sup> thru November 15<sup>th</sup>. *Final Film Footage including ALL Interviews MUST BE SHOT by November 15<sup>th</sup>.*

While shooting projects with the Canon 60D packages (2) you'll be converting DSLR Canon files on SD cards to Apple ProRes 422 HD files/footage with Compressor to your media drive(s). As you gather footage to use in your film (whether it be diverse shots of still images, interview footage, archival footage, etc.), you will need a systematic way to organize and access this material for it to be useful to you when you edit.

Screening every frame and logging EACH SHOT, not just clip is an essential part of the production process. It is the foundation of any good film, and if it isn't done and done well, then you will run into serious problems later. Basically, the purpose is to generate an organized bin with written information regarding CONTENT of all of your footage. From this will be able to select the portions of your footage that you will use to edit the film.

Final Film HD POST-Production Begins - Select Reels

*DUE: MON Nov 7th*

Editors will assemble the best sound bites and visuals in 2 sequences for screening on DVD. Remember we are looking for Broll with GOOD Nat Sound that can break up the interview bites.



### Final Film **Rough Cut 1**

*DUE: MON Nov 14th*

The Rough Cut is just that – the film takes shape but no polishing is done. It is an opportunity to move things around, add and subtract things, but keep it “big picture” – the finishing, fine-tuning editing will come LATER.

### Final Film **Fine Cut 1**

*DUE: MON Nov 21st*

After the rough-cut review, you will move forward in making changes and create the Fine Cut. At this point, you are honing and fine-tuning the elements of the film, based on suggestions made during rough-cut.

### Final Film **Film Title Sequence & Open**

30-60 second INTRO title sequence w/ visuals, titles, music, and credits.

*DUE: MON Nov 21st*

### Final Film **Fine Cut II - Picture Lock**

*DUE: MON Nov 28th*

After this Fine Cut II review, you’ll begin making those nitty-gritty changes that Editors get very enthusiastic about – dissolves, special effects, audio shingling, etc. You’ll also make final decisions about the film’s open and conclusion. The Editors can, at this point, work on making the film look really good, pacing the film and letting it breathe. Once it’s “done” it has achieved Picture Lock, which means that nothing will be moved again. Titles, credits and any final tweaks are made.

### Final Film **Sound Design and Mix**

*DUE: MON December 5th*

Sound design is the stage in which you will add any sound effects – all music, as well as special sound elements specific to your film. Sound design on the film is a process wherein the team listens to every bit of audio in the film, adjust the sound accordingly for clean quality, smooth transitions, and appropriate levels. NO MUSIC is to be used in the body in your final film, only for opening title sequence and ending close/credits.

### Final Film **Color Correction, Graphics & Final Exports.**

*DUE: Last Class – MON December 12th*

Final Film on a Video DVD and .mov file on a Data DVD.

## MON or WED DUE Dates for ALL Class Projects

- September 12<sup>th</sup> Written Assignment #1: Shooting Script  
September 19<sup>th</sup> Written Assignment #2: Treatment for Final Film  
September 19<sup>th</sup> Final Film Location Scout Report  
September 26<sup>th</sup> Final Film Pitches  
September 26<sup>th</sup> Practical Assignment #1: Interview Segments  
September 26<sup>th</sup> Final Film Pre-interview Assignment  
October 3<sup>rd</sup> Practical Assignment #2: Stock Video Shoot  
October 3<sup>rd</sup> Written Assignment #3: Locations

October 3<sup>rd</sup> thru November 14<sup>th</sup>

### FINAL FILM Pre-Production & Week of Production

- Oct 31<sup>st</sup> FINAL FILM INTERVIEW & B-ROLL SELECTS  
Nov 7<sup>th</sup> FINAL FILM Rough Cut 1  
Nov 14<sup>th</sup> FINAL FILM Fine Cut 1  
Nov 21<sup>st</sup> FINAL Film Title Sequence & Open  
Nov 28<sup>th</sup> FINAL FILM Fine Cut 2  
Dec 5<sup>th</sup> FINAL FILM Color Correct, Sound Design/Mix  
Dec 12<sup>th</sup> FINAL FILM Due on DVD – Class Screening  
Dec 19<sup>th</sup> Final HD Screenings in VB 204 TUE at 7:30

## **WEEKLY Schedule with DUE DATES IN ITALICS**

### **Week 1 – August 31 : First Class**

INTRODUCTION: Review of syllabus and course assignments.  
Intro to Canon 60D DSLR HD Video package.

