

Syllabus
RTV 4929c
Course 16275
Section HWEL
Fall 2025
Senior Production Workshop - Documentary Production
4 Credit Hours

Professor: Houston Wells
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Office Hours: Mondays 1:45-3:45 and by appointment or Zoom

Class meeting times: W 3-5 (9:35-12:35)

Room: Weimer 3324 (Video Editing Lab inside the INC newsroom)

Text: There is no required textbook for this course.

Pre-requisite: RTV 3320 Electronic Field Production
Co-requisite: RTV 3516/4930 Electronic Field Production II

This course is intended to be a true production workshop, in that you will be working in small groups to create a short-form documentary film. Early exercises and discussions will lead directly to the pre-production and field production of your film, and we will use much of the class time as supervised post-production. We will place emphasis on professional-level production values and the well-structured telling of impactful stories. Excellent projects will be considered for submission to film festivals.

As a member of this production community, you are expected to be on time and ready to participate. A great deal of the value of this course will come from discussion and critique, therefore **your participation is vital**. Your willingness to participate in thoughtful discussion will be reflected in your "attendance/punctuality/participation" score.

(Attendance is mandatory unless otherwise indicated. Unexcused absences during the semester will result in a two-point penalty per absence; tardies will result in a .5 point penalty.)

Posted due dates apply regardless of attendance; late assignments will be assessed a 20% penalty for each 24 hour period (or portion thereof) following the actual due date/time.

You are expected to check your UF email at least once every 24 hours; we will use email to communicate between class meetings.

Substantial production and post-production time outside of scheduled class hours will be required.

Schedule (subject to change):

- 8/27 Course introduction
Discussion: Documentary Film style, structure and substance
Examples of student docs
Viewing: A Thousand More, and The Making of A Thousand More
Define roles – Producer/Director/Production lead/Edit lead
- 9/3 Sell your skills – select production teams
Wisdom from the past
Intro to Project concept proposals x2: feasibility, access and impact
What is the Pre-Interview?
- 9/10 Project concept proposals x2: feasibility, access and impact
Intro to Visual Treatment and location scout
Canon C100 boot camp
- 9/17 BENCHMARK 1: pre-interview notes and discussion
In class: Visual treatment presentations and location scout reports
Interviewing skills
Intro to **Interview set-up challenge**
Interview location scout (Weimer)
- 9/24 **Interview set-up challenge** (composition, camera, lighting, audio)
Review interview shots
- 10/1 BENCHMARK 2: primary interview shot and transcribed, key bites selected
Start paper edit
Wells checks in with each production team – How are we doing with division of labor?
- 10/8 FIELD PRODUCTION DAY
- 10/15 BENCHMARK 3: B-roll selects
Continue paper edit, log B-roll
- 10/22 Post-production (additional field production as needed)
- 10/29 BENCHMARK 4: secondary interviews and additional B-roll
Finish paper edit, first A-roll edit
- 11/5 Post-production (additional field production as needed)
- 11/12 Post-production (additional field production as needed)
- 11/19 BENCHMARK 5: picture lock and rough audio mix
Post-production: finalize mix and color grade
- 11/26 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
- 12/3 Screening and discussion
(Individual reflection essay including peer evaluation due via Canvas by 11:00 PM 12/5)

Your final grade will be based on these scores:

Sell your skills presentation	4 pts
Concept proposals (production team)	5 pts
C100 Boot Camp (production team)	3 pts
Visual treatment scheduled meeting (production team)	3 pts
Visual treatment presentation (production team)	5 pts
Benchmark 1 (production team)	5 pts
Benchmark 1 (individual)	2 pts
Interview set-up challenge activity	5 pts
Benchmark 2 (production team)	5 pts
Benchmark 2 (individual)	2 pts
Benchmark 3 (production team)	5 pts
Benchmark 3 (individual)	2 pts
Benchmark 4 (production team)	5 pts
Benchmark 4 (individual)	2 pts
Benchmark 5 (production team)	5 pts
Benchmark 5 (individual)	2 pts
Final documentary (small group)	30 pts
Reflection essay/peer evaluations	5 pts
Attendance/punctuality/participation	5 pts

Grading scale:

A	93.50-100
A-	89.50-93.49
B+	87.50-89.49
B	83.50-87.49
B-	79.50-83.49
C+	77.50-79.49
C	73.50-77.49
C-	69.50-73.49
D	64.50-69.49
E	0-64.49

University of Florida resources and policies regarding:

Attendance

Grades

Course evaluations

Honor code and violations

Disability resources

Health/wellness

Crisis support

Etc.

Can be found at this link:

<https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

TELECOM/WUFT-TV Equipment Policy

All UF students granted limited permission to check out gear from the G020 Equipment Room must follow all established student/course access policies. Failure to do so will result in automatic suspension of G020 checkout privileges (for group checkouts, the suspension applies to everyone in the group) as well as grade deductions on coursework...based on the instructor's policies and course syllabus. Students who check out G020 gear are also required to pay for any damage to equipment beyond normal *professional wear & tear*, and to pay for replacement of any items lost or destroyed.

