

COM 445: ADVANCED DOCUMENTARY

Fall 2020

MEETING LOCATION:	Van Hoesen Hall B0112		
MEETING TIMES:	LECTURE:	Monday	3:00p – 5:40p
	LAB 1:	Wednesday	3:00p – 5:40p
	LAB 2:	Friday	3:00p – 5:40p
INSTRUCTOR:	Samuel Avery		
CONTACT EMAIL:	Samuel.avery@cortland.edu		
OFFICE LOCATION:	Virtual Meetings ONLY (Contact Sam to schedule)		
OFFICE HOURS:	8a – 9a (M) and 12:30p – 1:30p (MWF)		



Course Description:

Advanced techniques in nonfiction digital film production with an emphasis on conceptualization, research, fieldwork, interviewing, ethics, production techniques, directing, and distribution. Students will produce several original digital nonfiction film projects individually as well as collaboratively with peers.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO_03 Create Meaningful Content – Candidates prepared in Communication and Media Studies will apply knowledge and skills of the communication process in the creation of meaningful content appropriate to their area of interest or concentration.

Equipment Access:

Due to COVID-19, access to equipment may be limited and therefore it is recommended that students consider purchasing their own production equipment. Suggested production equipment can be found here – www.samavery.info/gear.

Assignments:

PROPOSAL: Cortland Issue Film (500 words)
PROJECT: Cortland Issue Film (5-7 minutes)
PROJECT: Local Organization Documentary
PROPOSAL: Final Nonfiction Film (500 words)
ROUGH CUT: Final Nonfiction Film (5-7 minutes)
PROJECT: Final Nonfiction Film (15 minutes)
EX #1 – Observational Filmmaking
EX #2 – Non-Linear Editing Practice
EX #3 – Interviewing Principles
EX #4 – Editing with Sound
EX #5 – Understanding the Narrator
SCREENING RESPONSES (8 out of 12 required)
PEER CRITIQUE

Required Supplies:

- 1) [SanDisk - Ultra 32GB SDHC UHS-I Class 10 Memory Card \(~\\$15\)](#)
- 2) [1TB USB 3.0 Portable Harddrive \(~\\$60\)](#)

Suggested Course Texts (optional):

- 1) **Directing the Documentary** by Michael Rabiger
- 2) **Documentary Filmmaking: A Contemporary Field Guide** by John Hewitt and Gustavo Vazquez
- 3) **Rethinking Documentary: New Perspectives, New Practices** by Thomas Austin and Wilma de Jong
- 4) **Cross-Cultural Filmmaking** by Ilisa Barbash and Lucien Taylor
- 5) **Fieldwork** by Bruce Jackson

COM 445 – Advanced Documentary

Tentative Course Schedule*

WEEK	DESCRIPTION	ASSIGNMENT(S)
Aug. 31	Understanding Documentary Film	Review and Sign Syllabus
LAB	Developing Your Idea & Finding Your Voice	Begin Film Journal
Sept. 07	Modes of Production	READ: <i>The Filmmaker As Hunter</i>
LAB	Production Workshop: Camera Operation	Practice Camera Operation
Sept. 14	EXPOSITORY: <i>Nanook of the North, Dead Birds & Penguins</i>	Film Journal
LAB	Production Workshop: Recording Sound	Practice Recording Sound
Sept. 21	OBSERVATIONAL: <i>Don't Look Back</i> (1966)	Film Journal
LAB	EXERCISE #1: Observational Filmmaking	Proposal: Cortland Issue Film
Sept. 28	POETIC: <i>Samasara</i> (2011)	Film Journal
LAB	EXERCISE #2: Nonlinear Editing (EX. #1)	Finish Exercise #2
Oct. 05	PERFORMATIVE: <i>Tongues Untied</i> (1987)	Film Journal
LAB	EXERCISE #3: Principles of Interviewing	READ: <i>The Image Mirrored</i>
Oct. 12	REFLEXIVE: <i>Exit Through the Gift Shop</i> (2010)	Film Journal
LAB	EXERCISE #4: Editing with Sound (EX. #3)	Finish Exercise #4
Oct. 19	PARTICIPATORY: <i>Supersize Me</i> (2004)	Film Journal
LAB	EXERCISE #5: Understanding the Narrator	Finish Exercise #5
Oct. 26	DISCUSSION: <i>Fast, Cheap, and Out of Control</i> (1997)	Film Journal
LAB	PRE-PRODUCTION: Local Organization Documentary	Finalize Edit for Cortland Issue Film
Nov. 02	SCREENING: Cortland Issue Films	Peer Critique
LAB	PRODUCTION: Local Organization Documentary	Post-Production: Local Organization
Nov. 09	DISCUSSION: <i>American Movie</i> (1999)	Film Journal
LAB	Sign Up: Individual Meetings	Post-Production: Local Organization
Nov. 16	SCREENING: Local Organization Documentary	Proposal: Final Project
LAB	Final Project Brainstorm	Production: Final Project
Nov. 23	No Class (Thanksgiving Break)	Production: Final Project
Nov. 30	VIRTUAL SCREENING & DISCUSSION: <i>Thin Blue Line</i> (1988)	Production: Final Project
LAB	Continue Work on Final Project	Post-Production: Final Project
Dec. 07	VIRTUAL SCREENING & DISCUSSION: <i>Grizzly Man</i> (2005)	Post-Production: Final Project
LAB	Continue Work on Final Project	Post-Production: Final Project
Dec. 16	Final Screening Party (VIRTUAL)	Submit to Festivals

