

**The University of Western Ontario  
Faculty of Information and Media Studies**

**MIT 1070A-001 / First Year Foundations in Media Production  
Course Outline – Fall 2019**

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**Instructor Information**

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**Course Information**

Lectures: Monday / 7 – 10 pm, FNB 1240  
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**Course Description**

This course introduces students to the technical and creative production of mediated communication. They will learn basic production principles and use these to analyze and create audio, visual and digital content related to and derived from mass communication through a variety of in-class exercises and creative projects.

The course will be structured around three learning modules:

- 1) Art and Techniques**
- 2) Screenwriting**
- 3) The Production Process**

The foundations of media production will be illustrated in the classroom with a wide range of audiovisual material: feature and short films, documentaries, TV and VOD series, interactive projects and social media content.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

**Art and Techniques:**

Analyze the basic principles of the creation of moving images.  
Apply those principles when creating images using consumer level devices.  
Create a series of still images using the basic principles of the creation of moving images.

**Screenwriting:**

Analyze the narrative structure of a media product using the three-act paradigm.  
Explore other narrative and experimental models.  
Assess an idea in terms of its narrative potential and production feasibility.

**The Production Process:**

Understand the stages of the media production process.  
Design the plan for the production of a creative media project.  
Work in teams and understand collaboration as one of the basic principles for the production of media content.  
Produce a creative media project by implementing a production plan and applying basic principles.

**Final Objective:** by the end of the course, students will have an enduring understanding of the artistic, technical, narrative, ethical and organizational foundations for the production of media content.

**Weekly Schedule:**

**1. Introduction: Media Production Foundations (Sep 09)**

**2. Art and Techniques: Basic Principles for the Creation of Moving Images – The Visuals (Sep 16)**

Block, Bruce A. *The Visual Story: Creating the Visual Structure of Film, TV and Digital Media*.

Chapter 2: Contrast and Affinity

Chapter 3: Space, Part One–The Primary Subcomponents

**3. Art and Techniques: Basic Principles for the Creation of Moving Images – Narrative Functions (Sep 23)**

Bordwell, David, Kristin Thompson, and Jeff Smith. *Film Art: An Introduction*.

Chapter 5: The Shot: Cinematography–Framing and Duration of the Image

**4. Art and Techniques: Basic Principles for the Creation of Moving Images – New Technologies (Sep 30)**

Frankham, Bettina. "Writing with the small, smart screen: Mobile phones, automated editing and holding on to creative agency." in *Journal of Writing in Creative Practice* 9, no. 1/2

**5. Screenwriting: Three-Act Structure (Oct 7)**

Field, Syd. *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*.

Chapter 1: What is a Screenplay?

Chapter 2: The Subject

Chapter 3: The Character

**6. Thanksgiving Day (Oct 14)**

**7. Screenwriting: Documentary and Experimental (Oct 21)**

Vertov, Dziga. "WE: Variant of a Manifesto," in *The Documentary Film Reader: History, Theory, Criticism*, ed. Jonathan Kahana.

Bernard, Sheila Curran. *Documentary Storytelling: Making Stronger and More Dramatic Nonfiction Films*.

Chapter 3: Documentary Storytelling

Grant, Catherine. "Déjà-Viewing? Videographic Experiments in Intertextual Film Studies." *Mediascape* (2013).

Miller, Carolyn Handler. *Digital Storytelling: A Creator's Guide to Interactive Entertainment*. Third ed. Burlington, Mass: Focal Press, 2014.

**8. The Production Process: Pre-Production (Oct 28)**

Hewitt, John and Gustavo Vazquez. *Documentary Filmmaking: A Contemporary Field Guide*.

Chapter 5: Preparing for the Long Haul

Grove, Elliot. *Raindance Producers' Lab: Lo-to-no Budget Filmmaking*. 2nd ed. New York: Focal Press, 2014.

Chapter 5: The Camera Package

Chapter 6: Sound

**9. Reading Week (Nov 04)**

**10. The Production Process: Production (Nov 11)**

Kellison, Cathrine, Dustin Morrow, and Kacey Morrow. *Producing for TV and New Media*

Chapter 8, The Shoot: Production

Hewitt, John and Gustavo Vazquez. *Documentary Filmmaking: A Contemporary Field Guide*.

