

VISUAL STORYTELLING

IE University

Professor: **DANIEL LOPEZ LEBOREIRO**

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Academic year: 22-23

Degree course: SECOND

Semester: 1º

Category: BASIC

Number of credits: 6.0

Language: English

PREREQUISITES

SUBJECT DESCRIPTION

We live in a visual world. Images and audiovisual pieces have become the way to express, communicate, present and even understand ourselves in our everyday lives.

Understanding the tools and techniques employed to tell an effective story is an essential skill every Communication student must have. In this course, students will be introduced to the theory of contemporary audiovisual storytelling. It will build upon "Photography and Video Production" and provide students with further working knowledge of such tools and techniques. Through deep analysis and a creative approach, they will acquire the knowledge and tools to read and write with images and sounds by producing their own creative AV pieces.

OBJECTIVES AND SKILLS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will learn how to:

- Apply the traditional and contemporary audiovisual storytelling to express themselves through individual and group projects.
- Understand the different stages of development of screenplays, using the traditional techniques employed in filmmaking and applying them to different formats.
- Promote a critical and analytical point of view about an audiovisual work
- Acquire the ability to build narrative pieces by using the proper audiovisual tools with rigor in different formats and present them in public.
- Increase creative abilities and communication skills. Strengthen the skills to write, plan, shoot and edit audiovisual pieces.

COURSE CONTENT

Core topics and Sub-topics:

- a) Foundations of film narrative: Narrative as a formal system (diegesis, fiction and non-fiction, point of view, structure)
- b) Principles of Screenwriting (Pitching, writing a screenplay)
- c) Audiovisual language (mise-en-scene, cinematography, film editing, music & sound)

METHODOLOGY

Teaching methodology	Weighting	Estimated time a student should dedicate to prepare for and participate in
Lectures	14.67 %	22 hours
Discussions	12.0 %	18 hours
Exercises	40.0 %	60 hours
Group work	26.67 %	40 hours
Other individual studying	6.67 %	10 hours
TOTAL	100.0 %	150 hours

PROGRAM

A) NARRATIVE AS A FORMAL SYSTEM

SESSIONS 1 - 2 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

CLASS OVERVIEW. AN INTRODUCTION TO VISUAL STORYTELLING.

Contents:

- Explanation of the class dynamics.
- Explanation of the Team and Individual projects through examples and screenings.
- Introduction to visual storytelling: differences between plot and story.
- Practical in-class exercise.

Blocks and activities:

Session 01: 10' Class presentation + 40' Viewings and discussion of examples for final projects + 30' Lecture + 25' Analysis of videos through live discussion

Session 02: 70' Practical in class exercise (analysis of a music video)

SESSION 3 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

REALITY VS FICTION

Activities:

Forum discussion on the mandatory viewings (Blackboard) // professor's feedback about the discussion and key concepts.

Mandatory viewing for discussion: TBD

Book Chapters: Stam, Robert (2009) "The phenomenology of Realism". Film Theory. An introduction. Blackwell Publishing, pp. 72-83. (ce)

SESSIONS 4 - 5 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

THE NEVER-ENDING QUEST FOR AN OBJECTIVE VISUAL STORYTELLING: DOCUMENTARY FILM MODES

In these two sessions students will learn:

- The basics of Documentary Storytelling.
- Bill Nichols' 6 modes of documentary.

Blocks and activities:

Session 04: 10' Lecture with Q & A + 20' Debate on realism and point of view in audiovisual storytelling + 40' Bill Nichols 6 modes of documentary: expository & poetic (lecture + analysis through live discussion)

Session 05: 50' Bill Nichols 6 modes of documentary: observational, participatory, reflexive & performative (lecture + analysis through live discussion) + 10' wrap up of key concepts + 20' Explanation of the individual assignment.

Mandatory viewing for the sessions:TBD

Individual Assignment:

Create a short documentary video on yourself. The maximum length for this video will be 5 minutes. The project will be explained in depth with screen examples during session 5. Individual assignments must be submitted to Campus Online before the due date, which will be announced in class during this double session.

SESSIONS 6 - 7 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

STORY STRUCTURE

Students will learn:

- The 3-Act structure
- The hero's journey theory through film examples and analysis.

Blocks and activities:

Session 04: 30' Lecture with Q & A + 50' Analysis and debate of the hero's journey in different classic films

Session 05: 60' Analysis and debate of Rosemary's Baby through live discussion + 20' wrap up of key concepts

Mandatory viewing for the sessions: Rosemary's Baby (Roman Polanski, 1968)

Highly recommended viewing for the session: Star Wars. Episode IV: A New Hope (George Lucas, 1977)

Mandatory reading in preparation for the class:

Book Chapters: Vogler, Christopher: The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers. 3rd ed. ed., Studio City, CA, Michael Wiese Productions, 2007. Chapter 1. Pages 3-20. (ce)

SESSION 8 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

NON-CLASS LEARNING ACTIVITY ON THE HERO'S JOURNEY

Activity:

Students will write down the Hero's journey steps in the film Parasite by Bong Joon-ho.

