The University of Western Ontario
Faculty of Information and Media Studies

MIT 3663 / Special Topic in MIT: Advanced Video Production

Course Outline – Winter 2021

Instructor Information

Name: Juan A. Bello
Office Hours (Online): Thursday 11 am – 12pm or by appointment.
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Course Information

Content Delivery Mode: Online / Asynchronous

The weekly **lessons** will be available on OWL (Course Content section) every Monday by 9 am

The originally assigned timeslot (Tuesday, 7 – 9:50 pm) will be used for periodical meetings with the instructor and/or your classmates (i.e. consultations, Q&A sessions, development of weekly activities, review of project status, production meetings, and feedback sessions).

Technology requirements: Personal computer (desktop or laptop)[1], internet connection.

Prerequisites: MIT 2601A/B. Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

Advanced Video Production is a project-based course. Students will work individually or in small crews, using narrative, artistic and technical resources for the production of a creative media project. The course will provide students with the opportunity to explore their personal areas of interest with respect to themes, point of view, style and audience engagement strategies.

Advanced Video Production is the third component of the MIT production sequence.

Learning Outcomes

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

- ✓ Apply their knowledge of media theory, history, research and analysis for the creation of a video project.
- ✓ Produce creative projects in line with professional standards.

Land Acknowledgement

Western University is located on the traditional lands of the **Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Attawandaron** peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with

[1] OWL is also available on mobile devices, but some features might not work correctly.
See Page 6: Adobe Premiere Pro system requirements.

One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This land continues to be home to diverse Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) whom we recognize as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors of our society.

As a way of implementing the recommendations of the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission,** we will dedicate time to explore the work of Indigenous creators and producers.

Weekly Schedule

The content (**lessons, video resources and activities**) for every week will be released every Monday at 9 am.

1	January 11-17	**Introduction + Ideas Lab** Fundamental Concepts: Found Footage, Video Journalism, Creative Documentary, Short Form Narrative, Video Essay, and Video Art.
2	January 18-24	
3	January 25-31	**Workshops: Shooting, Recording and Editing**
4	February 01-07	
5	February 08-14	
6	February 15-21	**Reading Week**
7	February 22-28	**Production – Stage 1**
8	March 01-07	
9	March 08-14	**Production – Stage 2**
10	March 15-21	
11	March 22-28	**Production – Stage 3**
12	March 29-April 04	
13	April 05-11	**Final Reports**
14	April 12	**Online Screening of Students' Projects**

Course Readings

The course will start with a series of **introductory readings** that will provide students with the theoretical framework for the development of their first proposals:

Bloemheuvel, Marente., et al. *Found Footage: Cinema Exposed*. Introduction, 10-12.

Bock, Mary Angela. "Video Journalism." In *Encyclopedia of Journalism*, 1424-25.

De Jong, Wilma. "Life does not tell stories: structuring devices in documentary filmmaking." In *Creative Documentary: Theory and Practice* edited by Wilma De Jong, Erik Knudsen, and Jerry Rothwell, 97-117.

Jech, Pavel, and Mary Angiolillo. *The Seven Minute Screenplay*. 7-25.

Mittel, Jason. "Videographic Criticism as a Digital Humanities Method." *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2019*. 224-242.

Rush, Michael. *Video Art.* Chapter 1, Shaping a History, 13-61.

Additional resources on aesthetic, narrative, and technical aspects will be provided based on the characteristics of each project.

Course Assessment [Assessment Schedule]:

Description	Due Date	Weight
Online Weekly Activities: Weekly activities (individual and group exercises designed for the analysis and application of the basic principles of media production). They will include: ✓ Acquisition, Investigation, and Discussion: analysis of media content, quizzes, and production of reports ✓ Practice, Collaboration and Production: exercises on the use of video production equipment and editing software. There will be 2 or 3 activities per week to be completed and submitted via **OWL > Activities, Tests and Quizzes** section. Depending on its complexity, each activity will have a value between 1 and 10 points. These activities are asynchronous (you are expected to work on them at your own pace), but **please note that they have to be completed by the end of the week**. For some group activities we will use collaboration platforms (i.e. Microsoft Teams, Vimeo). Special instructions will be provided. After Reading Week the number of weekly activities will decrease so efforts can be focused on the production of your creative projects.	Weekly	**25%**
Assignment: First Proposal / Work Plan What you intend to produce – Proposal, plan and video references. Instructions will be published on OWL.	Monday, January 25th 9 am	**5%**
Assignment: Video Project–individual Development of production and editing skills. Instructions will be published on OWL.	Monday, February 8th 9 am	**20%**
Assignment: Video Project(s)–group The last part of the term will be focused on the development of a creative project. Students will work in groups of up to three people. Because of the pandemic, all group projects will be designed, planned and produced in compliance with the university's policies on physical distance. They will be focused on 'online' collaboration. There are two options or 'streams': **Stream A**: one single project. In this case, the project will follow this schedule: Stage 1: version # 1 Stage 2: version # 2 Stage 3: version # 3 (final) **Stream B**: three different small (short) projects–one project per stage: Stage 1: small project # 1 Stage 2: small project # 2 Stage 3: small project # 3 For group projects: all members have to participate in every stage, every week. Individual reports will be required to grade each member's contribution. Grades may be different, depending on the involvement and work of each student.		

Instructions will be published on OWL. Creative Project(s) - Grade Breakdown:		
▪ **Production Plan**	Friday, February 26th 9 am	**5%**
▪ **Stage 1**	Monday, March 8th 9 am	**10%**
▪ **Stage 2**	Monday, March 22th 9 am	**15%**
▪ **Stage 3 + Final Report** The final submission should also include: Releases (consent forms): interviews, locations, music, still images and footage. Report of learning outcomes (individual)	Monday, April 4th 9 am	**20%**
TOTAL		**100%**

Western offers resources to help you in the transition to an online learning environment. Please visit: **Resources to Support Online Learning for Undergraduate Students:** https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/types/academic-and-learning-support.html

Important: In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence, it is possible that different procedures may need to be put in place on short notice.

Weekly Content: Readings, Lessons, Viewing Materials and Activities

This is an asynchronous online course–there won't be synchronous lectures–but students are expected to complete the assigned course work every week.

Weekly content will be released every **Monday morning by 9:00 am**.

Every "**week**" will be divided into two or three "**parts**". Every part will include an activity (assessment) to be done either individually or in groups.

You are expected to read and watch all the materials included in every lesson.

When working on your course lessons, it is strongly recommended that the notifications for personal messages (and any other apps notifications) are turned-off, and that the only windows that are open or active are those related to this course. This will allow you to focus on your course work. This is especially important when watching video content. When possible, try to reproduce the viewing conditions of a screening room (dimmed lights, silence) and avoid interruptions.

The **Tuesdays, 7-9:50 pm** timeslot will be used for periodical online meetings with the instructor and/or your classmates. (i.e. consultations, Q&A sessions, development of weekly activities, review of project status, production meetings, and feedback sessions).

You are expected to complete the assigned activities by the end of the week. The deadline for questions or consultations will be **Friday at 5:00 pm**. The deadline for submissions will be **Sunday at 11:55 pm**.

There will be a deduction of 5% per day for late submissions ("days" will count as 24hrs periods after the due date). No activities will be accepted one week after the due date unless a self-reported absence (SRA) report has been submitted, or requests for consideration or accommodation have been received from your academic counsellor.

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

Additional Resources / Streaming Services:

All Western students have free, unlimited access to a series of Video Streaming services: https://guides.lib.uwo.ca/findingandstreamingvideos/streamingvideos, including Audio-Ciné Films, Kanopy, Criterion-On-Demand (not to be confused with the Criterion Collection).

For access to Canadian content: National Film Board, CBC and TVO streaming services.

Equipment Access:

MIT 3663 students have access to **Sony HXR-NX100** camera kits for the production of their assignments.

The Equipment Support website https://equipmentsupport.fims.uwo.ca/ gives you access to the **online booking system**, **manuals**, **help-sheets** and **video tutorials**. This website will be accessible from January 19, 2021 (last day to add/drop courses). Please read the **equipment loan policies**: https://equipmentsupport.fims.uwo.ca/policies/ This year, the booking, pickup and return process takes in consideration the necessary sanitization and physical distancing requirements.

