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**CO-REQ or PRE-REQ:** None  
**OFFICE:** RNT 248

**OFFICE HOURS:** Given COVID-uncertainties email to set up a time  
**SEMESTER HOURS:** Three

*We acknowledge that Trinity Western University, Langley campus is located on the traditional ancestral unceded territory of the Stó:lō people."*

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This introductory course in the art and craft of digital video production familiarizes students with the "classical" approach to cinematic aesthetics and techniques. Students work individually and collaboratively as they produce, shoot, and edit short films. Emphasis is placed on analyzing films from a filmmaker's perspective.

## **COURSE SPECIFICS**

Motion picture and single camera film production have undergone major changes during the "digital revolution." Today more people have access to inexpensive high-end film gear than ever before. However, this does not mean the quality of productions has increased along with the quantity of great looking productions. To help remedy this situation, this course will introduce students to the seminal visual language, aesthetics, poetics, and techniques that enhance filmmaking. As such, it will involve both a theoretical and an applied, or "hands-on," approach to digital filmmaking. In addition, students will be introduced to the process of critiquing film from a film artist's perspective with an aim toward helping students gain confidence in the conceptual, narrative, and practical applications of digital-based film production. Students will also be given the opportunity to work in creative, collaborative teams to produce several short video pieces as they face the multiple challenges of making excellent short films.

## **COURSE DESIGN**

This course will focus on the art and craft of entry-level filmmaking. As such, it will involve the following activities:

- A. Composition Exercise
- B. Motion exercise
- C. In-Camera Continuity Exercise
- D. Montage Short
- E. Short Film
- F. Course Journals
- G. Ungraded but important viewing assignments

- H. Film viewings
- I. Screening of work with instructor and peers
- J. Text readings and discussions
- K. Pitching projects (oral presentations)
- L. Peer feedback and discussion

## COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

The following outlines what the diligent and hardworking student can experience during this course.

TWU Student Learning Outcomes	Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Strategies in MCOM 221A (as detailed above)
<b>1. Knowledge and its Application</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a broad foundational knowledge of human culture and the physical and natural world</li> <li>a depth of understanding in any chosen field(s) of study</li> <li>applied knowledge acquired through discipline-appropriate experiential learning</li> </ul>	1. Students will gain understanding of what constitutes “classically” executed filmmaking. 2. Students will become acquainted with many of the key filmic techniques that make for effective filmmaking.	Participation in and execution of the following exercises: A. Composition Exercise B. In-Camera Continuity Exercise C. Motion Exercise D. Montage Short E. Short Film F. Ungraded assignments G. Screening of your projects H. Text readings and discussions I. Pitching projects J. Peer feedback and discussion H. Journals
<b>2. Cognitive Complexity Skills including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>critical and creative thinking, quantitative reasoning, communication, research, and information literacy</li> <li>an ability to articulate various interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary perspectives, integrating informed Christian perspectives</li> <li>an ability to respond with wisdom, humility &amp; charity to</li> </ul>	1. Students will gain the ability to appreciate and to adjudicate good filmmaking. 2. Students will become proficient in developing critical skills and templates that enable them to unpack the multiple layers of meaning in cinematic techniques and stories.	Course readings and self-critiques in the following assignments: A. Composition Exercise B. In-Camera Continuity Exercise C. Motion Exercise D. Montage Short E. Short Film F. Ungraded Assignments G. Screening of your projects H. Text readings and discussions I. Pitching projects J. Peer feedback and discussions K. Journals

