LOCATION: Studio C

TIME: Monday 3pm

OFFICE HOURS: By Appointment

INSTRUCTOR: Rich Underwood
Email: rich@filmspot.tv
Telephone 619-602-2719

Instructor: Rich Underwood, San Diego State University.
Office Hours: By Appointment

Overview: Course Description:
TFM 560 will be focused on the creative management of competitive, independently produced festival worthy short narrative films to be created by core groups of committed collaborators from the 560 class, with additional crew support from TFM students outside the class. Students will shoot in either high-definition formats, or on super-16 mm film, or 35 mm film, as deemed appropriate for the project. The instructor will function as “Executive Producer,” technical advisor and critical mentor.

Prerequisites:
TFM 360, 361, and 510 with grade of B (3.0) or better in each, and consent of instructor. Proof of completion of prerequisites will be required in the form of a copy of your transcripts.

Important Dates:
Feb 2nd  Class Pitch - Wally Schlotter gives Wally Award Brief
Feb 6th  11am – 1pm Wally Brunch @ Fig Tree Liberty Station
Feb 16th  Wally Award Pitches
Feb 23rd  Wally Winners Announced - Hero Project Due
Mar 9th  Mid Term (Prep Docs Due)
Mar 16th  Matt Lofgren to screen “Alarmed”
May 4th  Final Film Due – What’s done at this point is what gets graded.
May 11th  Production Books Due

41991

Textbooks and Other Required Student-Furnished Materials:

2) Recommended: Christopher Kenworthy – Master Shots: 100 Advanced Camera Techniques to get an Expensive Look on Your Low-Budget Movie


Other Recommended Texts:

General
Gore, Chris ............... The Ultimate Film Festival Survival Guide
San Diego Film Commission - Film & Video Resource Guide 2000
Sidney Lumet - Making Movies

For Editors
*Weynand, Diana - Apple Pro Training Series: Final Cut Pro 6
*Wohl, Michael - Apple Pro Training Series: Advanced techniques in Final Cut Pro 5
Dancyger, Ken – The Technique of Film and Video Editing
Reisz, Karel and Millar, Gavin – The Technique of Film Editing
Miller, Pat - The Technique of Film Editing Script Supervising and Film Continuity

For Cinematographers
*Blain Brown: Motion Picture and Video
*Kris Malkiewicz: Lighting Film Lighting
Dennis Schaefer and Larry Salvato: Masters of Light
Alan J. Ritsko: Lighting for Location Motion Pictures
Gerald Hirschfeld: Image Control
Anton Wilson: Anton Wilson's Cinema Workshop

For Directors
*David Mamet: On Directing Film
*Steven D. Katz: Film Directing Shot by Shot
John Sayles: Thinking in Pictures
Steven D. Katz: Cinematic Motion: A Workshop for Staging Scenes,
Roberto Rodriguez: Rebel Without a Crew
Geoff Andrew: The Director’s Vision – A Concise Guide

(Watch Hollywood Camera DVDs)

For Screenwriters
Aristotle’s Poetics
*Robert McKee: Story
Christopher Vogler: The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers
William Goldman: Adventures in the Screen Trade
Lou Hunter: Screenwriting 434
Linda Seger: *Making a Good Script Great*
Lajos Egri: *The Art of Dramatic Writing*

**For Sound Designers**
*David Yewdall: The Practical Art of Motion Picture Sound*
Stanley Alten: *Audio in Media*

**Course Design:**
TFM 560 is a “Senior Thesis Film” course. *The work produced in the course reflects the culmination of your artistic and technical development in the TFM Program.* The entire process begins with your pitch. Students will pitch project proposals to the class, and the class will determine the films to be produced, with final approval resting on the Instructor/Executive Producer.

Once the films have been selected, the production teams may have the opportunity to pitch their projects to a jury of industry professionals who will award partial or complete funding on the basis of project merit. (Note: other funding strategies, such as the *Advanced Filmmaker Fund*, will be addressed in class).

Each production group must deliver a task/timeline in which key stages of the project are clearly delineated for approval by the Instructor/Executive Producer. These elements include approved scripts, lined shooting scripts, storyboards (where appropriate), cast lists, crew lists, budgets, production schedules, prop lists, costume lists, location scouting summaries, and any other materials relevant to your particular production.