It is your responsibility to book the equipment well in advance for the completion of your assignments. Do not leave the booking to the last minute because it is likely that it will not be available. Missing a deadline because of a late booking won't be considered as an exception and late assignment penalties will apply.

Alternatively, students can also work using their own devices–e.g. smartphone, point shoot camera, DSLR, etc.– (**UYOD – Use Your Own Device model)**. The instructor has to be notified and the projects need to be designed considering the technical capabilities of these devices.

Please, contact the instructor in case of any concerns regarding access to equipment.

Note: *If the equipment loan service cannot be activated due to COVID-19 restrictions, all students will work in a **UYOD – Use Your Own Device model**.*

Adobe Premiere:

This course requires the use Adobe Premiere and Adobe Media Encoder software. As part of the required materials, you are expected to purchase a subscription to **Adobe Creative Cloud from Adobe.** The student rate is US$19.99 per month with a 50% penalty for cancellation. Please read the **Premiere Pro system requirements:** https://helpx.adobe.com/ca/premiere-pro/user-guide.html/ca/premiere-pro/system-requirements.ug.html

By using Adobe Creative Cloud, you will be working on industry standard software, and it will be possible to work on your projects across devices. Students are expected to pay for their subscription, as you would for any other materials, such as textbooks, lab books, or software, required for courses taught at Western.

Use of FNB 2070 (Mac Computing Lab):

MIT3663 gives you access to FNB 2070 (Mac Computing Lab), where you will have individual access to an iMac for your course work. The Lab has been rearranged for physical distance purposes. You will need to follow the university protocols regarding COVID-19 protection. The information on policies and schedules will be provided via OWL.

Organization and Management of Media Files:

Please consult the Help-Sheets database (available on OWL and the Equipment Loan System). You are responsible for the correct download, management and back up of your data.

We encourage the use of an external hard drive **for the storage** of your media files. It will allow you to work in multiple devices and locations.

Western's Microsoft Office One Drive service can be an option **for backing-up** your files.

Announcements and Emails:

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

Please use your UWO email account when sending messages to the instructor.

Emails should follow professional standards of business communication:

- ✓ Remember to always introduce your messages with a proper salutation.
- ✓ Please double check that any request includes the word 'please' or a synonym.
- ✓ Don't forget to say 'thank you' when receiving a response.

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

Emails will not be used to explain and discuss class concepts or to provide detailed advice on assignments. Please request an appointment with your instructor if you need some assistance.

Grades will not be communicated or discussed via email.

Office Hours / Consultations and Meetings with the Instructor:

Office Hours (Online): Thursday 11 am – 12pm or by appointment. Students can request online (individual or group) meetings with the instructor.

In addition to these meetings, students can also communicate with the instructor via **Microsoft Teams Chat** or **Email**. Please make sure that you have read all the instructions and materials before asking specific questions.

The instructor might also request to meet with a student or group to discuss issues related to their performance in the course. In those cases, you will receive a request via email. If you don't reply, that email will be followed by a maximum of two reminders. Failing to respond will count as insufficient engagement.

The instructor will meet with every group to review the production of the creative project throughout its different stages. In these meetings, one of the members of the group should serve as note taker, while all the members are expected to participate actively. Missing any of these meetings (or arriving late) will affect negatively your individual grade.

The audio and/or video recording, storage, publishing and distribution of online meetings with the Instructor or you classmates is prohibited.

Working in Groups:

Team work is essential for the production of media content. The COVID-19 pandemic, despite the lockdown and other physical distance measures, has been a very productive time in terms of the exploration and development of new ways of collaboration. It is the intention of this course to provide you with an opportunity to work in teams.

The instructor will establish the size of the groups (minimum and maximum number of members). For some activities the groups will be assigned by the instructor, in other cases you will be able to choose your partners.

For the production of the Final Project(s), students will have the first option to form the groups and submit them to the instructor for approval. The first few sessions of the term will provide opportunities of interaction among students, during

which students may find potential team partners. The instructor will have the authority to reorganize teams for academic and logistic purposes.