questions, issues, & problems of the human condition		
<b>3. Aesthetic Expression and Interpretation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative, performative, material and narrative forms of critical inquiry</li> <li>• Intuitive, imaginative and interpretive methodologies</li> <li>• Ways of knowing through which maker and receiver come to insight and understanding</li> <li>• Collaborative and community-based interdisciplinary practices</li> </ul>	<p>1. Students will be given the opportunity to imagine, create, and share their technique exercises and film projects they create. In doing so, they will exhibit their growing cognitive and creative understanding and interpretation of cinematic texts while exploring ideas, concepts, and understandings related to film story elements and the techniques that reveal them.</p>	<p>Participation in the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Composition Exercise</li> <li>B. In-Camera Continuity Exercise</li> <li>C. Motion Exercise</li> <li>D. Montage Short</li> <li>E. Short Film</li> <li>F. Ungraded Assignments</li> <li>G. Screening of your projects</li> <li>H. Text readings and discussions</li> <li>I. Pitching projects</li> <li>J. Peer feedback and discussions</li> <li>K. Journals</li> </ul>
<b>4. Leadership</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• skills to become creative, collaborative, informed, competent, and compassionate people who influence the various contexts into which they are called</li> <li>abilities and attitudes characterized by service, humility and integrity.</li> </ul>	<p>1. Students might be given the opportunity to work in groups and to take leadership roles as they discover their strengths weaknesses in terms of their relational skills and ability to collaborate. This will depend on evolving COVID-19 responses.</p>	<p>Participation in the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>D. Montage</li> <li>E. Short Film</li> <li>I. Pitching Projects</li> <li>J. Peer feedback and discussion</li> </ul>

## COURSE LEARNING EVALUATION

You will be accountable for the following course activities which will be used to determine your grade:

Composition Exercise. For this assignment, you will explore and create photographic compositions. The goal is to incorporate the principle, practices, and technique of visual composition into still images. Although this exercise will not be graded to give you the freedom to explore without fearing a penalty, it is vital that you take

it seriously because this will form the foundation for your graded assignments given that film is made up of a series of individual frames. Composing still shots well will help you to compose motion shots well. Guidelines for the exercise will be given during the course.

Motion Exercise. For this assignment, you will explore and create moving cinematic images. The goal is to incorporate the course lectures, demonstrations, and discussions and shoot a variety of shots and scenes that reveal your understanding of the material. For this exercise, you are free to try an assortment of motion-centered shots with the goal being to explore “motivated and “invisible” techniques that will be explained in class. If you choose a partner you must do all your own camerawork. Like the Composition Exercise this assignment will not be graded but it is vital that you work hard on it as it too will form the foundation for your later assignments.

**Note: The Composition and the Motion exercises will be not be graded. You will get detailed feedback on what does and does not work in your shots but you will not be assigned a grade. The reason for this is that you should be free to explore this experience without fear of “punishment” if you do not succeed well. At the same time, it must be pointed out that these two assignments form the foundation for later exercises and thus must be done intentionally and not just as a “rote” exercise.**

Individual In-Camera Continuity Exercise. For this assignment, you will conceive, direct, and shoot a short 1 to 2-minute visual narrative exercise that reveals your understanding of cinematic composition, motion, and directional continuity. The goal is to be as creative as possible as you employ many of the camera and shooting techniques discussed in class to tell a “linear” story. Remember, this is to be a visual-centered, non-verbal story with a clear beginning, middle, and end. That is, there will be no dialogue as you tell a story that involves linear visual-centered action. This assignment will be screened as shot. Therefore, all of the editing and transitions must be done “in camera.” Your grade will be determined by the quality and creativity of your visual storytelling techniques, how well you meet the assignment requirements, and whether or not you meet the deadline for this assignment. You will be given a handout that will outline the objectives for the assignment and guidelines for how to do it. N.B. You must also submit a brief (one page) statement of your intent for the project, e.g., to make us think, to scare us, to make us laugh, to show off your action skills, etc. and how you went about doing this from a filmmaker’s perspective and what you learned from the exercise. **This assignment will account for 10% of your grade.**

Montage Short. This assignment will allow you to explore the non-linear nature of the cinematic medium. For this exercise, you will fashion a montage and or “film-poem.” By this is meant that you will shoot and edit images and sounds (music, voice over, sound FX, etc.) designed to tell a story, visualize a poem or script reading, reveal the interior life of a character, e.g., what it means to be homeless or lost in life, etc. You can also make a music video.