Attendance in pre-designated class sessions is mandatory. During the production phase, individual groups will meet with the Instructor/Executive Producer according to a staggered, pre-determined schedule, with meetings lasting roughly 30 – 45 minutes (4 - 5 production meetings per class day). Each student is accountable for at least one key creative role PLUS a key supporting role on a second film, and must keep a detailed time log of his/her participation in these productions (See figures 1 and 2 below). All students are expected to contribute to the class discussions, exercises, critiques and projects.

**Figure 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>KEY CREATIVE POSITIONS</strong></th>
<th><strong>KEY SUPPORTING POSITIONS</strong></th>
<th><strong>ADDITIONAL SUPPORT POSITIONS</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Producer</td>
<td>Production Coordinator(s)</td>
<td>Hair and Makeup</td>
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<td>Writer/Director</td>
<td>Assistant Director</td>
<td>Production Assistant</td>
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<td>Director of Photography</td>
<td>Camera Operator</td>
<td>Dolly Grip</td>
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<td>Production Designer</td>
<td>First Assistant Camera</td>
<td>Production Assistants</td>
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<td>Editor</td>
<td>Continuity/Script Supervisor</td>
<td>Jib Operator</td>
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<td>Sound Designer</td>
<td>Gaffer</td>
<td>Video Assist</td>
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<td>Visual Effects</td>
<td>Grip</td>
<td>Craft Service</td>
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<td>Boom Operator</td>
<td>Loader</td>
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<td>Location Sound Recordist</td>
<td>Animal Wrangler</td>
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<td>Location Scout/ Manager</td>
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<td>Property Manager (props)</td>
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Figure 2 (Time Log Form)

POSITION:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>TASK DESCRIPTION (cite film and task(s))</th>
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Course Objectives:

1) To provide an opportunity for students to produce competitive (i.e., festival-worthy) short narrative films.

2) To provide students the knowledge to formulate a viable festival and distribution strategy.

3) To provide a workshop and academic environment for students looking to build on knowledge and craft skills gained in other advanced production classes.

4) To offer students a viable portfolio film for future employment opportunities. This course assumes and assigns a significant commitment of time and resources outside of class due to the rigors of producing a polished film. Each student must assess his or her own time commitments and plan accordingly. As in the film and television industry, deadlines are non-negotiable.

Film or Digital cinema: Both film and HD digital cinema projects will be considered for this course. However, groups are strongly encouraged to shoot on film where appropriate. High-Definition projects (digital cinema) must maintain the standards and procedures expected of high-quality film production, especially with regard to lighting, contrast, sound and the appropriate use of tripods, Steadicams, dollies, jibs, etc.

Proof of Color Correction must be submitted with the production book. Either screen shots of your DaVinci session or receipt from a Color Correction Company.

Assignments:
Working in a production group, each student will be required to complete a film, with all rights and clearances intact, of significant complexity and quality, as determined by the instructor. Each group will be expected to maintain a production notebook that includes all materials including scripts, revised and lined scripts, storyboards, shot lists, production schedules, camera and sound reports, production stills and any other support items used in the film. This production notebook must be complete, presentable, and submitted on time or a grade reduction will result.

Project Approval. Students who wish to do so will pitch projects to the class. All students will vote on their top (number TBD) choices. Based on the pitches and interest of the students, (number TBD) projects generating the greatest support will be then referred for final approval by the Executive Producer/Instructioner. The projects will require shared financial participation, and will be provided class lab time for pre-production and production meetings. Groups must submit a group contract signed by all members before beginning production.

Length:
There is no rule on minimum or maximum length, but students are encouraged to produce projects under 8-minutes in duration. This is to allow for maximum production value and to ensure a logistically feasible project. Moreover, a well-crafted 7-minute film statistically stands a significantly greater chance of festival acceptance than a longer film that is harder to program either in front of a feature or within a 1.5-hour program of shorts. Projects that are less than 5-minutes, or longer than 15-minutes, will have to be justified as to their complexity and appropriateness. For longer projects, a solid production plan is required that shows you can complete a longer project in the time allotted and without negative impact on the equipment and facilities shared by other students.