When working in groups, it is very important to respond timely and to keep track of the conversations. All communications with the instructor will be through Western's email system. Not responding to messages from the instructor or other members of the group will negatively affect your grade. Failing to respond to one of your classmates' emails within 24 hours is something worthy to be reported. If at some point the communication within the group is not working smoothly, please notify the instructor.

The production of the project is expected to be a learning experience. Having previously acquired skills doesn't grant a member the authority to rule the group, nor should any members rely on other students' knowledge to avoid performing tasks.

You are responsible for keeping your team accountable. Each version (stage) of the video project should include final credits. Student/s should not be credited when failing to do their share of the work.

If one of the members of the group drops the course, the remaining member(s) is/are expected to start (or continue) working on the project (independently of its status of development). In these cases, the projects can be revised and adjusted taking into consideration the reduced number of members. It is your responsibility to contact the instructor to make the necessary arrangements. In these special circumstances, projects could be done individually instead of in groups.

No group will be asked to accept new members once the work has begun.

Language:

Even if English is not your first language, we encourage you to set-up English as the default language when using OWL, collaboration tools (i.e. Microsoft Teams), and media production software and equipment. It will enhance your learning experience.

Producing a media project (assignment) in a language other than English requires special permission from the instructor. When an exception is granted, the subsequent submissions of any video files have to include English subtitles.

Submission of weekly activities and assignments:

All weekly activities and 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. OWL's distinguishes between 'due by' and 'accept until'. Work submitted after the 'due' date will be considered as 'late' work.

There will be a deduction of 5% per day for late submissions ("days" will count as 24 hrs periods after the due date, including weekends and holidays). No activities or assignments will be accepted one week after the due date unless a self-reported absence (SRA) report has been submitted or requests for consideration or accommodation have been received from your academic counsellor.

No activities or assignments will be accepted via email, Microsoft Office One Drive, Google Drive, WeTransfer, or any other file sharing platform.

Important: It is your responsibility to write your full name on every exercise, to label all files according to the provided instructions, to make sure that the files are saved and exported in the correct format, size and resolution, and to submit them to the instructor via OWL. Always double check that the files (documents or videos) have been uploaded correctly.

The files containing group assignments are to be submitted by one member of the group. For every assignment, please discuss with your teammates who will have this responsibility. However, each member of the group is expected to double check that the files have been submitted on time and correctly before the assignment is due.

Failing to follow the procedures will affect your grade negatively.

Grades:

Please refer to the last page of this syllabus for the **Grade Ranges for Media Production Assignments.** That document has been developed uniquely for the evaluation of this course's assignments and activities. It is an adaptation of the 'Suggested Grade Ranges in the MIT program'.

You can contact the instructor at any time with questions about your grades and overall performance. Please don't wait until the last minute to ask for revisions, or to request consideration or accommodation for missed activities and assignments.

Failing to submit the weekly activities and/or the course assignments will be considered as **"insufficient engagement"**.

Students will receive graded work worth no less than 15% at least 3 days prior to the deadline for withdrawal without academic penalty. Please note, students are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of the grades they have received in their courses.

Students who are in danger of failing the course because of insufficient engagement or performance will receive a written warning, in the form of an email, prior to the course drop date. However, not receiving this warning does not constitute guarantee that you will pass the course. If your performance diminishes after that date, or if you do not submit the remaining activities and assignments (see assessment schedule), you might be at risk of failing the course.

Please refrain from asking the instructor for a certain grade to achieve personal goals: i.e. getting a scholarship, studying abroad, or being admitted into another program. This will not be acknowledged in the assessment of your performance.

Inappropriate Collaboration and Plagiarism:

Inappropriate Collaboration**:**

Any Activities or Assignments should be the independent work of only one student, unless the Instructor has requested the submission of a joint (group) assignment.

Your answers and work on the weekly activities are not to be shared with your classmates.

