



School of
Film & Media Arts

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

MICRO DOCUMENTARY: FILM PRODUCTION AND DOCUMENTARY STORYTELLING DURING THE PANDEMIC

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F2F/Project Based Film Production Courses

- FMA 252: Film Production II
- Production II engages students in more advanced productions, helping them to develop and demonstrate a mastery of the many skills necessary to make effective and successful films. It applies knowledge, methods and concepts developed in previous courses, into a creative problem-solving learn-by-doing filmmaking experience.
- Students develop one sizable film project, work in teams, and complete a short film by the end of the semester.





Course Outcomes:

- In this class, working as part of a team, students will produce a professional quality project following industry standard practices, and thereby:
 1. *Synthesize and apply concepts and experiences encountered in all prior courses to the creation of original work. Content from the prerequisite courses, such as Analysis of Film Language, Intro to Screen Performance, Short Script Analysis, Prod I, Post I, Visual Storytelling and Writing the Short will provide the foundation for this project-based course.*



Course Outcomes:

2. Produce a high-quality student project following industry standard practices.
 - *Break down the script to derive shot list/storyboards that elucidate subtext*
 - *Budget and schedule the project according to industry standard methods*
 - *Cast the project with student and professional actors*
 - *Organize the project shoot according to equipment needs, availability, and temporal efficiency*
 - *Select crew based on need, expertise and budget*
 - *Rehearse with actors before going on set to develop character backstory and plan blocking*



Course Outcomes:

2. Produce a high-quality student project following industry standard practices.

Continued:

- *Plan and strategize location staging and shoots with DP, AD, Producer, Art Director, Director and team*
- *Communicate with crew, actors, and class in preparation for shoot.*
- *Generate permits and insurance certificates for shoot locations.*
- *Complete principal photography with adequate coverage to allow editorial choices*
- *Self-assess performance at all phases of the project*
- *Conform shoot into assembly edit to assess adequate coverage*



Typical Course Environment

- Highly tactile and collaborative environment
- Project based
- Reliance on equipment and facilities on campus
- Team-work required
- Typical crew size: 10
- Typical cast size: 2 and up
- Typical shoot day: 8 -10 hours

Film Production II During the Pandemic



- SP20 – Campus closed in March
 - ❖ *No access to equipment and facilities. A DIY approach.*
- FA20 – FMA 252 offered in hybrid modality
 - ❖ *Course offered in hybrid modality. Single project required.*
- SP21 – FMA 252 offered in hybrid modality
 - ❖ *Course offered in hybrid modality. Three smaller projects required.*

Micro Documentary Project

- This project was developed to meet some of the learning outcomes of the course while providing flexibility to students as they mitigated the risks of film production during the pandemic.
- Students worked individually or in teams of two.

Objective: Produce a micro-documentary with an approximate TRT of 3 minutes.

A successful project must:

- Tell your audience a compelling story, which is informative, evocative and/or entertaining.
- Tell your story in a cinematic way, relying on visuals and action, as opposed to interviews. This should not deter you from including interviews, but you must rely on visual storytelling techniques as opposed to talking heads.
- Demonstrate good production values including camera position, shot composition, lighting, sound quality and editing.
- Avoid using copyrighted materials.



Students were able to hone their skills in documentary storytelling while achieving proficiency with new film production tools covered in this course.



This project required smaller crew size than a typical narrative project, thus allowing to minimize risk during the pandemic.



Documentary storytelling was new to many of the students as most of our students start with a narrative approach. This allowed them to broaden their horizons and grow as cinematic storytellers.

Results:



Copeland Acres

A short documentary by Emma Grosklos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKNkGvaionA>





Journey of Generations

A short documentary by Gabrielle Pogozelski

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=irTBN-z4HrM>





Superior Pho

A short documentary by Rocky Nguyen

<https://vimeo.com/516193830>





Princess

A short moc-umentary by Alex Feliciano

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jcl3D1LxDcA>





The Alchemy Element

A short documentary by Kendall Mullenhour

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-SoCMo6jk7k>





Frankie, the Domestic Tortoise

A short documentary by JC Wilson

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-tex_9PEhQ





Spark: A Mini Documentary

by Justin Nelson

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fHV92rX6ulwnkQpJz3y_LJsDj7dS3Qni/view

