



RTA 920: Visual Storytelling: Video Production

Fall, 2014

Lecture Professor: Dana M. Lee ext. 7546
Twitter: @professordana

Email: danalee@ryerson.ca
Course Twitter Hashtag: #rta920

Office Hours: by appointment

About the Course

Course Description from the Ryerson University Undergraduate Calendar:

"This course will introduce the production techniques of single-camera video as used in television and other screen-based media. Students will build skills in designing video pieces from beginning to end: pre-production, on location shooting, and post-production editing and finishing."

Course Goals (Learning Outcomes):

By the end of this course, students will:

- Recognize the various pieces of hardware we use in single camera video production systems
- Identify and understand the use of the controls on those devices
- Learn the fundamentals of good visual storytelling
- Improve production values by using your technical and production knowledge
- Be able to execute the planning, shooting & editing of a basic single camera video production in a visually creative & technically proficient manner.

This course will introduce you to the world of single-camera EFP - Electronic Field Production practices. Through lectures and hands-on field production, you will have the opportunity to develop a knowledge of television equipment, tools and planning. You will learn about the fundamental operation and care of equipment, and gain an understanding of the protocol and interpersonal skills necessary for a successful television production.

In EFP, you find yourselves on location, left with a single camera recorder, some peripheral equipment, your pre-planning and your wits. The task at hand here is to capture excellent sound and clear pictures, return to the editing suite, and make some sort of sense of what you've shot. This course will go over the hardware and skills that makes this possible.

Studio production, on the other hand, takes place in the multi-camera television environment. Since it's very different than single camera work, we will be discussing how television studios work, and participate in a studio tour while we discover the various pieces of equipment you'll find there.

The class will be a combination of lectures, paperwork planning sessions, and hands-on location shooting - a detailed schedule can be found later in this outline. As a major part of this course is hands-on, come prepared to handle the equipment and participate in all of the various crew roles. Because the planning sessions make the teleproductions run smoothly (or not), all paperwork must be ready for review by the due dates outlined.

Attendance at all sessions is mandatory, due to the fact that television production is by nature cooperative group work.

Due to the introductory nature of this course, it is unlikely that every student will become completely proficient in all areas of video production. However, I expect that each of you will have built a foundation for continuing interest in the TV production process.

Supplies and Texts

All 'readings' will be supplied *for free*. There is no textbook required for this course. If you wish to beg, borrow or purchase a television production textbook by all means do so, but I will only quiz you (on the mid-term test) on material we have covered in class. There are several good websites that go into the various facets of television production and I encourage you to read through them as we progress through the course.

Because there is a quiz during the semester, *taking notes during lectures is highly recommended*.

Course Website on Blackboard (at <http://my.ryerson.ca>) :

Some course material including announcements, handouts, readings, etc. will be available online using Blackboard, a web-based instructional tool. The Blackboard site for this course can be accessed at <http://my.ryerson.ca>.

Supplies:

Each student should have:

- one SD card (at least Class 10 speed, and at least 8 GB in capacity) for recording your shoots on the camera, in the field
- a USB stick that can be handed in (at least 8 GB in capacity) for assignment submission
- another USB stick or portable USB storage device that can handle 32 GB or more to use during editing sessions
- a set of headphones or earbuds to plug into the camera to monitor sound quality and to use during editing sessions

You will be using RTA equipment for the video shoots and RCC editing suites for post-production. You will, of course, be held responsible for damage or loss of equipment. If you return equipment late to the EDC lockup, there will be a fine for late return (since other students are waiting to use the equipment.)

Evaluation

<i>Description</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Grade</i>
Video sequence #1	Group	20%
In-class test	Individual	30%
Video sequence #2	Group	30%
Final Production Review Journal	Individual	10%
Peer Evaluation (2, worth 5% each)	Individual	10%
<i>Total</i>		<i>100%</i>

Postings of the grade results of each of the assignments will be available online on Blackboard as soon as humanly possible. As per University policy, final grades will *NOT* be posted on Blackboard.

Assignment Submission

Assignments are to be handed in *on a USB stick*. It must be clearly labelled so I can return it to you after the assignment is graded. Unlabelled or unclearly labelled USB sticks will be kept by me, to add to my collection.

Technical Specifications:

All video assignments must conform to the following technical specifications.

VIDEO SUBMISSION

- Copy your finished production onto your "assignment hand-in" USB stick.
- Your video must be exported as an HD 1920x1080 - H.264 file.
- Name your exported file "lastname_firstname_assignment1.mov"
- Clearly label your USB stick. There's rarely enough room on a USB stick for a proper label, so I suggest you write the information neatly on a small piece of paper, and scotch tape it to the USB drive.
- Label it with the person who owns the USB disk: Last name, First name.