When the Instructor has not given permission, students who work together and produce identical or very similar individual assignments are guilty of inappropriate collaboration. Such collaboration may include one, or all, of the following, depending on the situation:

1. plagiarism, where one student has copied the work of another student;
2. facilitation of plagiarism, where one student has knowingly permitted another student to copy his/her assignment;
3. contravention of the Instructor's stated expectations regarding collaboration on the assignment in question.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism (the unacknowledged use of another person's work) is one of the most serious academic offences, since it involves fraud and misrepresentation. In plagiarizing, one is in effect claiming another person's words, ideas or data as one's own work and thus misrepresenting material subjected to academic evaluation. For more information, please refer to: **Notes from the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Information and Media Studies** and **FIMS Scholastic Offenses Policy** https://www.fims.uwo.ca/current_students/undergraduate_students/policies/fims_penalties.html

Copyright and Right to Privacy:

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

For all Video Assignments, no material can be submitted without the written consent of all the people involved in its production (on and off camera). 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.

Video Assignments produced within the context of this course may be used at a later stage for academic purposes as a teaching resource, including public screenings and online distribution.

The audio and/or video recording, storage, publishing and distribution of online meetings with the Instructor or you classmates is prohibited.

Use of Zoom:

Only participants using their UWO credentials will be permitted to access Zoom meetings.

If, for privacy reasons, a student wishes to use a pseudonym, they must have the pseudonym pre-approved by the instructor before being allowed to participate in the online component of the course.

Participants in this course are not permitted to record any sessions or meetings (i.e. zoom, video chats, or any online interaction with the instructor or their classmates) except where recording is an approved accommodation.

As a general practice, zoom session or meetings hosted by the instructor won't be recorded. In case of an exception, the participants will be notified. The data captured during these recordings may include your image, voice recordings, chat logs and personal identifiers (name displayed on the screen). The recordings will be used for educational purposes related to this course, including evaluations. The recordings may be disclosed to other individuals under special circumstances. Please contact the instructor if you have any concerns related to session or meeting recordings.

Online Etiquette:

Some components of this course will involve online interactions. To ensure the best experience for both you and your classmates, please honour the following rules of etiquette:

- please "arrive" to the sessions on time
- please use your computer and/or laptop if possible (as opposed to a cell phone or tablet)
- ensure that you are in a private location to protect the confidentiality of discussions in the event that a class discussion deals with sensitive or personal material
- to minimize background noise, kindly mute your microphone for the entire class until you are invited to speak, unless directed otherwise
- unless invited by your instructor, do not share your screen in the meeting

The course instructor will act as moderator for the class and will deal with any questions from participants. To participate please consider the following:

- if you wish to speak, use the "raise hand" function and wait for the instructor to acknowledge you before beginning your comment or question
- remember to unmute your microphone before speaking
- self-identify when speaking.

General considerations of "netiquette":

- Keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the course.
- Be courteous toward the instructor, your colleagues, and authors whose work you are discussing.
- Be respectful of the diversity of viewpoints that you will encounter in the class and in your readings. The exchange of diverse ideas and opinions is part of the scholarly environment.
- Be professional and scholarly in all online postings. Cite the ideas of others appropriately.

Note that disruptive behaviour of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of Zoom-bombing a class or of other serious online offenses may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

Please read the attached pages:

Grade Ranges for Media Production Assignments

Notes from the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Information and Media Studies

Grade Ranges for Media Production Assignments
Juan Bello / MIT 3663 – Winter 2021

90-100 (Outstanding, A+)

The project 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** (course readings, visual principles and technical procedures) and **ideas** is immediately evident.

The topic is treated with **sensitivity** and **subtlety of thought**.

The quality of the **camera work, mise-en-scène, screenwriting and editing** and background **research** is **exemplary**.

A+ = exceptional student, someone who has mastered the techniques or theories and applied them in **novel** (original) **ways. "Exemplary"**
Work could be exhibited in a professional media festival (emerging talent categories) / or could be included in the portfolio for admission into a graduate program / or could be used as a 'work sample' for the application to an entry level grant program.

80-89 (Excellent, A)

The project 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.
"Getting to the heart of the matter" applies both to:
The subject of the video project (What the project is about)
The use (application) of concepts, principles and techniques.

Screenwriting-Structure > It is clearly focused and logically organized.

Mastery of **complex material** (course readings, visual principles and technical procedures) and **ideas** is demonstrated.

