Communication Arts (CMM 253)>
Introduction to Digital Video Production and Human Rights

Offered Fall & Semesters (3 credits)
This course may be cross listed as a Fine Arts core class pending one’s advisor’s approval.

Professors: Giulia Grassilli
            Reda Zine
            Nicola Spaccucci

Course Description:
This program combines classroom instruction and video production work with work in the Bologna community. Students, with faculty members serving as supervisors, are placed at a local immigrant association and are asked to produce a short web documentary based on the needs of the community. Students will work in teams to find, shape, and tell stories about the lives of recent immigrants. In addition, students will be required to attend film screenings and to meet with international filmmakers at the Bologna Human Rights Nights International Film Festival.

Course Background:
Communication Arts 253 explores the history and theories of documentary filmmaking. The course explores a variety of films made across the world from a range of differing documentary styles. Students will learn a variety of techniques for working in a foreign setting and gain a better understanding of the impact such media can have on both local and international communities.

Course Objectives:

- To look at the emerging field of human rights documentary filmmaking by studying films that have been presented at the Bologna International Human Rights Nights Film Festival.

- To demonstrate the ability to research, develop and produce a 5 to 10 minute documentary working as a team.

- To better understand the lives of recent immigrants living in Bologna by capturing their stories in a short documentary.

- To participate in the international Human Rights Night Fall Festival, meeting with and hearing from human rights filmmakers.
Course Textbook:

Communication Arts 253 Reading Pack.
All necessary and recommended readings can be found in the reading packet.

Prerequisite: None

Evaluation:

1. **Technical Competencies:** Student teams will be graded according to the originality of their approach to the medium, technical competence in using the equipment, as well as over-all understanding and progress demonstrated in assignments, projects and discussions.

2. **Reflection Journal:** Students should keep a journal and make at least weekly entries. These entries can consider the challenges and triumphs of the creative process. This course is unique in that not only will students gain an intellectual understanding of the human rights film genre, but will simultaneously be placed in a community project, likely working alongside refugees and immigrants living in the Bologna community. Stories will emerge from the lives of migrants and are to be captured in the documentaries.

   Your journal is the place to record significant observations; to record cross cultural challenges; and to pose questions for further research and development. You may include notes about the development of characters, conflicts and locations. You might also wish to include notes about the production process itself. The journal is a place for you to systematically reflect and consider the progress you are making in this semester's creative journey.

3. **Student / Group Contracts:** By the fourth-class meeting each student will prepare a work plan/timeline describing weekly plans and reasonable expectations of measurable progress by the end of the semester. This work plan will be the basis a class contract. It will be used for student assessment purposes.

4. **Team Presentations:** Each team will have two opportunities to formally share findings.

   **Presentation 1:** Each team will prepare a written 3 to 5 page analysis of their own documentary project or of a documentary linked to what they like to do in the field, before they go out and shoot. (Inform your discussion with reference to relevant research and articles.) The team will also need to explain the challenges being faced when working in the Bologna community in relation to the film project. Be prepared to present your work orally to the class.

   Please cue or dub your screening tape before your presentation.

   Be prepared to discuss:
- Story Structure and authentic representation of the community with whom you are working
- Style and Approach
- Editing
- Credibility
- Ethics
- Overall Impact on a human rights cause

Presentation 2: At the end of the semester each team will present their films to the broader Alma Mater and Spring Hill Community.

Requirements:
- **Attendance** and participation in class discussions (**10% of grade**)

- **Mid Term Exam** based on reading assignments and supplementary screenings (**20% of grade**)

- **Human Rights Nights Film Festival**: Attendance at a minimum of three films during the October event. (**20% of grade**)

- **Community Participation and Journal**: Consistent (four or more visits) participation in community events as outlined by your site. These will be graded based on electronic journal submissions due at the end of the semester. (**25% of grade**). (**ethnography**)

- **Final Documentary Film Completion** (5 points given for completing each activity / assignment): The final film product must be a five minute production (no longer than 10 minutes). (**25% of grade**)

**Completion of five activities / assignments:**

1) **Group Contract / Proposal** (individual project) due fourth week
After having met at least twice with community leaders / immigrants, each student will submit a three-to-four page (double spaced) proposal for a documentary topic of their choice to check authenticity, ethics and practicality. The instructor will indicate which elements are needed from the list of proposal segments in Chapter four. The **Contract / Proposal** will form the basis for the pitch the students will complete in the class.

