

TV PRODUCTION SYLLABUS

INSTRUCTOR: James Hawkins

ROOM: 411

E-MAIL: hawkinsj@leonschools.net

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Through assigned readings, the viewing numerous videos, and the completion of a series of video assignments, you are expected to acquire a thorough understanding of the basic elements of video production. This understanding should include the following ten areas:

1. General audio and sound mixing techniques, including the handling of common audio problems.
2. Camera placement and operations, including a basic understanding of camera color balancing, camera optics, light levels and the use of special filters.
3. The use and characteristics of the various video and audio recording media.
4. Lighting techniques, including existing light, bounced light and three-point lighting.
5. Technical and production differences between standard definition (SDTV) and HDTV/DTV production.
6. Elements of effective visual composition.
7. Editing techniques: assembly and insert, online and offline, linear and random access, and the use of time-code.
8. And understanding of analog and digital data.
9. A general understanding of postproduction, including associated audio and video equipment.
10. The ability to critique the strengths and weakness of video productions.

Probably most important, the course will provide an opportunity for you to create a variety of video productions and producing the morning news program, allowing you to express personal creativity while developing the ability to conceptualize story ideas and effectively translate these ideas into video productions.

TEXTBOOK: All assignments and information for this course for Video Production can be found on-line at <http://www.leonschools.net/Page/26425>

GRADING:

The final grade in the course will be based on:

Tests, quizzes and written work = approximately 50% of grade.

Assignments and critiques = approximately 35% of grade.

Class attendance and participation = approximately 15% of grade.

The criteria for the final grade in the course is as follows:

A = outstanding work; a 90% or above average on tests and written material; a demonstration of excellent production and editing skills; an ability to effectively critique the strengths and weakness of other projects; all work turned in on time.

B = an 80% average on tests and written material; an ability to meet deadlines; a proven ability in production and editing; strong critiques.

C = a 70% average on tests and written material; an ability to meet most deadlines and an acceptable grasp of editing and production techniques; a basic knowledge of basic critique elements.

D = a 60% average on tests and written material; however, student has fallen short in one or more major areas: meeting deadlines, an understanding of editing equipment and decisions, critiques, or the ability to effectively use production or editing equipment.

F = below a 60% average on tests and written material; student has fallen below the minimally acceptable requirements for the course.

TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

Problems with video and audio equipment are a fact of life in any broadcast or video production facility. However, "technical problems" are often actually "operator problems." If you encounter a significant technical problem in completing your assignment, you will need to indicate this by writing out a malfunction report. (See sample later in this syllabus.) When the video is shown to the class, it will be determined if the nature of the problem was (1) totally beyond your control, (2) the result of not fully understanding the equipment or its operation, or (3) potentially salvageable by employing a simple alternate approach. Most camcorder problems can be discovered by doing a short audio and video check before leaving the equipment checkout area. This also protects you. Because you are responsible for equipment, this procedure will uncover problems for which you might otherwise have been held responsible.

EQUIPMENT RESPONSIBILITY

When you check out equipment you are responsible for that equipment until you turn it back in. Considering the cost of this equipment, you will not want to loan it to a fellow classmate or leave it in a place that has questionable security.

If you have camcorder of your own, you are invited to use it. With large classes this will save you problems in checking out equipment.

PRODUCTION ASSIGNMENTS

1. **CAMPUS STORY.** Take any aspect of school life you want to tell a story about and develop a well-thought-out video piece. (Length: open.) Before you start work write out a complete script. This is to be turned in with your video. Don't worry about minor differences between your script and your final video. NOTE: you will not need to turn any more scripts in for projects until you do the dramatic piece (#4 below).

2. **PERSON AT WORK.** Illustrate on tape the relationship between a person and a job (a real vocation or avocation, not a fantasy occupation). Tell a complete story of the person-job interaction through the use of establishing shots, close-ups, ECUs, etc. After we finish seeing your piece, we should feel we know the person, know what they do (their complete job), and know how they relate to their job (including people they work with). Sound for this assignment will be a selection of music of your choice. It is assumed that you will try to relate sound and video in this edited piece.

3. **MOOD PIECE.** Through subjective video techniques, establish a basic mood (tranquility, anxiety, reverence, anger, patriotism, or whatever) through your selection of subject matter and the use of camera angles and lighting techniques. Communicate this basically subjective feeling or concept. You may use ambient sound, prerecorded music, or a combination of both.

4. **MINI-DRAMA.** Do a short (approximately two minute) dramatic scene with two or more actors. This piece must include at least six, sequential, A-B dialogue sound edits. Use a variety of shots keeping in mind the techniques of single-camera production described in the text. Particular emphasis will be placed on editing and smooth audio edits.

PRODUCTION ASSIGNMENT PERSONAL REPORT

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

ASSIGNMENT (circle one): Campus Story, Person at Work, Mood Piece, and Dramatic Scene.

THESIS SENTENCE: This video piece was intended to: (One sentence only.)

NOTES TO INSTRUCTOR: (Special problems; things I wouldn't do again; things I especially liked about this piece, etc.)

Note: Attach this sheet to your completed assignment. Your video will not be shown or evaluated without this sheet.

PRODUCTION ASSIGNMENT CRITIQUE

Your name: _____

Assignment completed by: _____

VIDEO QUALITY/TECHNIQUE (poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (EXCELLENT)

AUDIO QUALITY/TECHNIQUE (poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (EXCELLENT)

CREATIVITY (poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (EXCELLENT)

OVERALL RATING (poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (EXCELLENT)

Note: Be specific as possible in your comments. Keep in mind that a talent that you are expected to develop in this course is an ability to effectively describe (using the proper terms) the strengths and weakness of videos.

Final Video Assignment

The primary purpose of the "dramatic scene" assignment is to see that you can edit together at least six successive audio segments of spoken dialogue. It is assumed that each edit will represent a shift from one person's dialogue to the words of another person within the same basic scene. Although this is a dramatic segment and not a question-and-answer interview piece, the editing principles are somewhat the same. It also not a multiple-camera studio exercise. You are to use the single-camera, film-style approach to doing the assignment.

After shooting the people in the scene from the appropriate (read: best) angles with audio, you will then edit together the most appropriate takes to make continuous (smooth) segments.

The focus will be on smooth (unnoticed) audio edits. This isn't an easy task. Background noise, differences in mic distance, etc., will complicate things. Start on this assignment early!

You will need to write (type) out a full script for this in a proper film-style or video format. This will be handed in for a grade. Use the dramatic format in the text.

The length of time is open. I assume it will be 60-seconds or more.

As you edit, watch audio timing. During speech we have normal pauses-especially when you switch from one person to another. Make sure that the timing in the edited piece sounds natural.

You may use background music if you like.

Don't use the camera's built-in mic; select a handheld, or dynamic mics.

Equipment Problem Report

(Note: this sheet must be turned into your instructor before an "equipment problem" will be accepted as an excuse for problems with a video assignment.)

DATE: _____

EQUIPMENT:

1. Camera/recorder unit number: _____

2. Editor number: _____

3. Tripod number: _____

Other: _____

NATURE OF PROBLEM (Be specific.)

Your name: _____