

**THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ROME**  
**S Y L L A B U S**

*The learning goals for students pursuing a degree in Communication are meant to develop and enhance their writing skills, whether expository, reflective or analytical; or journalistic; or creative. The program also aims to develop students' conceptual analysis skills and critical thinking; and train them in the use of the appropriate/required tools and technology related to the field of Communication, in selected courses. The Communication degree program also offers students the opportunity to benefit from the Rome location, and prepares them to work and operate successfully in a global environment characterized by diversity and intercultural understanding and respect.*

**Course Title:** Media Technology

**Course Number:** COM217

**Period:** Spring 2011

**Credits:** Three hours.

**Professor:** Kristen Palana

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**Time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00-10:25

**Office hours:** By appointment.

My office is located on the first floor of the Carini Building near the Multimedia Lab.

**Course Description:**

This is a hands-on, practical course that teaches students how to use the equipment needed for visual media production including broadcast quality digital video cameras, lighting equipment, microphones and audio technologies, and non-linear editing software. The aesthetics of good still and moving imagery, light and color theory, the aesthetics of camera angles and movements, sound design principles, and good composition will also be addressed.

**Prerequisite:** COM205

**Learning Objectives:**

In this course students will:

1. Become adept at using broadcast quality digital video cameras and bringing captured images and sound into a non-linear software environment for editing and final output.
2. Become familiar with professional lighting equipment and audio equipment and understand why and when professionals use or don't use certain equipment.
3. Comprehend camera angles, basic cinematography, and points of view in video and film.
4. Obtain a fundamental knowledge of cuts-only editing, transitions, compositing, and assembling still images and video with video editing software.
5. Focus on Sound Design and its importance.
6. Develop solid technical skills as well as develop aesthetically and conceptually in regards to video production.

### **Learning Activities:**

Project # 1: Working With Video Cameras. Students will work in groups to shoot a moving video profile of a place or location, either indoors or outdoors in Rome. Shots will need to be edited in-camera and therefore shot in sequence. Students will need to demonstrate a combination of good compositions, steady camera movements, angles, and points of view. CLO's: 1, 2, & 6.

Project # 2: This project will have two parts.

A. Lighting. Students will create a sequence of video shots that create a sense of mood and that utilize different types of lighting. For example, high key, low key, outdoor, and lighting for the moving camera should be addressed. CLO's: 1, 2, 3 & 6.

B. Sound and Editing. Using video footage from Project #3A, students will remix and edit their footage using Final Cut Pro. Emphasis will be on sound design and how well students convey their intended mood. CLO's: 1, 4, 5 & 6.

Final Project: TBD. Students will submit proposals and storyboards, film their footage using appropriate camera compositions, shots, and lighting, add sound, and edit using non-linear editing software. Final projects should not exceed 4 minutes. CLO's: 1-6.

### **Assessment Tools**

Students will be assessed by the following:

All projects will be rubric graded.

Items evaluated in the rubrics will be creativity, exploration of concepts and ideas, technical proficiency, professional presentation of projects, and effective participation in class critiques.

Two or more quizzes will be given to measure students' conceptual, technical, and aesthetic progress.

Homework will be assessed on a pass/fail basis.

### **Grade Tabulation:**

Homework: 5%

Participation: 5%

Quizzes 20%

Project 1: 10%

Project 2A: 10%

Project 2B: 10%

Final Project Proposal with Storyboard: 10%

Final Project: 30%

### **AUR Grade Values**

94 - 100 points = A "Excellent"

90 - 93.99 pts = A-

87 - 89.99 = B+

83 - 86.99 = B "Good"

80 - 82.99 = B-

77 - 79.99 = C+

70 - 76.99 = C "Satisfactory"

60 - 69.99 = D "Poor"

59.99 - 0 = F "Failing"

**Grade Dispute Policy:**

Please note that grades are given according to AUR Grade Values. This means average projects will receive a C, good projects a B, excellent projects an A, etc. The reasons for each grade will be spelled out clearly in project rubrics and on corrected quizzes. If students do feel that they were given an incorrect grade, please address the issue with me personally after class in a respectful way. More often than not students are given the highest grade possible for the quality of work submitted and grade disputes are not encouraged unless a glaring discrepancy was made. **Please also note that the final grade for the semester also includes scores for overall participation, attendance, and punctuality.**

**Course Textbook:** Video Production Handbook –Fourth Edition  
by Gerald Millerson  
Focal Press. 2008.  
-Additional readings are from handouts and online sources.