**Deliverables:**

Based on the deadlines included in this syllabus or assigned by the instructor per the group’s individual production schedule, the following elements must be delivered to receive a grade in the course.

1) **Production Notebook:** Must include all necessary releases and licenses (talent, music, etc.) Will Not Be Returned
2) **Copy of Finished full-resolution Production Master (XD-Cam preferred)**
3) **Viewing DVD-R** to be delivered in a properly labeled Amery case (include flat art, title and credit block to conform with convention)
4) **Other elements as noted by instructor**
5) **Festival and/or distribution plan to include a minimum of five festival submissions.**
6) **A complete press kit and access via password to your withoutabox.com profile.**
7) **Project website** (elements to also be included in class website to be named)
8) **A vimeo link** is due the day before the due date in class with password to a downloadable version of the project. The active link needs to be included in the production book.

**Film Festivals – Student Screenings:**
In addition to the public festivals you will submit to, all projects must be submitted for consideration and screening at the SDSU film festival or student-organized screening. Although not all projects may be selected for screening, all must be submitted.

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance:**
Attendance is expected at all classes and production meetings. Lateness or absence that puts undue strain of the production process will of course show up in class reviews which will affect your individual grade. Late projects may not be accepted and will also receive a grade penalty at the instructor’s discretion (usually one full letter grade for work made up in a timely manner). This may include work missed for excused absences.
**Academic Dishonesty:** Although there will be no papers due for this course, academic dishonesty policies still apply to projects and exams. For example, having someone else do your project work and representing it as your own work is the same as plagiarism.

**Grading Procedures:**
Much of your grade will rely on your attendance at mandatory meetings and on the degree of professionalism in the production process you demonstrate. There will be a strict adherence to deadlines and delivery schedules. All students will share two project grades which

Each student must work on two projects and have a primary position on one and at least a secondary position on another. The primary project for each student will be weighted at 80% and the secondary project weighted at 20% and the grade will be based on meeting the due date, creative, technical and organizational aspects, as well as satisfaction of learning objectives. In addition each student will receive an individual grade based on the performance of the positions they held in each production.

Each grade will be determined based on the following percentages:

30%  
Midterm – Prep Participation – Write a one-page summary of your prep activities for each production. Attach the form in Fig #2 for bullet points and any supporting material you feel is important. This is an individual grade and will be determined by both volume and quality of work.

30%  
Final - Completed Final Films on DVD Due and a Vimeo link is due the day before the due date in class with password to a downloadable version of the project. The active link needs to be included in the production book. This grade is shared by everyone in the group.

30%  

10%  
The Hero Project:

This assignment came out of feedback from an ASC panel at The American Society of Cinematographer’s Clubhouse and Panavision. “Everyone should have heroes!” Students must be literate about the craft people they hope to emulate. Whatever your primary role is in 560, find an outstanding craftsperson to do a study of.
Hero Project:

1.) Make a DVD and a Vimeo post of highlights from your selected craftpersons work, from 3 to 5 different films.

2.) No more than 10 minutes long.

3.) Include a written description of the scenes and why you admire their work. A paragraph on each should be enough.

Start the project with a slate white on black:

Slate #1
This project is intended for educational use only.

Slate #2

Example:
John Smith
A Study of
Laszlo Kovacs ASC

Slates that go before each scene:

Example:
Scene from Easy Rider 1969
Tracking Shot from Car
Chapter 4 or Scene 4 on DVD

Producers may choose to give a 3-5 minute lecture on their selected producer and turn in a copy typed in Times New Roman 12pt.

- 10%
SDSU Student Film Showcase. 1 grade point reduction will be given to all primary members of any group whose film does not make it into the SDSU Student Film Showcase. (Note: A late film will not make it into the Showcase and will be penalized for twice resulting in a 2 grade point reduction.

Note: Additionally, each student is required to attend at least two SDSU plays this semester (tickets can be purchased online at [http://theatre.sdsu.edu](http://theatre.sdsu.edu)). Signed ticket stubs or receipts for each student should be included in the group production notebook. This will be considered in the above evaluation category under “participation.”

