

Syllabus
RTV 4930
Course 23127
Section DOCU
Fall 2025
Electronic Field Production II - Documentary Prep
3 Credit Hours

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

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

Room: Weimer G215 (Editing lab)

Text: There is no required textbook for this course.

Pre-requisite: RTV 3320 Electronic Field Production

In this course, we will hone skills essential to the production of non-fiction narratives, specifically documentary. Emphasis will be placed on planning and structuring documentary productions as well as adding to the production and post-production technical skills practiced in earlier coursework. Students will experience hands-on instruction in advanced camera work, lighting, and audio; students will also work extensively with Adobe editing software.

Due to the nature of this course, attendance is mandatory unless otherwise indicated. A portion of your grade will be based on attendance and punctuality. Each unexcused absence will result in a 2 point grade reduction. Each tardy will result in a .5 point grade reduction. Posted due dates still 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.

UF's attendance policies can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

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

Schedule (subject to change):

- 8/25 So what is Documentary Film anyway?
 Equipment agreement
 Canon C100 mark ii refresher
 Creative B-roll gathering and edit exercise with C100
 Assign short doc selections
- 9/1 Labor Day holiday
- 9/8 Creative B-roll edit DUE via Canvas (9:35 AM)
 Introduction to the paper edit
 Transcription (using tools in Premiere) and paper edit (DUE Wednesday via Canvas, 11:00 PM)

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|-------|---|----------------------|
| 9/15 | Advanced camera shooting exercise | [Short doc viewings] |
| 9/22 | Canon C100 Camera Practical test (individual times scheduled for this) Interview + B-roll edit from paper edit (in-class edit) Introduce Natural Sound Impression exercise | |
| 9/29 | Interview + B-roll edit DUE via Canvas by 9:35 Natural Sound Impression exercise DUE via Canvas by 9:35 Review Nat Sound exercise in class How do you tell a person's story? Using action to reveal character Intro Character assignment | [Short doc viewings] |
| 10/6 | Character presentations in class Character write up DUE via Canvas by 9:35 Introduction to the No-interview Character Study | [Short doc viewings] |
| 10/13 | Manipulating light outside No-interview Character Study edit (in-class) | [Short doc viewings] |
| 10/20 | No-Interview Character Study DUE via Canvas by 9:35 View No-Interview Character Study in class Interview lighting review exercise Introduce Location Scout assignment | [Short doc viewings] |
| 10/27 | Location Scout assignment DUE via Canvas by 9:35 Interviewing skills Introduction to The One Minute Interview and pre-interviews | [Short doc viewings] |
| 11/3 | One Minute Interview shoot Intro Blake Snyder's Beat Sheet and film viewing | |
| 11/10 | Present film breakdowns using the Blake Snyder Beat Sheet Introduction to the Visual Treatment, choose teams of 2-3 One-minute interview edit (in-class) | |
| 11/17 | One Minute Interview DUE via Canvas by 9:35 One Minute Interview viewings in class | |
| 11/24 | Thanksgiving Holiday | |
| 12/1 | Visual Treatment and pre-production packet DUE via Canvas by 9:35 Production teams present Documentary Proposal to class | |

Your final grade will be based on these scores:

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|---|--------|
| Creative B-roll gathering and edit | 5 pts |
| Advanced Camera exercise | 4 pts |
| Canon C100 Camera Practical test | 8 pts |
| Short Doc viewings/reflection | 6 pts |
| Transcription and paper edit | 4 pts |
| Interview + B-roll edit (Agriscience) | 8 pts |
| Natural sound exercise | 5 pts |
| Character research and storytelling | 7 pts |
| Interview drill | 5 pts |
| Location scout report | 5 pts |
| No-interview character study | 12 pts |
| Beat sheet breakdown | 3 pts |
| One-minute interview | 12 pts |
| Visual treatment presentation (production team) | 10 pts |
| Attendance/punctuality | 6 pts |

Grading scale:

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|----|-------------|
| 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.