*All dates, descriptions and assignments are subject to change due to COVID-19

Course Guidelines and College Statements:

Academic Integrity:

All students are expected to uphold academic integrity standards. Plagiarism is defined as taking the ideas of others and using them as one's own without due credit. Students who cheat in examinations, course assignments, or plagiarize in this course may be disciplined in accordance with university rules and regulations. (College Handbook, Chapter 340)

Attendance Policy:

All students are required to attend class meetings (both in-person and virtual) and participate. Missing more than six (6) classes will result in a failing grade for COM 445 – Advanced Documentary.

Disability Notice:

As part of SUNY Cortland's commitment to a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment, we strive to provide students with equal access to all courses. If you believe you will require accommodations in this course, please place a request with the Disability Resources Office at disability.resources@cortland.edu or call 607-753-2967. Please note that accommodations are generally not provided retroactively so timely contact with the Disability Resources Office is important. All students should consider meeting with their course instructor who may be helpful in other ways. (College Handbook, Chapter 745)

Diversity Notice:

SUNY Cortland is dedicated to the premise that every individual is important in a unique way and contributes to the overall quality of the institution. We define diversity broadly to include all aspects of human difference. The College is committed to inclusion, equity, and access and thus committed to creating and sustaining a climate that is equitable, respectful and free from prejudice for students, faculty and staff. We value diversity in the learning environment and know that it enhances our ability to inspire students to learn, lead and serve in a changing world. We are committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive campus through the recruitment and retention of faculty, staff and students. As a community, we hold important the democracy of ideas, tempered by a commitment to free speech and the standards of inquiry and debate. To this end, we are dedicated to developing and sustaining a learning environment where it is safe to explore our differences and celebrate the richness inherent in our pluralistic society. (College Handbook, Chapter 130)

Inclusive Learning Environment:

SUNY Cortland is committed to a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment. The course instructor honors this commitment and respects and values differences. All students enrolled in this course are expected to be considerate of others, promote a collaborative and supportive educational environment, and demonstrate respect for individuals with regard to ability or disability, age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity/expression, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or other aspects of identity. In an environment that fosters inclusion, students have the opportunity to bring their various identities into conversation as they find helpful, but are not expected to represent or speak for an entire group of people who share aspects of an identity. If you have any questions or concerns about this statement, contact the Institutional Equity and Inclusion Office at 607-753-2263. (IEIO <http://www2.cortland.edu/about/diversity/>)

Title IX Statement:

Title IX, when combined with New York Human Rights Law and the New York Education Law 129-B, prohibits discrimination, harassment and violence based on sex, gender, gender identity/expression, and/or sexual orientation in the education setting. The federal Clery Act and NY Education Law 129-B provide certain rights and responsibilities after an incident of sexual or interpersonal violence. When a violation occurs, victims and survivors are eligible for campus and community resources. Where the College has jurisdiction, it may investigate and take action in accordance with College policy. If you or someone you know wishes to report discrimination based in sex, gender, gender identity/expression, and/or sexual orientation, or wishes to report sexual harassment, sexual violence, stalking or relationship violence, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at 607-753-4550, or visit cortland.edu/titleix to learn about all reporting options and resources. (Updated by SUNY Legal Feb. 1, 2018). (Title IX <http://www2.cortland.edu/titleix>)



State University of New York at Cortland

Communication and Media Studies Department

I have read the COM 445: Advanced Documentary syllabus and I am aware of the program's requirements including the **Attendance / Participation Policy**. I understand that I should keep the syllabus and course policies for my records.

Date: _____

Semester: _____

Print name: _____

Signature: _____

C Number: _____