3) **Preproduction presentation** (group) due fifth week
This is the first group graded project. Each group will present their research and plans For characters and sequences. They should be able to discuss the feasibility of the plans and Demonstrate preproduction planning including location surveys of difficult sites.

2) **Trailer** 1:30 (individual project) due fifth week
After instruction in editing and the viewing of various documentary trailers, each student
will edit a 1:30 trailer for a documentary. This can be done on the documentary of their choice, on field video already shot, or on a reel of video provided by the instructor. The **Trailer** will include a music bed and titles.

4) **Production screening Work-In-Progress** (group) due 9th week  
Each group will present to the class the roughcut (should be full-length) that is finished at that point. They will discuss the differences between the preproduction plans and the outcomes. Any field production problems should be discussed.

5) **Final screening / Premiere** (group) due week eleven. 
Each group will present their film to the broader Spring Hill community.

**Texts:**
- The Guerilla Film Makers Handbook
- The Documentary Film Makers Handbook: A Guerilla Guide
- Directing Motion Pictures by Terence St. John Marner (1972)
- The Last Word: Definitive Answers to All Your Screenwriting Question by Tom Lazarus
- Cutting Edge: the Magic of Movie Editing (DVD)
- Final Cut Manual

**extracts from these texts:**
Schedule:

**Week 1**  
**Wednesday (60 minute class)**  
3.00-4.00 pm  
Introduction and review of syllabus

**Week 2**  
**Wednesday**  
4.30 – 7:00 pm  
Part I: Cinema & Human Rights  
Part II: Representation and Diversity / Ethnographic film-making / guerrila film-making and identity

**Week 3**  
**Wednesday**  
4:30 – 7:00 pm  
Part I: Community film-making / Film ideas / script lab  
Part II: Film organization / group contract = production plan

**Week 4**  
**Wednesday, October 3**  
4:00 – 7:00 pm  
Part I: Instructor Giulia, Reda, Nicola & Todd  
Group Contract / Production Plan: Presentation Due  
Part 2: Instructor Reda (with participation of guest camera operator)  
How to use a camera

**Week 5**  
**Wednesday**  
4:00 – 7:00 pm  
Part I: Intro to editing and post-production  
Part II: Pre-production / film production planning

**Week 6**  
NO CLASS STUDENTS IN POLAND (Fall Semester) / Puglia (Spring Semester) THIS WEEK  
ATTENDING HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

**Week 7**  
**BOLOGNA HUMAN RIGHTS NIGHTS FESTIVAL 17-21 October (Fall Semester Only)**
Wednesday, 
4:00 – 7:00 pm

Part I: Pre-production presentation due
Trailer Due

Part 2: Topic– film shooting

**Week 8**
**Wednesday**
4:00 – 7:00 pm
Film shooting

*Mid Term Exam*

**Week 9**
**Wednesday**
4:00 – 7:00 pm
Part I: Editing and post-production / watching rushes
Part II: Editing and post-production

**Week 10**
**Wednesday**
4:00 – 7:00 pm
Editing and post-production

PRODUCTION DUE - 75% of final product due

**Week 11**
7 to 9:00 PM
Intensive Lab Editing

**Week 12**

FINAL DUE

PUBLIC SCREENING
ALMA MATER AUDITORIUM

**Teaching Strategies:**

Our strategy is to meet you where you are at and bring you to a higher level of knowledge and skill through hands-on experience and thoughtful, interesting, and
provocative lectures. The reading pack provide useful content and an excellent introduction to the real world of human rights filmmaking. Classroom activities will advance and challenge your skills while placing them in their historical context and role in today’s culture, both in the U.S and here in Italy. Your skills in film production will improve through hands-on work and you will leave with a solid platform for launching into advanced work in the field. Course assignments are rigorous, technical, and determined.