Equipment Checkout

When you pick up equipment, you must allow enough time to thoroughly inspect and test each piece before leaving the Equipment Room. **WHEN YOU SIGN FOR THE GEAR, YOU ARE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT IS FULLY FUNCTIONING, UNDAMAGED, AND THAT ALL PARTS ARE THERE.** You're also making a promise that all of the gear will be returned **ON TIME** and in good working order, similar to the condition at check-out. (If you test something and it doesn't seem to be right at check-out, get help then...or you will be responsible if the problem is only noted after you check in.)

Equipment Return

When you return equipment, you can leave it with the Equipment Room Manager for inspection or you can stay with the equipment while it is checked in. If you are not present during check-in, you will be notified of any damaged or missing gear as soon as the damage or loss is discovered. If you are not present during check in, you are still financially responsible for any damaged or missing gear. If you are not present at the time of check-in, you forfeit your right to challenge the check-in results of the Equipment Room Manager regarding the condition of the equipment when it was returned. It is advisable for borrowers to remain for check-in whenever possible, as this is your only opportunity to witness the inspection and testing of your equipment and answer/ask questions. Also, you will be required to clean or re-pack equipment/cables that are not in acceptable condition. Any damaged, broken or missing parts will be noted on the borrower's loan agreement and the borrower will be required to pay for any damage or loss. The borrower(s) will also face an automatic suspension of G020 checkout privileges, following the same penalty schedule as for late returns.

Late Return

Gear returned more than FIFTEEN MINUTES late will result in the following:

*first offense: suspension of gear checkout privileges for the individual (or all individuals in the group if a checkout for a group project) for 1 week

*second offense: suspension of gear checkout privileges for 1 month

*third offense: suspension of gear checkout privileges for 1 semester

In addition, lab grades and project grades will be penalized according to the instructor's rules regarding missed lab shifts or late assignments. Students should understand their failure to return equipment on time can result in irreparable harm to the work of other students waiting to check out gear. This cannot be taken lightly because other students' academic success may be affected by the offending student's disregard for the rules.

Other Policy Violations

Disregard for the equipment and the rules of the Equipment Room may result in the loss of privileges.

Besides late return, other violations of policy include:

*Returning equipment in unacceptable condition

*Handing off the gear to another student (if an individual checkout) or to anyone beyond the group members listed on the checkout form (for a group checkout)

*Taking equipment out of town without authorization

*Using equipment for work other than that required by the student's instructor

*Providing equipment access to suspended students, to students who do not qualify for equipment, or to non-students

Length of Checkout

The length of time you are allowed to keep the equipment varies according to what you are checking out and what class you are in. Specifics will be spelled out by your instructor and your course syllabus but in general, lab shift deadline and timed projects will be a matter of hours or a single day, other projects have either one or two day checkout as determined by the instructor. In all cases of overnight checkout **the gear is always due back by 9am** on the promised day of return. Whenever you return gear from a project shoot, **there is a 24-hour waiting period before you can reserve project gear again**. Plan your shoots accordingly; this rule is strictly enforced because it guarantees better access to a limited amount of gear by all students in each class. Students who are in need of an exception to this rule must have their instructor send an e-mail to the Equipment Room Manager giving permission for the exception.

Equipment Loss

The person or group who signed the equipment checkout form, regardless of who was in possession of the equipment at the time of loss, must replace any equipment that is lost while the equipment is checked out.

Theft

In the event of theft **you are required to notify the appropriate law enforcement department immediately**. And you must notify the Equipment Room Manager and your instructor as soon as possible. The person or group who signed the equipment checkout form could be held responsible for any negligence, so keep close track of all gear and do your professional best to make sure it all gets safely home to G020.

Malfunctioning Equipment

If you experience a problem with a piece of equipment while on a shoot, you are encouraged to call the Equipment Room Manager right away. Often the problems are comparatively minor and can be easily fixed. If the problem is beyond immediate on-site repair, bring the item back to the Equipment Room as soon as possible. If the breakage was not caused by negligence, and a similar piece of equipment is available, you can check it out. However, if a similar item is not available, you will have to make do without it until other gear becomes available.

Financial Responsibility

Every equipment user is financially responsible for loss, theft, or damage to any equipment that he or she checks out.

Failure to report lost or damaged equipment will be viewed as an attempt to conceal the loss or damage to the equipment and can result in your being barred from checking out equipment in the future.

Equipment Safeguarding

Equipment should be safeguarded at all times. No equipment may be left or stored in an unattended vehicle even if the vehicle is locked and the equipment concealed. The Department considers this an unprofessional risk.

No equipment may be stored in an office or classroom or studio or other University facility other than the Equipment Room without special permission. The department considers this an unnecessary risk.

Do not ever leave equipment outside the Equipment Room door, in any hallway or out in the open in any newsroom. This is an unnecessary risk.

Equipment may not be handed off to another student. When you are finished using the gear, it must be returned to the Equipment Room Manager for check-in. You remain financially responsible. Handing it off to someone, which is a policy violation, does NOT relieve you of any liability.

Travel

Equipment may not be taken out of town with prior permission from the instructor of record. The borrower and instructor of record must discuss transportation, handling and storage of all gear prior to departure to ensure no unnecessary risks are taken with the equipment. Extreme cases may require pre-approval not only of the instructor, but of the Telecom Dept. and/or tv station.

Pledge

You must sign the Gear Liability Pledge to acknowledge to have fully read, understand, and promise to comply with this Telecom/WUFT-TV Gear Policy. Unless/until we have a signed pledge on file, the equipment room will not let you borrow any gear designated for your class.