The goal is for you to plan and discover audio/visual correlations for the text, concept, issue, or idea you will explore. You are encouraged to experiment with light, camera angles, composition, the manipulation of time and space, motivated shots, etc. Your finished piece will be edited using matching and counter-punctual sound and image techniques. This project should be approximately 2.5 to 4 min. in length. You must submit the ‘text’ that you have “cinematized” as well as a brief write-up of what you intended to do, how and why you went about doing it, and what you learned from the exercise. Guidelines and grading criteria will be provided for this project. **This assignment will account for 30% of your grade.**

Short Film. For this assignment, you will produce, produce, shoot, and edit digital film short that tells a narrative story. In doing so, you can write an original story, adapt a myth, folktale, or Bible story, parable, fable, etc. as the

basis for your project. The goal is to show what you have been learning and to create a film that moves and engages your audience as you write/adapt a short script, storyboard it, devise a shot list, and produce, shoot, and edit your project. Guidelines and grading criteria will be provided for this project. Note: You will lose marks if this assignment is late.

Each team member must play a key role in the film, e.g., writer, director, cinematographer, editor, etc. **You will also submit a production log or journal explaining what you did on the film and detail what you learned from this experience.** Your grade for this production will be based upon how well you have implemented and integrated the key concepts and insights covered in class and gained competency in the technical and aesthetical aspects of filmmaking. This project should be approximately 3 to 5 min. in length. You will be given a handout that details the requirements for this project. **This assignment will account for 30% of your grade.**

Course Journals. Being engaged with the course material and your peers is a critical part of this course. To help you do this you will keep two journals and submit them at the end of the course. Journal One will be a personal journal where you log your responses to the course readings, viewings, modules, etc. You must include at least two key take-aways from each chapter reading, module viewing, etc. This journal will also include a summary assessment of the work you have done during the course and of what you learned. Journal Two will be your responses to the work of your peer. That is, what worked well and how they could have improved it. Guidelines for how to do your journals will be provided at the start of the course. Both of these journals will be submitted at the end of the course during final exam week. **This assignment will account for 30% of your grade.**

Ungraded But Important Assignments. This course will involve activities that are not graded but which will enhance your learning experience such as viewing course related films and assignments. Along with the course and Module readings you must pitch your film projects to your peers. Pitching is a vital part of the film industry and it will help you clarify what you intend to do. Guidelines will be handed out for how to do this. In addition, you will have access to AccuSkills or other filmmaking tutorials which will be explained during the course.

Guidelines will be handed out during the course for each of the above requirements. The experience with COVID might alter the way in which some of the assignments are done.

**N.B.** Filmmakers need to know and master many related to film production. Throughout the course, you should study websites like the following to become familiar with key terms: “Ultimate Guide to Film Terms: The Definitive Glossary of Film Terminology,” <https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/movie-film-terms/>

## REQUIRED TEXTS + MATERIALS

Vankevich, Ned. Digital Filmmaking: A Beginner’s Guide to Mastering the Craft. Epub. 2019.

Internet links provided in Moodle and Course Text.

You will also be required to purchase some inexpensive equipment for this course. To be discussed first class.

## RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Block, Bruce. The Visual Story: Seeing the Structure of Film, TV and the New Media. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Focal, 2008.

Figgs, Mike. Digital Filmmaking. New York: Faber and Faber, 2007.

Schroepel, Tom and Chuck DeLaney. The Bare Bones Camera Course for Film and Video. 3rd ed. New York: Allworth, 2015

Stockman, Steve. How to Shoot Video That Doesn't Suck: Advice to Make Any Amateur Look Like a Pro. New York: Workman, 2011.

Vineyard, Jeremy. Setting Up Your Shots. Studio City, CA, Michael Wiese Productions; 2nd edition, 2008.