Forum discussion on the mandatory viewing and readings (Blackboard) // professor's feedback about the discussion and key concepts.

Mandatory viewing for the session: Parasite (Bong Joon-ho, 2019)

SESSIONS 9 - 10 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

TIME AS A NARRATIVE TOOL

Students will learn:

- The importance of time in visual storytelling: temporal order, temporal duration and temporal frequency.
- Continuity vs discontinuity storytelling. Flashbacks, flash forwards, ellipsis and overlapping. Pros and cons.
- Point of view and its relation to time.

Blocks and activities:

Session 09: 20' Lecture with Q & A + 20' Temporal order, duration and frequency analyzed through live discussion+ 40' Lecture on continuity vs discontinuity storytelling: key concepts explained and analyzed through live discussion

Session 10: 20' Lecture with Q & A + 20' Point of view and its relation to time: key concepts explained and analyzed through live discussion + 30' Analysis of the mandatory viewing + 10' wrap up of key concepts.

Mandatory viewing for the session: TBD

SESSION 11 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

THE IMPORTANCE OF TIME IN VISUAL STORYTELLING: NON-CLASS LEARNING ACTIVITY

Activity:

Sequencing Memento (Christopher Nolan, 2000). Students will write down the correct timeline for Nolan's film and submit it to Blackboard.

Mandatory viewing for the session: Memento (Christopher Nolan, 2000)

B) PRINCIPLES OF SCREENWRITING

SESSIONS 12 - 13 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

SCREENWRITING WORKSHOP

In these two sessions, students will learn:

- The concepts of logline, Pitch, Synopsis, Beat sheet, Treatment and script.
- Examples of screenplays will be analyzed and discussed in class.
- How to structure and write a proper screenplay for their final Team assignment.

Blocks and activities:

Session 09: 30' Lecture with Q & A + 40' Analysis and debate of loglines and pitches' examples through live discussion + 10' wrap up of key concepts

Session 10: 30' Lecture with Q & A + 40' Analysis and debate of beat sheets, treatments and scripts through live discussion + 10' wrap up of key concepts

Mandatory reading:

Book Chapters: Snyder, Blake: Save the Cat! The Last Book on Screenwriting you'll ever need. Michael Wiese Productions, 2007. P 67-96. (ce)

SESSION 14 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

IN THE SCREENWRITER'S ROOM: BRAINSTORMING SESSION

Activities:

Students will work in Teams and will decide a Topic/Theme and aesthetic for each episode of a self-conclusive Web-series. They will debate and pitch the theme of their Chapter's script to their peers filming themselves on individual videos that will share with the professor for feedback.

SESSION 15 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

PRACTICAL EXERCISE ON SCREENWRITING: PITCHING TO A CLIENT.

In class activities:

Teams will pitch their Web-series to the class. Elevator's pitch in a Pecha Kucha presentation style (10' per Team).

SESSIONS 16 - 17 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

STRUCTURE AND CHARACTER: CHARACTERS ARCHETYPES AND BIOS

Students will learn:

- The Archetypes theory.
- To create a proper Character's bio for their final project

Blocks and activities:

30' Lecture with Q & A + 40' Analysis and debate of the mandatory viewings through live discussion + 10' wrap up of key concepts

Mandatory reading:

Book Chapters: McKee, Robert (1997) "Structure and character" Story. Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Scriptwriting. Regan Books, pp. 100-109. (ce)

SESSION 18 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

NON-CLASS LEARNING ACTIVITY: WRITING THE CHARACTER'S BIOS FOR THE TEAM PROJECT

Activity:

Teams will write the character's bios for each episode of their self-conclusive Web Series and submit them for feedback.

C) AUDIOVISUAL LANGUAGE

SESSIONS 19 - 20 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

MISE-EN-SCENE

Learning and discussion of the key elements of the mise-en-scene: setting, costume and make up, staging and lighting.

Blocks and activities:

Session 19: 40' Lecture with Q & A + 40' Analysis and debate of the lighting and staging in the mandatory viewing through live discussion

Session 20: 60' Analysis and debate of the setting, costume and make up in the mandatory viewing through live discussion.

Mandatory viewing: Eyes Wide Shut (Stanley Kubrick, 1999)

SESSION 21 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

NON-CLASS LEARNING ACTIVITY ON THE MISE-EN-SCENE

Activities:

Analyze and discuss in a Blackboard Forum three music videos taking into consideration the mise-en-scene: Kendrick Lamar's Alright (Collin Tilley, 2015), Childish Gambino's This is America (Hiro Murai, 2018) and The Carters' Apesh**t (Ricky Saiz, 2018).