If this is the first time you have made a film, you are now forewarned that this course will require extensive editing lab hours in the final weeks of the semester. **If you plan to travel in weeks ten and eleven of this semester you may not want to take this class.** You will need to be here on campus, in the editing lab for extensive periods of time in order to assure a quality product is produced. Your professors have a trained eye and can quickly determine which projects were thrown together at the last minute and which films emerged as a result of serious editing and field work (i.e. long hours).

A central aspect of the class is your relationship to individuals in the community with whom you will be working. As Americans living abroad you will be facing many stereotypes in which you will need to overcome. Class time will be devoted to discussing your relationships at your sites and how the voice of the community members will always be primary, at many moments creating challenges forcing your team to restructure your proposal to genuinely capture the lives of those in the community. This is a human rights focused course and your personal relationships with immigrants, refugees and the other wow your will be meeting are more important than the film being produced.

**Grading Scale:**

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**Spring Hill College Italy Center Attendance Policy:**

Attendance at all classes is required of all students. Students are expected to arrive at class on time, having completed the week’s course readings and assignments, with a pen, paper and books in-hand. Students are expected to read their email daily to keep abreast of important academic and safety related issues. It is the student’s responsibility to notify his/her teachers of an anticipated absence, make arrangements to complete the work, and then complete the work as agreed. In the event a student misses more than one class he/she will automatically be marked down one grade point. A student may be absent one time before being penalized. For example, if a student is expected to receive a “B” for a course, but has one unexcused absences on his/her report, the final grade for the course will be dropped to a “B-“. Excused absences require a note from the Spring Hill medical Doctor (Stephen Williams, M.D.) or from Dr. Todd Waller. Any change in status which will result in absence, the student must contact their professor.
immediately. It is a student’s responsibility to keep him/herself informed of pending strikes, changes in air travel and any other potential obstacles that may prohibit one from being at class on time. Excuses related to travel delays will not be accepted. Examinations missed by reason of absence must be made up at the convenience of the instructor. Students are required to familiarize themselves with the course schedule and should not attempt to make travel plans that may conflict with course meetings, on site visits, and exams.

Faculty Bios:

Giulia Grassilli. Artistic Director of Human Rights Nights, annual festival on human rights in Italy, Chair of Human Rights Film Network (global network of human rights film festivals) and Officina Cinema South-East, she is a freelance at international level for social change through films and arts. Since 2000 she is consultant for world cinema and awareness raising communication campaigns on migration, human rights and development for film institutions (Cineteca di Bologna), festivals (Venice Film Festival, Africa at the Pictures UK), film productions (Channel 4 BRITDOC Foundation), public institutions and NGOs (Bologna Municipality, Oxfam GB - Equals 2011, AfricanBamba, Senegal). She holds an MA in International Relations and Development Studies (University of East Anglia) and a PhD in Migration Studies (Sussex University) and has taught at University of Bologna, Frei Universität Bozen and Denver University. Currently she is Research Associate at SOAS University in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology (London).

Reda Zine is a filmmaker, musician and producer born in 1977 in Casablanca who lives in Italy. He studied arabic media at the Sorbonne University in Paris and script & direction at the Cineteca di Bologna, Italy. He has been performing and teaching between United States (Dickinson College, Pennsylvania), France (INA, Panos Institute), Sweden (University of Lund - Oriental Studies), Italy (Museo Ara Pacis, Rai3 TV, RADIO Rai 3, Ivan Illich School), Morocco (Boulevard, Boultek), Tunis (Nejm Azzahra), Lebanon (Freemuse, Orient Institut-Beirut), and Turkey (House of Music). He is the artistic director of transnational musical opensource project "Sharing the Spring" produced by Creative Commons; see: www.itwillbewonderful.org He worked with the Hip Hop band Public Enemy on a documentary about the life of Malik Farrakhan (aka Tony King), (Suttvues Prod. and Special Jury Mention. July 10, 2009 at Premio Gianandrea Mutti, by Officina Cinema Sud-Est in collaboration with Cineteca di Bologna). He is currently directing the Amitie project which entails 4 documentaries to be produced for the E.U. office on Awareness on Migration, Development and Human Rights.

Today is Sept. 3, 2012