First Person, Present tense
Video Production

Course Description: First person, present tense is an arts workshop focusing on video production that challenges the participants to work in the area that intersects narrative fiction and documentary, memoir and experimental film. The class will challenge the students to mine their own surroundings and experiences to find stories that move and challenge them or those around them and then create a visual document that expresses the issues of personal interest within it. Once the theme has been chosen the following challenge will be to find the most appropriate end for the work: Internet, film festival, art gallery, iPhone or public space, for example.

As part of the class, instruction will be given on editing software and basic issues with sound and the camera. The participants will also be challenged to work with the people, budgets and means at their immediate disposal: camera phone, web cam, surveillance tape, etc.

Course objectives:
- Clear storytelling This class focuses on the content of your films more than the technical or formal aspects. With that in mind, the objective is to tell stories in clear and thoughtful manner that engages, challenges or informs the viewer
- Technical Proficiency While this is not a technical class (as per above), it is expected that you will finish the semester with a certain degree of ability both with shooting and editing short films. This will include sound, image, and editing program.

Spending the time it takes Filmmaking takes time, preparing (pre-production), shooting (production) and editing (post production). You are expected to plan accordingly. According to the Gallatin requirements, “students are expected to devote at least eight (8) hours to weekly course assignments (in addition to the time spent in the classroom), with the understanding that it may go higher.”

Attendance policy: Class starts punctually at 3:30. Two lates is an absence, two absences affects your grade.

Requirements
- Vimeo All students must have a Vimeo account.
- HARD DRIVE You MUST have your own hard drive. I would suggest a 1TB drive. HD video files are roughly 1minute = 1GB. In my experience and asking around two brands that seem to do so less are G-Technology and LaCie. I would suggest the LaCie travel drives (the ones with the orange casing).
  Make sure to get one that has Firewire 800 or USB 2.0. Also make sure it is not for storage but one that you can work off. If you are not sure you can ask me or look around on the web.

Please refer to the New Classes site for other links and readings.
Working together vs. Alone
Filmmaking is usually a very collaborative process. I STRONGLY suggest you work in teams. Help out a fellow student then she or he can help you out. In this way, you will be able to get more ambitious projects done and will see how others work.

Medium
You are challenged to take the idea of video production in its broadest sense. Think about as many possible outlets as you can and see which is best for you. On line, installation, phones, projected in public spaces, theaters, etc. Documentary, Narrative, Experimental, Hybrid Doc/Narrative, etc.

Written work:
• All written work to be handed in via email as an attachment and should be received no later than the beginning of class on the due date.

   To hand in the work via email:
   The email subject should have your name and the paper. For example, the subject should say:
   Your last name_proposal1_1stP (e.g. smith_paper1_1stP)
   The document should be titled as follows:
   Your last name_paper1.doc (e.g. smith_proposal.doc)

• The papers must be sent in Microsoft Word format: Other formats ARE NOT acceptable
• Please use standard fonts (Arial, Helvetica, Times New Roman, etc.) in standard size (10 - 12) and margins (1” – 1.25”).
• Late work will be accepted only under extreme situations. Grading will be discussed in each case.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated under any circumstance
As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website [www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html] for a full description of the academic integrity policy.

Presentation:
“To be just, that is to say, to justify its existence, criticism should be partial, passionate and political, that is to say, written from an exclusive point of view, but a point of view that opens up the widest horizons.”
-Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867)

Each week Students will be broken up into groups of two or three to present on the film listed. The goal of the presentations is to bring up specific issues about ideas and issues found in the films discussed. You are expected to come with a clear agenda, proposal of theses and ideas. Baudelaire’s quote above should be recalled. In these presentations you should take each of the films as something that makes an argument, puts forth a proposal and/or challenges a specific way of thinking.

It is strongly suggested that you do not only visual research (watching the movie) but also academic research (texts, articles).

The presentation must be NO LONGER THAN ten minutes. This will be strictly enforced.
Some suggestions:
- Make sure your arguments are concise, clear and concrete as you can make them. This way we will have something to respond to.
- Asking questions usually is not the best way to begin a dialogue. Try to make a challenging enough presentation so that the questions and issues are built in.
- If the film you choose challenged you, try to make the presentation challenge us.
- When using clips from the movies, make sure to be VERY specific with what you choose.
- Think about not just WHAT is said but HOW it is being said.

The presentations should represent a lot of organizing and clarifying of the ideas, as well as a thoughtful and engaging way to present those ideas.

Students should plan to work together either virtually or in person. You are encouraged to make the presentations original and creative.

The presentation will be graded on the following points:
- Clarity
- Complexity of the material

The presentations can be accompanied by some visual aid (powerpoint, prezi, etc) and an outline. A handout for the class can also be helpful.

• Students are responsible for all missed assignments and in-class work.

Grading

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
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<td>Class presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sketch #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>My manifesto</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sketch #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sketch #3</td>
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<td>Proposal (written)</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>(35%)</td>
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RESOURCES

- The class has cameras and audio equipment for sign out. Details to be discussed.

- See the NYU Classes site. There are a number of links and pdf articles that will prove helpful.