### **Week 2 – Sept 5 & 7**

Lecture: The documentary film treatment.  
EDITING: Workshop/Overview of HD Suites 1 and 2.  
INTERVIEW: Shooting, Sound Recording & Lighting w/ DSLR Camera, Marantz recorder, and Rifa Softlight Kit Workshop.

### **Week 3 – Sept 12 & 14**

*DUE September 12<sup>th</sup> - Written Assignment #1: Shooting Script*  
Lecture: Location Scouting, mixing color temperatures, documentary shooting styles.  
DSLR Camera Workshop II w/ location sound recording.

### **Week 4 – Sept 19 & 21**

*DUE September 19<sup>th</sup> - Written Assignment #2: Treatment for Final Film*  
*DUE September 19<sup>th</sup> - Final Film Location Scout Report*  
Lecture: Documentary film clip screenings and discussion of various types of documentaries.

### **Week 5 – Sept 26 & 28**

*DUE September 26<sup>th</sup> - Final Film Pitches*  
*DUE September 26<sup>th</sup> - Practical Assignment #1: Interview Segments*  
*DUE September 26<sup>th</sup> - Final Film Pre-interview Assignment*  
Lecture: Documentary film clip screenings II/discussions of various types of documentaries.

### **Week 6 – Oct 3 & 5**

*DUE October 3<sup>rd</sup> - Practical Assignment #2: Stock Video Shoot*  
Lecture: TBD – Guest Speaker

### **Week 7 – Oct 10 & 12**

Lecture: Advanced HD editing techniques  
Class HD Suites exercises

**Week 8 - Oct 17 & 19**

IN PROGRESS: INTERVIEW & BROLL SELECT Reels on DVD, Screen & Critique.

**Week 9 - Oct 24 & 26**

IN PROGRESS: INTERVIEW & BROLL SELECT Reels on DVD, Screen & Critique.

**Week 10 - Oct 31 & Nov 2**

*DUE Oct 31<sup>st</sup> - FINAL FILM INTERVIEW & B-ROLL SELECTS Reels*  
Screen & Critique.

**Week 11 - Nov 8 & 10**

*DUE Nov 7<sup>th</sup> - FINAL FILM Rough Cut 1 on DVD, Screen & Critique.*

**Week 12 - Nov 14 & 16**

*DUE Nov 14<sup>th</sup> - FINAL FILM Fine Cut 1 on DVD, Screen & Critique.*

**Week 13 - Nov 21 (no class 23<sup>rd</sup> /T-Giving Break)**

*DUE Nov 21<sup>st</sup> - FINAL Film Title Sequence & Open*  
Screen & Critique.

**Week 14 - Nov 28 & Nov 30**

*DUE Nov 28<sup>th</sup> - FINAL FILM Fine Cut 2*  
Screen & Critique

**Week 15 - Dec 5 & 7: NO Regular CLASS meetings**

*DUE Dec 5<sup>th</sup> - FINAL FILM Color Correct, Sound Design/Mix.*  
Professor/Team Screening & Critique in HD Edit 1 or 2, with Media Drive/FCP or DVD.

**Week 16 - Final Week Dec 12 & 14**

*DUE Dec 12<sup>th</sup> - Final Projects due on Blue Ray HD or Widescreen SD DVD,*  
and a DATA DVD with exported final Quicktime file.  
Final Film Screenings in-class via DVD or data/media drive.

PUBLIC SCFEENING: VB 204 TUE at 7:30pm

## Course Bibliography

Aufderheide, P. (2007) *Documentary Film: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press

Brenneis, L. (2005) *Final Cut Pro 5 for Mac OS X : Visual QuickPro Guide*. Peachpit Press

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Rabiger, Michael. *Directing the Documentary 2nd ed.*, Focal Press, 1992.  
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Barry, A. M. S. (1997). *Visual intelligence: Perception, image and manipulation in visual communication*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

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Mayer, R. E. (2001). *Multi-media learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press