Mandatory viewings for discussion:

- Alright (Collin Tilley, 2015). Music video.
- This is America (Hiro Murai, 2018). Music video.
- Apesh**t (Ricky Saiz, 2018). Music video.

SESSION 22 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

NON-CLASS LEARNING ACTIVITY: TEAM PROJECT SCREENPLAYS

Activities:

Students will submit their final web-series screenplays for feedback.

SESSIONS 23 - 24 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

CINEMATOGRAPHY AND SOUND

Recap of the cinematography and sound theories learned in Photography & Video Production last year. Students will learn more in deep concepts they were introduced to last year, as well as its importance in storytelling:

Cinematography:

Key concepts:

- Framing
- Camera angles
- Camera level
- Camera distance
- The mobile frame
- Space and continuity. The 180° System.
- The fourth wall.

Sound:

Dimensions of film sound:

- Rhythm
- Fidelity
- Space
- Time

Music:

Through different examples in fiction films, documentaries and advertising campaigns, students will analyze in class how music contributes to underscore action and emotion in an audiovisual piece.

Blocks and activities:

Session 23: 20' Lecture with Q & A + 50' Analysis and debate of the mandatory viewing through live discussion + 10' wrap up of key concepts

Session 24: 40' Lecture with Q & A + 30' Analysis and debate of film and advertising examples through live discussion + 10' wrap up of key concepts

Mandatory viewing: TBD

Mandatory reading: Bordwell, D., Thompson, K.: Film Art. An Introduction. Chapter 7: "Sound in the cinema"

Book Chapters: Bordwell, D., Thompson, K.: Film Art. An Introduction. Chapter 7: "Sound in the cinema". (ce)

SESSIONS 25 - 26 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

FILM EDITING THEORY

Students will learn different film editing theories from Kuleshov to Walter Murch through lectures, examples, forum discussion and film analysis.

Blocks and activities:

Session 22: 40' Lecture with Q & A + 30' Analysis and debate of contemporary examples influenced by the editing theories explained through live discussion + 10' wrap up of key concepts

Session 23: 20' Lecture with Q & A + 50' Analysis and debate of contemporary audiovisual examples (film, advertising, music video...) influenced by the editing theories explained through live discussion + 10' wrap up of key concepts

Mandatory viewing: Requiem for a Dream (Darren Aronofsky, 2000)

SESSION 27 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

MILLENNIAL AND GENERATION Z STORYTELLING: NEW FORMATS AND TECHNIQUES

Analyze and discuss in a Blackboard Forum contemporary videos taking into consideration the modern storytelling techniques explained in class as well as the audiovisual language tools learned in this course.

Mandatory viewings: TDB

SESSION 28 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

FEEDBACK SESSION: TEAM ASSIGNMENT'S FIRST CUT

Professor will give feedback on the first cut of each episode of the final Team assignment.

SESSIONS 29 - 30 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

FINAL PRESENTATIONS

Team project presentation. Wrap up of the course. Each Team will have 30 minutes for their presentation.

Blocks and activities:

Session 29: 30' presentation per Team with Q&A.

Session 30: 30' presentation per Team with Q&A.

Team Assignment Submission:

Team projects will be screened in class and submitted to Campus during the day (deadline at 23:59 PM on the last session day). Editing changes according to the feedback in class will be accepted.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Compulsory

- Snyder, B.. (2007). *Save the Cat! The Last Book on Screenwriting you'll ever need*. Michael Wiese Productions. ISBN 1932907009 (Digital)

Recommended

- Murch, W., (2001). *In the blink of an eye. A perspective on Film Editing*. 2nd. Silman-James Press. ISBN 9781879505629 (Digital)

- Alexander, B.. (2011). *New Digital Storytelling: Creating Narratives with New Media*. Praeger. ISBN 0313387494 (Digital)

- Field, S.. (2011). *Foundations of Screenwriting*. Random House. ISBN 9780385339032 (Digital)

- Bordwell, D., Thompson, K. (2016). *Film Art. An introduction*. Eleventh Edition. McGraw Hill. ISBN 9781259534959 (Printed)

Chapter 7 only

- McKee, R.. (1997). *Story. Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Scriptwriting*. Regan Books. ISBN 9780060391683 (Digital)

pp. 100-109 ("Structure and character") Only

- Stam, R.. (1999). *Film Theory. An introduction*. Blackwell Publishing. ISBN 9780631206538 (Digital)

pp. 72-83 ("The phenomenology of Realism") Only

- Vogler, C. (2007). *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers*. 3rd ed.. Michael Wiese Productions. ISBN 9781932907360 (Digital)

Chapter 1. Pages 3-20 Only

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The sessions will consist of lectures and practical application of the contents. At the end of the course, students will have to do a series of individual and/or group exercises related to what has been learned in class. These assignments are MANDATORY to pass the course and will constitute students' grades. In the Team practices, students will take on different roles in the different departments that typically constitute a production team (Production, Direction, Cinematography, Lighting, Sound Recording). We will discuss the works in class, at the end of the course.