## Chapter 9: Field Production: Shooting the Documentary

### 11. The Production Process: Post-Production (Nov 18)

Hurbis-Cherrier, Mick. *Voice & Vision: A Creative Approach to Narrative Film and DV Production*.  
Chapter 21, The Art and Technique of Editing

### 12. Editing – Review of Group Projects (Nov 25)

### 13. Final Review and Screening of Students' Projects (Dec 02)

#### Assignments:

Description	Due Date	Weight
<b>Attendance and Participation:</b>  Attendance - <i>Please don't forget to sign the attendance control.</i>  Participation in discussions based on each week's lectures, readings and screenings.	Weekly (in-class)	10%
<b>In-Class Activities</b>  Weekly activities (individual and group exercises designed for the application of the basic principles of media production). They will include:  Media Content Analysis (narrative and visual principles) Quizzes on reading materials Technical Tutorials on the basic functions of entry-level video production equipment	Weekly (in-class)	15%
<b>Visual Essay</b> (individual):  Students should select a subject –topic, story, character or location- and produce a sequence of still images. The aim is to apply the visual principles presented and discussed in class.  Instructions will be explained in class and posted on OWL.	Week 05 (Monday, Oct 07)	20%
<b>Proposal for a Creative Project</b> (individual):  Project description (what you intend to do) Production principles that you would like to explore References (bibliography and media references)  750 words. Instructions will be explained in class and posted on OWL.	Week 07 (Thursday, Oct 24)	20%
<b>Media Project</b> (in groups):  Throughout the second half of the course, students will work in teams of up to three people on the production of a creative media project. Each group will select one of the individual proposals to develop. The members of the group will work collaboratively on the production of the project.  Individual reports will be required to grade each member's contribution. Grades may be different, depending on the involvement and work of each student. <div>continued on next page</div>		

Options: Video-Essay Short Documentary Short Experimental Video  Length: 3 min. Instructions will be explained in class and posted on OWL.		
▪ Production Plan (in-class assignment)	Week 08 (Monday, Oct 28)	5%
▪ Rushes / Footage Selection	Weeks 10 & 11 (Monday, Nov 11 & 18)	5%
▪ Edited Version 1.0 (for revision and feedback)	Week 12 (Monday, Nov 25)	5%
▪ Final Project (group) and Report of Learning Outcomes (individual)	Week 13 (Monday, Dec 02)	20%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100%</b>

### **Attendance and Participation:**

Attendance will be taken in every session. Please do not forget to sign the attendance sheet at the end of each session.

Students are expected to participate in discussions based on each week's lectures, readings and screenings.

Please arrive on time to all sessions. Lateness and/or early departure will adversely affect your participation grade.

Screenings are mandatory, even if you have seen the material before or recently.

If you are absent from one session, or an assignment is late due to illness or other legitimate reasons, please contact the instructor as soon as possible and forward supporting documentation to your Faculty.

For more information on Academic Accommodation, please see **Notes from the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Information and Media Studies** at the end of this document.

### **Reading and Viewing Materials:**

The required readings are extracted from textbooks that were conceived as media (video and film) production guides. They reflect different approaches to the production process. Students are encouraged to read other chapters from these guides, depending on their interests and the characteristics of their individual projects.

Additionally, students will be provided with a list of viewing suggestions; they are encouraged to watch the material included in this list to 'train their eye'.

All Western students have free, unlimited access to **Kanopy**, a streaming service that provides access to more than 26.000 titles: <https://uwo.kanopystreaming.com>

### **BYOD – Bring Your Own Device:**

This is a **BYOD – Bring Your Own Device course**. You are expected to use your own device –e.g. smartphone, point shoot camera, DSLR, etc. Your assignments will be graded considering the application of the aesthetic and theoretical principles presented and discussed in class, in other words: the creative aspects of the media production process. The quality, technical capability and price of your device will not affect your grade. Please, see the instructor in case of any concern regarding access to equipment.

### **Lynda.com:**

Lynda.com offers on-demand courses to help you build professional skills across a vast range of job functions, including creative and technical aspects of the media production process. All Western students have free, unlimited access to this resource. For more information: <https://lynda.uwo.ca/>

The instructor will share links to some Lynda.com video-tutorials. Students are also encouraged to explore this resource on their own time for skill development.

### **Submission of assignments**

All assignments have to be submitted through OWL. If you fail to submit your work by the due date and time, it will be considered a late submission and it will be marked accordingly.

Instructions will be provided and posted on OWL for the submission (upload) of photo and video assignments.

### **Penalty for late assignments:**

There will be a 5 points penalty for each day the assignments are late. Weekends and holidays do not count in this late assignment penalty policy.