**Recommended Reading:**

Video Basics 4  
by Herbert Zettl  
Wadsworth/Thomson Learning. Belmont, CA.USA 2004.  
-This book is on reserve in the AUR library and also contains a CD-ROM.

**Additional Costs:** The lab fee for this course (75 Euros per student) is used for the maintenance of the Multimedia Lab and production equipment.

**Courtesy Policy:**

Compared to similar design/studio courses, our time slot is incredibly short at only 1 hour and 25 minutes per session. Please try to keep distractions and late arrival to an absolute minimum. Make sure your cell phone is turned off. If you have an emergency situation that requires your phone to be on, please speak with me first. Ringing cell phones, late arrival, leaving early, and walking in and out of class while class is in session is disrespectful to your Professor and to your fellow classmates and will result in the lowering of your Class Participation Grade and Overall Grade.

**Attendance Policy:**

In keeping with AUR's mission to prepare students to live and work across cultures, the University places a high value on classroom experience. As a result attendance is expected in all classes and attendance records are maintained. The University's attendance policy is as follows:

**Minimum Attendance Requirement**

Students must attend a minimum of 70% of a course in order to be eligible to be considered for a passing grade.

**Absences**

- \* Students will not be penalized for one absence from classes meeting once a week;
- \* Students will not be penalized for three absences from classes meeting twice a week;
- \* Students will not be penalized for four absences from classes meeting more than twice a week, as in the case of some intensive courses.

If further absences are recorded, grade penalties will be applied according to the instructor's specific attendance policy, as stated in the syllabus. If the instructor does

not specify an attendance policy, there will be no grade penalty other than that attached to the minimum attendance requirement.

Cases of prolonged absences caused by an emergency or a medical condition may require students to withdraw from some or all of their courses. Under such circumstances students should first consult their academic advisors.

#### **Kristen Palana's Specific Attendance Policy:**

Any student with more than three absences will get a half letter grade off their final grade for every absence beyond three. **Please note that each two lates count as one absence.**

No make-up exams or quizzes will be given without a documented medical excuse. Incomplete grades are not given.

Attendance is taken at the start of each class. Late arrival will be marked as such. **If a student is more than a half hour late to class they will be marked as absent.**

#### **If You Miss Class:**

Please use the class contact sheet (given out after the add/drop period) to email or phone a classmate who can lend you their notes and help you get back on track. In this course it is important to stay on top of material since so much is covered.

\*Please do not email your professor for a briefing on what you missed, as it's not possible to sum up an entire class in a short email. After you have made an effort to contact a classmate and catch up, your professor will be happy to give you individual help by appointment. **Remember that YOU are responsible for preparing for upcoming quizzes/projects, due assignments, and doing the homework even for the classes you missed. Do not wait until the next class to find out what happened while you were away.**

#### **AUR Academic Integrity Code & Policy against Plagiarism**

"Integrity is fundamental to the academic enterprise. It is violated by such acts as borrowing or purchasing assignments, including but not limited to term papers, essays, and reports; lending to or producing assignments for others (either for or without payment); using concealed notes or crib sheets during examinations, copying the work of others and submitting it as one's own; and otherwise misappropriating the knowledge of others. Such acts are both dishonest and deceptive: the work submitted to instructors is not the work of the person whose name it bears. In consequence, the sources from which one derives one's ideas, statements, terms, and facts, including internet sources, must be fully and specifically acknowledged in the appropriate form. Failure to do so, intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes plagiarism." -- AUR Student Handbook, 2006/2007, p. 15.