Incompletes:
Not completing your project on time is not considered sufficient grounds for an incomplete. No incomplete grades are given for this class unless:
1) You have completed at least 80% of the course
2) The Incomplete results from a documented medical or family emergency or other unusual circumstance approved by the Department Chair’s office.

3) You are not failing the course at the time the Incomplete is requested.

**Professional Behavior:**

All productions must adhere to the highest standards of professional behavior and safety. **No weapons or weapon facsimile may be used during production without the written permission of the professor.** All weapons must be examined by a faculty member before being used on set. All action scenes or scenes in which injury or the perception of injury may occur must be cleared with a faculty member and a safety officer or equivalent must be on set, with safety and the situational awareness of the set their only responsibility. Everyone – cast, crew, vendors and bystanders must be made aware of the production and the intention of the action and must be treated with respect at all times.

**Lab Fee:** This course requires a $20 lab fee.

**Miscellaneous**

All submitted work must be typed. Scripts and schedules must be submitted in acceptable formats.
Press Kit Essentials

1. Create a document (.pdf) that includes the following in a neatly arranged manner.
   - Title
   - Tag Line
   - Log Line
   - Shooting Format
   - Synopsis
   - Director’s Statement – Some festivals request a brief Statement of the Director, which can vary widely in content and approach, often addressing the significance of the project or aspects of process. It is NOT a synopsis.
   - Director Bio
   - Producer Bio
   - Writer Bio
   - Any other bios from cast or crew that are significant to the film and could be used in marketing. They should emphasis professional credits. Be written in third person, identifying the person by entire name and for the duration of the bio by last name.
   - Cast and Crew Listing (same as end credits)
   - Production Notes and Anecdotes: Some festivals request brief notes and anecdotal accounts pertaining to the production, which can vary widely in content and approach.
   - Quotes from cast and crew about the project.
   - A positive review (or excerpts from a review that are favorable).
   - Any previous publicity
   - One Sheet (poster)
   - Postcard (art)
   - Flyer (art)
   - The total PDF Press Kit – No Larger than 4mb

2.) **Author DVD of Film with Appropriate Slipcover Artwork**
   - DVD Case w/ artwork (labeled with title of project, director, contact number, and running time)
   - DVD Disc w/ artwork (labeled with title of project, director, contact number, and running time)

3.) **Create Artwork** - To be delivered on a data disc, each file to be labeled with title of project, director, contact number.
   - Poster and postcard employing iconic image from your short.
   - Digital Images (headshots) of the Director, Producer and other important members of the cast and crew - with captions and photographer credit.
   - Production stills - with captions and photographer credits
• Color Stills lifted from the film – with captions

**Note:** Create Caption Document:
Number the images and include a .PDF document that matches captions with images.

**Note:** Images should be .JPGs minimum 4x6 225 ppi no larger than 3MB

• One Sheet (poster) .jpg 27” x 40”
• Postcard as .jpg
• Flyer as .jpg
• Camera ready titles and promo graphics as .jpg

• Behind the Scenes Video of the Project

4.) Make all of these files accessible on a webpage utilizing the design of the “One Sheet”.

Now you have both a standard and on-line press kit and all the materials to upload to “Withoutabox.com.”
Title: ___________________________  Total Points 1-4 _______ 125

Category #1 Total Points _______ 35
☐ Title  ☐ Logline  ☐ Genre
☐ Story –  ☐ Arc –  ☐ Twist –  ☐ Take Away

Category #2 Total Points _______ 40
☐ Something New
☐ Style/Potential
☐ Multi-layered
☐ Compelling Characters
☐ Purpose
☐ Memorable
☐ Re-Watch ability
☐ New Knowledge

Category #3 Total Points _______ 35
☐ Star Power
☐ Publicity
☐ Broad Appeal
☐ Sequel/Franchise/Merchandising
☐ Target Audience
☐ Festival Worthy

Category #4 Total Points_______ 15
☐ Prepared
☐ Feasibility/Costs
☐ Shot List vs. Realism

Note
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>Mar 23</td>
<td>Group 5</td>
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<td>Apr 13</td>
<td>Group 2</td>
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<td>Apr 20</td>
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