Assignments won't be accepted after the assignment grades are published.

### **Use of Electronic Devices:**

The use of your personal computer in the classroom is allowed for taking notes and working on in-class activities. Please do not use your personal computer or any other device -tablet or phone- for other purposes during class time. Using your devices in the classroom for other activities not only distracts you, but can also disturb your instructor and classmates. Working on assignments for other courses or engaging in text messaging and social media during class time will have a negative impact on your participation and in-class activities grades.

### **Copyright and Right to Privacy:**

Any recording (photo, video or audio) produced in the classroom is not to be shared privately or publicly, in any media. The instructor and your classmates own the rights on their respective name, voice and likeness.

No material produced in the context of this course is to be shared without the written consent of all the people involved in its production (on and off camera).

For all video assignments, you need to obtain releases (written consent forms) for the use of any interviews, locations, music, still images and footage. Forms and templates will be provided.

### **Emails and OWL:**

Announcements, detailed assignments instructions when needed, links and references of interest will be sent by email. Please check your UWO email regularly.

Please use your UWO e-mail account when sending messages to the instructor.

Generally, e-mails will be responded within 24-48 hours during weekdays and regular work hours. You should not expect replies overnight or during holidays and weekends.

E-mails will not be used to explain and discuss class concepts or to provide detailed advice on assignments. Please see your instructor during office hours or request a meeting if you need some assistance.

Grades will not be communicated or discussed via email.

# NOTES FROM THE FIMS DEAN'S OFFICE

Fall 2019

## Rights and Responsibilities

The conditions governing a student's ability to pursue their undergraduate education at Western are ratified by Senate and can be found on the Academic Policies section of the University Secretariat:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic\\_policies/rights\\_responsibilities.html](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/rights_responsibilities.html)

## Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

## Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software Turnitin under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system.

## Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)

## Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the

semester, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- during exam periods,
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are NOT met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate, if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact the FIMS Undergraduate Student Services Office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see [Policy on Academic Consideration For Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#) and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf)

## Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Academic Calendar](#).

## Grading at FIMS

- Normally, first year courses required for entry into an MIT or MPI module (MIT 1020E and MIT 1025F/G) are expected to have a course average between 68-72%.
- Normally, second year required courses (MIT 2000, 2100, 2200, 2500) are expected to have a course average between 70 and 75%.
- Normally, third year required courses (MIT 3000, 3100) are expected to have a course average between 72 and 77%.

**Elective courses and 4<sup>th</sup> year seminars have no recommended course averages.**

## Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwo.com/mentalhealth/>

## SUPPORT SERVICES – LINKS

Office of the Registrar:

[www.registrar.uwo.ca](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca)

Student Development Centre:

[www.sdc.uwo.ca](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca)

Psychological Services:

[www.sdc.uwo.ca/psych](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/psych)

Services for Students with Disabilities:

[www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd)

Accessibility Information:

[www.accessibility.uwo.ca](http://www.accessibility.uwo.ca)

/ Writing Support Centre:

[www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing)

Learning Skills Services:

[www.sdc.uwo.ca/learning](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/learning)

Indigenous Services:

<http://indigenous.uwo.ca/>

/ International and Exchange Student Centre:

[www.sdc.uwo.ca/int](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/int)

Career Centre at Western:

[www.success.uwo.ca/careers/](http://www.success.uwo.ca/careers/)

## Appendix A: Suggested Grade Ranges in MIT, MPI and MTP

### Guidelines to the MIT Grade Range

These guidelines are benchmarks, and are not to be followed as rigid regulations. They will be adjusted as appropriate to take into account the level of the course and any specific instructions given by a professor. As well, competency in English language usage (including spelling and grammar) may be taken into account in the assignment of grades by individual instructors. Note that the 70-79 grade range is broken into two divisions, as this is the grade range into which a large number of students fall.

#### 90-100 (Outstanding, A+)

The report shows sparkling originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic. Sophisticated synthesis and analysis of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of the topic are demonstrated. Mastery of complex material and ideas is immediately evident. The topic is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the writing and background research is exemplary.

#### 80-89 (Excellent, A)

The report shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic; it gets to the heart of the matter with comments and/or questions. It is clearly focused and logically organized. The quality of writing makes the report immediately understandable. Mastery of complex material and ideas is demonstrated. The report is of appropriate length, while preserving the priorities and emphasis of the material, so that the result is meaningful, not simplistic.