## Course Grading System

This course will use the University Grading Scale and will employ the following criteria for grade assessment:

A- to A+	superior content entailing vivid and engrossing ideas outstanding organization including strong introduction, idea development and closure distinctive style and delivery of the material high level of creativity and insight expressed in the work the student is exceptionally sensitive to the given rhetorical situation and constraints imposed by the project the project is superior in generating audience identification, empathy, response, etc. the project stimulates the audience to think and want to hear more about the topic
B- to B+	significant content good organization good delivery, creativity and technical and aesthetical execution of the project or paper a good job, but not achieving the excellence to merit an A
C- to C+	average content reasonably clear purpose and organization distracting problems in the technical and aesthetical execution of the paper or project
D	unclear purpose serious deficiencies in most areas of content, organization, and style
F	unacceptable at all levels of expectation reveals lack of preparation extremely poor execution of content, style and delivery

In short, an A signifies an excellent and highly effective communication and content performance, B an above average content and communication performance, C an average and competent content and communication performance, D a poor content and communication performance, and F a failure to communicate and meet the necessary and sufficient requirements for an assignment.

## TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignments Due</u>
Sept 09	Course Introduction	This a vital class laying the foundation for the course
14	Project Excellence and Professionalism	Moodle Unit One ;Vankevich Intro and Ch. 1
16	The Film Production Process	Moodle Unit Two; Vankevich Ch. 2
21	Visual Composition	Moodle Unit 3; Vankevich Ch. 3

	23	Visual Composition CONT.	<b>Composition Exercise</b>
	28	Visual Composition CONT.	<b>Composition Exercise</b>
	30	Cinematic Motion	Moodle Unit 4; Vankevich Ch. 4
Oct	05	Cinematic Motion Critique	<b>Motion Exercise</b>
	07	Cinematic Motion Critique	<b>Motion Exercise</b>
	12	The Grammar of Film	Moodle Unit 5; Vankevich Ch. 5
	14	Visual Story Telling	Moodle Unit 6; Vankevich Ch. 6
	19	In-Camera Project Critiques	<b>In-Camera Film</b>
	26	In-Camera Project Critiques CONT.	<b>In-Camera Film</b>
	28	READING BREAK	No Class
Nov	02	Editing and Montage Pitching Projects	Moodle Unit 7; Vankevich
	04	Pitching Projects	<b>Montage Project Pitch Due</b>
	09	Montage Critiques	<b>Montage Project</b>
	11	Remembrance Day	NO CLASS
	16	Montage Critiques	<b>Montage Project</b>
	18	Creating Short Films	Moodle Unit 8; Vankevich Ch. 8
	23	Making Short Films CONT.	Moodle Unit 9; Vankevich Ch. 9
	25	Creating Short Films CONT.	<b>Final Project Pitches Due</b>
	30	Creating Short Films CONT.	<b>Final Project Issues</b>
Dec	02	It's A Wrap	<b>Short Film Due</b>
	07	It's A Wrap	<b>Short Film Due</b>

**N.B. Changes could be made to this schedule depending on COVID-19 responses.**

## Course Policies and Caveats

### Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism at TWU

One of the core values of Trinity Western University is the integration of academic excellence with high standards of personal, moral, and spiritual integrity. The University considers it a serious offence when an individual attempts to gain unearned academic credit. It is the student's responsibility to be informed about what constitutes academic misconduct. For details on this, and on identifying and avoiding plagiarism go to the [University Homepage > Academics > Academic Calendar](#) (Section: Academic Policies).

<https://prezi.com/od62fxnkbmxh/plagiarism-how-to-get-it-out-of-your-life/> (Prezi presentation)

<http://bit.ly/1p00KX3> (Google Slide presentation offering more comprehensive information)

In this class academic dishonesty will also entail having someone else do camerawork, directing, producing, or editing for you and not getting permission to do this. In some cases, group work is allowed. We will discuss this during the course.

### Campus Closure and Class Cancellation

In the event of extreme weather conditions or other emergency situations go to <https://www.twu.ca/campus-notification>.

### University Standard Grading System

The Standard Grading System can be found in the Academic Calendar at <https://www.twu.ca/academics/academic-calendar> (See Section: Grading Practices)

[NOTE: If your department or course deviates from the standard, include that grading system here, and change the title of this section to *Course Grading System*.]