Criteria	Percentage	Comments
Class Participation	20 %	

Documentary Video on Oneself	35 %	
Web-series	45 %	

Evaluation and weighting criteria

Different areas will be examined: class participation, analytical approach to the films and readings discussed in class, and creativity in the assignments which will be submitted to the professor and presented in class.

Criteria:

- Active class participation (analytical skills and participation in synchronous and asynchronous classes): 20 %
- Individual creative work (Documentary video on oneself): 35%
- Team creative work (Web series): 45%

Students must:

- Read the book chapters and view the assigned audiovisual materials in preparation for every session.
- Demonstrate a critical and analytical approach to the concepts and the ability to relate theoretical and practical knowledge and creativity.
- Participate actively in class.

Creative assignments must:

- Follow the conditions established by the professor and show outstanding achievement toward stated goals and objectives.
- Apply the narrative and creative knowledge gained throughout the course.
- Be based on an idea that is relevant to the course and show innovativeness in its application.
- Be original and have aesthetic quality.
- Be technically correct and have a professional appearance.

Regarding class participation, to obtain the best evaluation, students must:

- Demonstrate excellent preparation: have analyzed readings exceptionally well, relating it to other material (e.g., other readings, course material, discussions, experiences, etc.), create links and make connections between the films proposed and others such as the recommended movies, being able to draw examples from them.
- Contribute in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keep analysis focused, respond very thoughtfully to other students' comments, contribute to cooperative argument-building, suggest alternative ways of approaching material and help class analyze which approaches that are appropriate, etc.

RUBRICS FOR THE CLASS PARTICIPATION GRADE

Participation is graded on a scale from 0 (lowest) through 10 (highest), using the criteria below:

GRADE	CRITERIA
0 – 4.9	Disruptive behavior in class. Not present in synchronous debates or asynchronous forums. No involvement in discussion.
5 - 5.9	Present, not disruptive. Tries to respond when called on but does not offer much. Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussion.
6 - 6.9	Demonstrates adequate preparation: knows basic reading facts, but does not show evidence of trying to interpret or analyze them. Offers straightforward information (e.g., straight from the reading), without elaboration or very infrequently (perhaps once a class / synchronous or asynchronous). Does not offer to contribute to discussion but contributes to a moderate degree when called on. Demonstrates sporadic involvement.
7 - 8.9	Demonstrates good preparation: knows reading facts well, has thought through implications of them. Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way: responds to other students' points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way, offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion. Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement.
9 - 10	Demonstrates excellent preparation: has analyzed readings / viewings exceptionally well, relating it to other material (e.g., other readings, course material, discussions, experiences, etc.). Offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of class material, e.g., puts together pieces of the discussion to develop new approaches that take the class further. Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students' comments, contributes to cooperative argument- building, suggests alternative ways of approaching material and helps class analyze which approaches are appropriate, etc. Demonstrates ongoing very active involvement.

PROFESSOR BIO

Professor: **DANIEL LOPEZ LEBOREIRO**

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Ph.D. in Visual Communication at Universidad Complutense de Madrid. BA in Visual Communication at Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

Daniel is a film editor and a documentary filmmaker. He received his PhD in Visual Communication from the Complutense University in 2008. Since then, he has alternated his professional activity as a film editor and filmmaker with his lectures at IE University, Universidad Carlos III and U-TAD University and an active research work. He has written more than a hundred articles in both scientific and non-scientific publications and has contributed to four edited collections on Film History: “Cien miradas de cine” (“One Hundred Cinema Glances”), “Listas negras en Hollywood” (“Hollywood Blacklists”), “Los mensajeros del miedo” (“Fear Messengers”) and “Las películas de Almodóvar” (“The Films of Pedro Almodóvar”).

As a film editor, Daniel has edited hundreds of international advertising campaigns for brands such as Coca Cola, Red Bull, Toyota, Nestlé, AXA, ING Direct, BBVA, Nationale Nederlanden, Vodafone and Vueling, among many others. He has also been senior editor for many Spanish TV Shows broadcast by the four leading Spanish TV private Networks: Antena 3, Cuatro, Telecinco and LaSexta. He has worked as assistant film editor, post-producer and trailer editor for the film “Temporal”, directed by José Luis López González “Catxo”. He currently collaborates with Condé Nast Publications, editing fashion films.

As a documentary filmmaker, Daniel has filmed some TV documentaries including “Los rostros del olvido” (“The Faces of Oblivion”), produced by Mediaset, and “El precio de los alimentos” (“The Food Price”), produced by Atresmedia.

OTHER INFORMATION