Suggested Films:

**Jafar Panahi**  This is not a film  [Netflix]

**Michael Moore**  Roger and Me  [Amazon streaming]

**Vincent Paronnaud, Marjane Satrapi**  Persepolis  [Amazon streaming]

**Emad Burnat, Guy Davidi**  5 Broken Cameras  [Netflix]

**Ari Folman**  Waltz with Bashir  [Amazon streaming]

**Agnes Varda**
  The Beaches of Agnes  [Fandor]
  The Gleaners and I  [iTunes]

**Chris Marker**
  Sans Soleil  [Hulu plus]
  The cat without a grin  [YouTube (click cc for subtitles)]
  La Jetee  [Vimeo and YouTube]

**Albert and David Maysles**  Salesman  [Hulu plus]

**Jonathan Caouette**  Tamation

**Ross McElwee**  Sherman’s March, Bright Leaves  [Fandor]

**Nathaniel Kahn**  My architect  [Vimeo]

**Caveh Zahedi**  I am a sex addict  [Amazon streaming]

**Lena Dunham**  Tiny Furniture, Girls
All assignments are described in full after the week by week syllabus.

1 1/28 Introduction
- Goals for the class
- Equipment
Very brief intro to sound/camera equipment

2 2/4 I am. Part 1 • Screenings
SKETCH #1 Two minute video project
Please note that all projects are invited to challenge conventional thinking about what a film or video can be. Students will screen their video with a one-minute introduction and a ten-minute feedback/discussion.
Organizing your media
Presentation:
Jonathan Caouette Tarnation

3 2/11 I am. Part 2 • Screenings continued.
Proposal #1 Due. See details below.
Codecs (H264, Apple ProRes, etc.) or Why you should not edit in H264
Presentation:
Michael Moore Roger and Me

4 2/18 My manifesto
Proposal Workshop/Manifesto Critique
Technical issues #1: Final Cut/Editing
Come in with any pressing issues and we will discuss the basics of editing from general How-to to theory.
Recording sound: some things to know.
Presentation:
Ross McElwee Sherman’s March

5 2/25 Music and Your Film: Legalities and working with a composer
Copyrights and music
Working with a Composer
Other ideas for music
Camera facts: white balance, exposure, lighting tips
Presentation
Agnes Varda The Beaches of Agnes or The Gleaners and I

7 3/4 Sketch #2 Places and People
Final Cut workshop: bring in questions, ideas, challenges you have come up against.
Interviews: techniques, Ideas, faux pas.
DVD Studio pro/DVD Authoring
Presentation
Morgan Spurlock Super Size Me

7 3/11 The Big Picture: Your final Project and the Problems you are having, might have and shouldn’t have
Sound levels, exporting OMF, etc.
Presentation:
3/18  SPRING BREAK

9  3/25  Sketch #3: Proposal rough sketch
      Review of Proposal beginnings, part 1
      Presentation:
      Jafar Panahi  This is not a film

10  4/1  Sketch #3: Proposal rough sketch
       Review of Proposal beginnings, part 2
       Presentation:
       Final Cut: Media manager, Compressor and DVD Studio Pro

11  4/8  Work Day
       Presentation:
       Video Art (Choose one: Ryan Trecartin, Bruce Nauman, Pipilotti Rist, Marina
       Abromovic, Miranda July, etc.)

12  4/15  Sketch #4: Proposal Rough sketch #2
        Presentation:
        Jafar Panahi  This is not a film

13  4/22  TBD
        Presentation:

14  4/29  Final workshop before the final critique

15  5/6  Screening of Final Project
Assignments
Please note that all projects are invited to challenge conventional thinking about what a film or video can be.

ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE POSTED ON YOUR VIMEO PAGE BEFORE CLASS.

Sketch #1: I am. Due 2/4
Time limit: 2 minutes max.

Requirements:
This project should introduce you to someone who does not know you. It should tell us (the class) who you are, what you are interested in and how you think and work.

Restrictions:
YOU CANNOT appear in it in person and cannot use your own voice.

Each student will screen his or her video with a one-minute introduction and a ten-minute feedback/discussion.

Proposal, version #1 Due 2/11
The goal of this course is to develop a series of works that explore your personal interaction with real events. With this proposal you should have a brief explanation of your area of focus. It should have the following format:

Title
Subtitle (optional)
Brief explanation No more than 200 words. Your focus should be on clarity. It is better to be straightforward and clear than anything else. Anyone reading this should know immediately what you are doing, why it matters and why it is interesting. It is strongly suggested that you meet with classmates to discuss ideas and read one another’s proposals before submitting them.
Technical details What is the format of the work? Is this a video for projection? YouTube/Vimeo? Viral video? Installation?
Challenges This should include all the possible challenges you can foresee, whether technical, personal, logistical or of any other kind. If you don’t see any, you should be worried. Very worried. It’s filmmaking. (Some might include: My subject is very difficult. I am very timid but want to interview people. What I want to do is technically challenging and outside my budget, etc.)

My (video) manifesto Due 2/18
Time limit: 2 minutes max.
NOTE: This is a video manifesto, NOT written.

Requirements:
Make a video/filmic/visual argument for the work you are making or the work you want to see. This could be specific to you or a general statement of interests. This could also be a formal or stylistic manifesto or a political or anti-political project.
Be bold, clear and precise.
What do you want/need/hope for? It is OK to express confusion, uncertainty, etc. Don’t let the word “manifesto” scare you. It should be understood as a way to force yourself to articulate (in
time-based media) what you are working on or at least challenge you to figure out the questions you are asking.

**Sketch #2: Places and people**  
**Due 3/4**  
**Time limit: 2 minutes max.**

**Requirements:**  
Look at your proposal. Where does it happen? Who is central to it? Who is secondary? What are the relationships between the places, the people and other elements of the story?  
You **MUST** have at least one shot in which the camera moves (a tracking shot, etc).  
At least two, but preferably more, people **MUST** speak.

**Sketch #3: Proposal rough sketch**  
**No time limit. Suggested: One minute**

You should begin to sketch out elements of your final project. This can be a scene or a section of the final (this **MAY** be used in your final project) or an exploration of the possible stylistic or thematic ideas you are approaching.