The project is of appropriate length, while preserving the priorities and emphasis of the material, so that **the result is meaningful, not simplistic.**

The quality of the **camera work, mise-en-scène, screenwriting** and **editing** makes the project immediately **understandable** (and also **compelling** and **engaging**).

A = excellent work (complex, not simplistic)
Work could be exhibited in a local or juried student media festival.

75-79 (Very Good, B+)

The project shows **above average** analysis, critical thinking and independent thought.
(**Above average** use–application–of concepts, principles and techniques in a meaningful and thought-provoking manner).

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.

Screenwriting-Structure > The analysis is organized around focal points and the argument is easily followed.

The project 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. (See the concept of *cinécriture*. In media production assignments, this ability to write refers to the quality of the **camera work, mise-en-scène, screenwriting** and **editing**)

B+ = work is very good, above average
Work could be shared publicly i.e. FIMS Media Arts Festival–non-juried student media festival.

70-74 (Good, B)

The project shows **an attempt at analysis** and **critical thinking**.
(an attempt at using–applying–concepts, principles and techniques in a meaningful and thought-provoking manner).

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**.

Screenwriting-Structure > The analysis is organized around focal points.

The project is generally **well** written (**filmed, produced, written and edited**) and well argued.

B = average, good work

60-69 (Competent, C)

The project demonstrates **adequate comprehension** of the topic.
"adequate comprehension of the topic" applies both to:
The subject of the video project (What the project is about)
The use (application) of concepts, principles and techniques.

The project 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 **camera work, mise-en-scène, screenwriting** and **editing** is **sufficiently intelligible** with enough elaboration and enough connections made between ideas to permit a viewer to understand the point of the project.

C = work is competent > correct use (application) of concepts, principles and techniques.

50-59 (Marginal, D)

The project shows **less than adequate comprehension** of the topic and of the material covered by the course.

The project is a **less than adequate summary of sources** and/or is **considerably off-topic**.

Facts are stated inaccurately or ambiguously;

The writing (**screenwriting** and **editing**) style is **difficult to follow**;

There is **insufficient elaboration to permit viewer's comprehension** of relations among ideas; little judgment is shown in selecting detail for inclusion in the project.

Below 50 (Unacceptable, F)

The project demonstrates a **failure to comprehend the topic**.

The material is **disorganized and unintelligible**.

The project clearly **does not meet the minimal requirements** of the assignment.

Grading Criteria for Weekly Activities:

In-Class Activities	Grade	Maximum Point Value*						
		1.00	**2.00**	**3.00**	**4.00**	**5.00**	**6.00**	**8.00**
Outstanding	**A+**	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	8.00
Excellent	**A**	0.85	1.75	2.65	3.50	4.50	5.50	7.00
Very Good	**B+**	0.75	1.50	2.25	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00
Good	**B**	0.70	1.25	2.00	2.75	3.50	4.25	5.50
Competent	**C**	0.50	1.00	1.75	2.50	3.00	3.50	5.00
Marginal	**D**	0.25	0.75	1.50	2.00	2.50	3.00	4.00
Unacceptable	**F**	0.00	0.50	1.00	1.50	2.00	2.50	3.00
			0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

(*): Every weekly activity has a different point value, depending on its length and complexity.

January 4, 2021

NOTES FROM THE FIMS DEAN'S OFFICE

Winter 2021

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

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

Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments, including take-home exams, 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 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 Accessible Education (formerly 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 two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, 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, unless noted on the syllabus. 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 or equivalent documentation, 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

In the event of a Covid-19 resurgence, it is possible that different procedures may need to be put in place on short notice.

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 4th 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/uwocom/mentalhealth/

SUPPORT SERVICES – LINKS

Office of the Registrar:
www.registrar.uwo.ca
Mental Health Support:
https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html
Accessible Education:
http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html
Accessibility Information:
www.accessibility.uwo.ca/
Writing Support Centre:
http://writing.uwo.ca/
Learning Skills Services:
https://www.uwo.ca/sdc/learning/
Academic Learning and Support for Online Learning:
https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/types/academic-and-learning-support.html
Indigenous Services:
https://indigenous.uwo.ca/
Western International:
https://international.uwo.ca/
Career Centre:
http://careerexperience.uwo.ca/

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.