

ENG 4136: Video Production
meeting times: T/TH 9-11, Rolfs 115
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description:

This course is designed as an introduction to a broad range of practices sometimes labeled "video art" or "experimental video." The focus of the course will be exclusively on non-narrative approaches to the theory and practice of videomaking. Students will work on a series of short projects throughout the semester (about one every two weeks) that engage simultaneously with different theoretical problems, technological challenges, and aesthetic strategies. The projects will span all of the stages of video production as well as a wide variety of aesthetic forms. The course will conclude with a short final project of your own devising that grows out of one or a number of the theories and formal approaches that we have explored during the semester.

assignments:

A majority of the course will be spent on a series of short video assignments (3 min. or less) designed to introduce both technical and aesthetic issues. All of these assignments will be accompanied by one-page papers wherein you explain the theory behind your practice. The assignments are as follows:

1. one-take video (duration)
2. postcard project (sequence)
3. abstract video or process video (abstraction)
4. experiments in sound/sound abstraction (sound)

I'll explain these in much more detail as they approach. Everyone will be required to do all 3 of the projects.

In addition to these three assignments, you will also be required to make a final project in which you incorporate what you've learned in the course into a project of your devising. This final project will be NO LONGER THAN FIVE MINUTES in length. You will want to begin thinking about this well before the final weeks of the semester and should bounce your ideas off of me as they develop. However, I would encourage you not to become too committed to ideas that you've had before the start of the class or at the start of the semester, because the hope is that your ideas will change as the semester progresses and as you see different working models. The only constraints that I put on this final project are that it be non-narrative and that it reflect some aspect of your experience of the class.

grading:

Final grades will be determined according to the following formula:

3 video projects	15% each
sequence project (postcards)	10%
final project	30%
class participation	15%

I'll be using a 100-point scale, and the following is what each grade will mean on each project:

A+: 100
A: 96

A-: 92
B+: 88
B: 85
B-: 82
C+: 78
C: 75
C-: 72
D: 65
E: 0

Your final grade will be determined using this scale, from the weighted average of your project grades. (D grades will range from 60-70; E grades will be anything under 60.)

For your class participation grade, I've been a little generous with this in the past, but I'm going to be less so this semester. If you rarely talk in class but stay awake and seem engaged, that's a C+. You can move up from there by participating regularly. If you want an A for participation, you should be contributing at least once per class meeting. If you can't manage to stay awake or if you just don't seem engaged, expect something lower than a C+ for participation.

So what do these grades signify? An A means that you've done excellent work at both the technological and aesthetic levels and that the project significantly engages with the key theoretical issues that the projects are meant to address. A B means that you've excelled at one of these levels but that there are significant issues at other levels or that while you're on the right track, there's something missing on all three levels (technological, aesthetic, theoretical). A C means that you've had significant failings on all three levels, but recognizes that you have made a serious effort nonetheless. A D means that not only have you had significant failings on all three levels, but that you've also apparently not made a serious effort. Only in cases of complete non- or malfeasance will I give an E as a project grade.

attendance:

There are only 30 class meetings, and all of them are important. The conversations that we'll be starting in the first weeks will build throughout the semester, so missing a day really will hurt your ability to keep up. If I could, I'd make the official attendance policy NO ABSENCES. (I've never missed a class for illness or anything else. I only am asking the same from you.) But I can't. So below is the official policy.

All students are allowed three (3) unexcused absences. Missing a screening counts as an absence. Unexcused absences include all absences that are not accompanied by either a note from a dean or doctor. If you have a cold and don't feel like coming to class—that counts as unexcused unless it's severe enough to merit a trip to the hospital. I'm not suggesting that you should come to class sick—please don't—but that's what your 3 days are for. After three absences, I will subtract 1/2 letter grade from your final grade per additional absence. There is no easier way to fail my class than by not showing up. Don't put yourself in that position.

NOTE: Thursday before Spring Break is a critique. These are really important, and I will not accommodate requests to go on Tuesday for those who are trying to leave town early. Spring Break starts on Saturday, so don't think otherwise.

Also, all students will be required to attend FLEX, the Florida Experimental Film/Video Festival from February 18-20. Put it on your calendars now. Class will be cancelled the following week to allow you to attend as much as possible. Plan on attending all 5 screenings (Sat/Sun 7 & 9; Monday 7). This will be your absolute best chance to see a body of work by important artists (Su Friedrich, Steve Reinke, and Sam Green) presented in the best possible format (35mm, 16mm,

ProRes files, HD, etc.), and you'll also have a chance to interact with "real" filmmakers who will be in town for the festival. There will be no more educational part of the semester than this weekend.

late work:

The course moves forward at a pretty significant clip and the projects build upon each other, so failing to complete your work on time is really not an option. However, the following is the official policy in the event that you should fall behind:

Work submitted after the due date will be marked down. The only exception is for medical reasons—again only with a doctor's excuse—and must be brought to my attention BEFORE the assignment is due. For each class period that the assignment is delayed, it will be marked down 1/2 a grade (i.e. an A becomes a B+, a C+ becomes a C). Again, this is a very easy way to get a very bad grade.