### **Academic Freedom**

With our charter, mission, and identity as a Christian university, Trinity Western University is committed to academic freedom, affirming and supporting it as defined and described in the statements of Universities Canada and the Tri-Council Research Granting Agencies provided in full at the following link:

<https://www.twu.ca/academic-freedom-trinity-western-university>.

Students should familiarize themselves with both the academic freedom statement and policy found at the Academic Freedom website. In this course, the academic freedom of both the course instructor and students is to be respected. Trinity Western University welcomes a diversity of academic perspectives, both in class discussion and submitted course work, provided they are thoughtfully and respectfully presented. Hate speech will not be tolerated.

### **Accessibility Statement**

Students with a disability who need assistance are encouraged to contact the Centre for Accessible Learning upon admission to TWU to discuss their specific needs. All disabilities must be recently documented by an appropriately certified professional and include the educational impact of the disability along with recommended accommodations. Once documented with the Centre for Accessible Learning, a letter will be sent to the student's professor recommending appropriate accommodations. Within the first two weeks of the semester, students must meet with their professors to agree on accommodations appropriate to each class. Students should follow the steps detailed by the Centre for Accessible Learning outlined on the website at <https://www.twu.ca/academics/learning-commons/centre-accessible-learning>.

### **Hospitality in the Classroom**

TWU is committed to an ethic of inclusion centred on the principles of Christian hospitality, reciprocity and reconciliation. We seek to cultivate generous learning spaces that are based on respect for differences and are open to diverse views, opinions, and identities that are thoughtfully expressed in a collegial manner. We welcome and value all voices, including those from under-represented groups or those who have been marginalized.

### **Attendance Policy**

Class attendance, whether face-to-face or virtual, is very important to student success at TWU. Students must attend class at least 75% of the time. If students fail to meet this standard, the instructor may fail the student from the course.

In addition, given the interactive nature of the course you are expected to attend and engage the class. Diligently doing your homework will prepare you for this and the explosions of learnings that can occur.

### **TWU Writing Centre (Undergraduate)**



The Writing Centre is available to assist all students with their academic writing assignments in any subject at any stage of the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Live, online writing appointments are available throughout the week by appointment and take place within the Learning Commons appointment booking system. To make an appointment, visit [www1.twu.ca/writingcentre](http://www1.twu.ca/writingcentre). For undergraduates, online writing feedback is offered through WriteAway. Students can submit up to three drafts of a paper, and the online tutors will provide feedback and resources to help improve the writing. Find out more at <https://writeaway.ca>. For more information, visit <https://www.twu.ca/writing-centre> or contact [writingcentre@twu.ca](mailto:writingcentre@twu.ca).

### **Late Assignments Policy**

Unexcused late assignments will be docked half a grade for each day they are late.

### **Safety Protocols**

Part of being a professional filmmaker is understanding the rule of safety first. Please be prudent and cautious in dangerous shooting environments. Protect yourself and the safety of your crew and cast. Common sense is a good best friend.

### **Facial Mask Policy**

Regarding the wearing of masks in common areas, classrooms, laboratories, or other learning environments, all TWU students are expected to adhere to the provincial health officer order requiring masks be worn in these university spaces among others. Students who meet the PHO's listed exemptions for wearing a mask, including people who are unable to wear a face covering because of psychological, behavioural or health conditions or physical, cognitive, or mental impairments, people who cannot put on or remove a mask on their own, or people who need to remove a mask to communicate with someone who is hard of hearing and for whom visual cues are essential, are expected to communicate with the instructor to notify them. TWU students who are unable to wear a mask per these guidelines are asked to choose a seat in class away from the immediate front row or the middle of the class to give them some more space from others in the room in order to protect their health and safety as well as that of their peers and instructor(s).

### **Trigger Warnings**

This course will involve viewing and critiquing both your work and some controversial films and themes that might be disturbing. Should issues arise, please feel free to discuss them with your teacher.

**N.B.** The instructor reserves the right to alter this syllabus in the event of unforeseen necessitating circumstances.