#### 75-79 (Very Good, B+)

The report shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. Claims are supported by ample evidence and the components of the topic are well-researched and presented. The topic is addressed in reasonable depth and/or breadth and covers material appropriate to the course. The analysis is organized around focal points and the argument is easily followed. The report demonstrates an above average ability to write in an intelligible style and to condense material meaningfully and with a concern for priorities of that material.

#### 70-74 (Good, B)

The report shows an attempt at analysis and critical thinking. Claims are supported by reasonable evidence. The topic is addressed in some depth and/or breadth, with references to the appropriate literature and course material. The analysis is organized around focal points. The report is generally well written and well argued.

#### 60-69 (Competent, C)

The report demonstrates adequate comprehension of the topic. The report is on topic and is a reasonable summary of material covered in the course, but goes no further. Facts are stated accurately; the quality of writing is sufficiently intelligible with enough elaboration and enough connections made between ideas to permit a reader to understand the point of the report.

#### 50-59 (Marginal, D)

The report shows less than adequate comprehension of the topic and of the material covered by the course. The report is a less than adequate summary of sources and/or is considerably off-topic. Facts are stated inaccurately or ambiguously; the writing style is difficult to follow; there is insufficient elaboration to permit reader's comprehension of relations among ideas; little judgment is shown in selecting detail for inclusion in the report.

#### Below 50 (Unacceptable, F)

The report demonstrates a failure to comprehend the topic. The material is disorganized and unintelligible. The report clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment.

## Appendix B: Guidelines of Academic Appeals for FIMS Students

### Grounds for Appeal:

The Faculty of Information and Media Studies does not view the appeals process as an opportunity for students to solicit a second opinion on a grade assigned to a particular piece of work. Appeals must pertain to the final grade in a course, and will only be entertained if sufficient grounds for appeal can be met, including: medical or compassionate circumstances, a defect in the evaluation process, bias, inaccuracy or unfairness.

### Stages in the Appeals Process:

**The first stage of the process is a discussion of the disputed grade with the appropriate Teaching Assistant (if applicable), and subsequently, the course Instructor.** For grades assigned to individual assignments, essays, lab reports, projects and tests completed throughout the term, the student first must appeal to the Teaching Assistant or Instructor of the course, within three weeks of the date on which the Instructor or Teaching Assistant returned the assignments to the class. The Appeals Committee will not hear any further appeals about the final grade in any course unless this first step has been taken.

**If completion of the first stage has not resolved the matter, the student may appeal the final grade in the course to the FIMS Appeals Committee.** Appeals of final grades must be **within the time frame indicated in the Undergraduate Calendar**. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the appeal is submitted within the deadline. The student shall submit a formal letter to the FIMS Appeals Committee outlining the grounds for the appeal, the remedy sought and relevant materials including the information about when and with whom (Teaching Assistant and/or Instructor) the student met, as described in Stage 1. If the appeal involves a request for work to be regraded, the original marked work and a clean copy (if possible) must be included. If the appeal is commenced once the deadline has passed, it will not be considered either by the Appeals Committee or by the Associate Dean.

### **The FIMS Appeals Committee has the discretion to determine whether the grounds for appeal have been met.**

If the Committee deems that the reasons for the appeal are not legitimate, the Associate Dean will be informed. The appeal will be terminated and the student will be informed.

### **If the Committee decides that the grounds for appeal have been met, the following steps will be taken:**

1. the course Instructor will be shown the appeal letter and offered an opportunity to make a written response;
2. if work is to be regraded, a reader will be appointed who is competent in the area in question and was not involved in the assignment of the original mark. The reader will consider the work in question and will arrive at an independent evaluation. If there is a large discrepancy between the original mark and the regraded mark, a second reader may be appointed by the Committee. **If the appointed reader(s) arrive at a grade within five marks of the original, the original grade will stand.**

### **The FIMS Appeals Committee will review the evidence and will make a recommendation on the case to the Associate Dean Undergraduate.**

The Associate Dean Undergraduate will consider the recommendation from the Appeals Committee, and will make a decision. The student and the instructor will be notified promptly and in writing by the Associate Dean of the decision and of the change in grade, if any. Within the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, the Associate Dean's decision on the matter is final.

Further appeals are possible under certain circumstances to the Senate Review Board Academic (for Undergraduate students) or to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (for Graduate students) but the student should carefully consult the guidelines regarding such Appeals.