#### **Suggestions:**

Back-up all work in progress. I recommend saving your projects literally every time you make a change. It just takes one quick click...and could save you hours (if not days) of frustration. **Always back-up everything!** Expect the unexpected. If you have an assignment due on Thursday, try to get it done a few days before. That way, if and when you are having technical problems, you will have some extra time to fix mistakes and troubleshoot. Remember: *It is always better to show what you are working on than to show nothing at all.* We can try to solve the problem in class if necessary.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

\*This outline is subject to change. Tentative: Guest speaker or field trip. TBD.

### **Schedule**

#### **Week 1.**

*Day 1:* Introduction. Screening of sample video works and explanation of media technologies used. Composition strategies.

*Day 2:* Composition exercise. Shooting still images with digital or traditional cameras around Rome.

*Read This Week:* Video Production Handbook: Chapter 1. *The Way Ahead.*

#### **Week 2.**

*Days 1 and 2:* Review of images captured. Perspectives and still images discussion. Working with the video cameras. The basics. Tripods and other options. Shooting techniques. Lens. Focus. White Balance. Color Balance. Camera angles, movements, and points of view.

*Read This Week:* Video Production Handbook: Chapter 2. *Meet Your Camera*

#### **Week 3.**

*Day 1:* Introduction to Project #1. Getting into groups. Review of camera angles, movements, and points of view. In-class project

*Day 2:* View in-class projects. Groups meet to address final Project #1 concerns.

*Read This Week:* Video Production Handbook: Chapter 3. *Using Your Camera.* Handouts.

#### **Week 4.**

*Day 1: Project #1 Due.* Discussion and Critique. If time permits, Principles of Lighting and examination of sample works.

*Day 2:* Introduction to the two part Project #3. Project 3A will focus on lighting. Indoor Lighting. 3 Point Lighting. Lighting for the moving camera. Demo with equipment. Alternatives to 3 Point Lighting.

*Read This Week:* Video Production Handbook: Chapter 4. pp.74-85. *Practical Lighting*

#### **Week 5**

*Day 1:*

*Read This Week:* Video Production Handbook: Chapter 4. pp.86-95. *Practical Lighting*

#### **Week 6.**

*Days 1 and 2:* Continuation with lighting principles and techniques. In class exercises.

Examination of sample works. Technical and aesthetic issues.

*Read for Next Week:* Video Production Handbook: Chapter 5. *Audio Techniques*

#### **Week 7.**

*Day 1: Project #3A Due.* Discussion and Critique.

*Day 2:* Introduction to audio and Project 3B. Introduction to sound resources. Sound principles and design. Working with microphones and audio equipment. Tips and tricks. Manipulation of sound on the computer.

*Read for Next Week:* Video Production Handbook: Chapter 8. *Editing*

#### **Week 8.**

*Day 1:* Continuation with audio. Introduction to non-linear editing. Types of editing. Examination of editing samples. Introduction to Final Cut Pro. Editing and putting

footage into the computer. Jump cuts and transitions.

*Day 2:* Continuation with non-linear editing. Some advanced techniques.

*Read for Next Week:* Video Production Handbook: Chapter 9. *People*, Chapter 10. *Organizing Your Production*

### **Week 9.**

*Day 1:* **Project #3B Due.** Presentation of Project #3B and discussion.

*Day 2:* Introduction to the final project. 4 groups will be assembled. Storyboarding and technical considerations. In class research and storyboarding.

*Read for Next Week:* Video Production Handbook: Chapter 6. *Backgrounds.*

### **Week 10.**

*Day 1:* Equipment review and review of all topics covered so far.

*Day 2:* **Final Project Storyboards Due.** Discussion. Aesthetic and technical concerns.

*Read for Next Week:* Video Production Handbook: Chapter 11. *Production Techniques.*

### **Week 11.**

*Days 1 and 2.* View and evaluate final project footage in progress. Video shooting must be completed and editing and sound design started. In-class troubleshooting.

### **Week 12.**

*Days 1 and 2.* **Rough cut due** (imagery and sound). In progress critique.

### **Week 13.**

*Day 1 and 2.* **Fine cut due** (imagery and sound). In progress critique.

### **Week 14. Final Exam Week:**

**Final Projects Due.** Screening and critique. **Tuesday, May 10, 2011. 10-12PM. Multimedia Lab.**