Week	Date	Lecture	Outside of Lecture	Due For This Week's Lecture	Evaluation
1		no class this week			
2	Sept. 8	*Introduction *Why make video? *What makes a good video? *Audience and purpose: why not just do what I want? *Good vs. Bad Storytelling: examples, YouTube, etc. *Paperwork package and production planning *A sample production			
3	Sept. 15	*Aesthetics: colour, light, framing, sound *Technical requirements to achieve this *Crew positions		Readings on aesthetics and technical requirements: TBA	
4	Sept. 22	*Good vs. Bad Videos: Internet phenomena vs. ugly videos *More about storytelling *Scripting *Discuss assignment #1			
5	Sept. 29	*The Tools, The Shooting, The Editing *Sample shoot: in-class demo		*Watch videos on The Tools, The Shooting, The Editing: TBA *HAND IN ASSIGNMENT #1 DRAFT PAPERWORK DURING CLASS	
6	Oct. 6	Shoot assignment #1 from pre-determined outline/script, using your paperwork package			
RW	Oct. 13	no class this week			
7	Oct. 20	*Editing Tools: in-class demonstration *Discuss assignment #2			
8	Oct. 27	*Half the class: edit assignment #1 in lab *Half the class: multicamera studio demonstration and tour	*Finish editing assignment #1 on your own time *Start working on assignment #2 paperwork	Watch videos on multicamera production for either this week or next week's demo and tour: TBA	
9	Nov. 3	*Half the class: edit assignment #1 in lab *Half the class: multicamera studio demonstration and tour	*Finish editing assignment #1 on your own time	WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6 DEADLINE, 9 a.m.: *HAND IN ASSIGNMENT #1 ON USB STICK to my mailbox in RTA office for my screening and marking. LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE PENALIZED. *HAND IN ASSIGNMENT #2 DRAFT PAPERWORK	
10	Nov. 10	Screen "Best of Assignment #1" in class; deconstruct, learn from our mistakes		HAND IN PRJ #1 AND PEER EVAL #1 DURING CLASS	Assignment #1: 20%
11	Nov. 17	Shoot assignment #2 in class	Edit assignment #2 on your own time		
12	Nov. 24	IN CLASS TEST ON: *Principles of storytelling *Technical principles		HAND IN ASSIGNMENT #2 ON USB STICK DURING CLASS , for my screening and marking. LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE PENALIZED.	In-class test: 30%
12a	Dec. 1	Screen "Best of Assignment #2" in class; deconstruct, learn from our mistakes		HAND IN PRJ #2 AND PEER EVAL #2 DURING CLASS	Assignment #2: 30% PRJs: 10% Peer Evals: 10%

Production Review Journal

Students will maintain notes to write a Production Review Journal for the end of the semester. This consists of a one-page (about 500 words total) single-spaced written report that summarizes lessons learned, proficiency accomplished, difficulties encountered, and an analysis of crew role performed or process engaged in, in context with observed video programming.

A report template will be provided for this assignment.

Hard copies only. Must be word-processed - *no handwritten journals.*

Peer Evaluation

At the end of *each* group assignment (i.e. the video assignments), each student is required to evaluate the contribution of his or her classmates to the show, as well as his or her own contribution. A report template will be provided for this.

Contacting Me

Email is a much better way to contact me, rather than voicemail - I am out of the office some days of the week, but I'm almost always picking up email. I will try to respond to inquiries within 48 hours of reception (not including weekends...)

I will reply to (but be annoyed by) email *requesting information that I've already told you*, so read carefully and completely all materials supplied to you (this goes for any course at Ryerson, not just mine.) That said, I am always happy to clarify things that you don't understand - just read your stuff first!

You must use your @ryerson.ca email account to contact me. This is University policy. As well, I use a fairly rigorous junk mail filter. It lets through all Ryerson email, but may very well block messages from hotmail, gmail, yahoo, and similar systems.

If you email me from another system, I may simply ignore your message, or delete it without warning.

Appendix (General information for all RTA students)

Student Codes of Conduct

All students are required to adhere to all relevant University policies, such as the Student Code of Non-Academic Conduct (see <http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol61.pdf>) and the Student Code of Academic Conduct (see <http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol60.pdf>).

The Ryerson University Undergraduate Course Calendar

This is your resource for all information relating to academics, including curriculum, course descriptions, significant dates (including last date to drop a course without academic penalty), academic standings, The Student Code of Academic & Non-Academic Conduct, etc. The Ryerson University Undergraduate Course Calendar is available online at <http://www.ryerson.ca/undergraduate/calendars/>.

RTA Website

At www.ryersonrta.com you will find information about the curriculum, course outlines, scholarships, student groups, staff & faculty, studios & facilities, etc.

Blackboard Course Website

Blackboard is an online course tool which may include an online discussion board, course documents such as the syllabus and lecture notes, announcements, an area where your grades are posted, etc. If your professor has set up a Blackboard site for this course, you'll find it at <http://my.ryerson.ca>.

RTA Online

RTA Online is an Organization on Blackboard that contains templates for storyboards, production paperwork, etc., as well as online tutorials for software and equipment used in classes and labs. Find it under 'Organizations' on your my.ryerson.ca homepage.

Your Ryerson Email Account:

The RTA School of Media will often send you important information by email (e.g. scholarship information, reminders of important dates, notification of meetings and/or events, internship opportunities and job postings, etc.). Correspondence from RTA and from your professors will be sent ONLY to your Ryerson email account. It is your obligation to ensure that you activate your account and check it regularly, or have it forwarded to an account you check regularly. Please use only your Ryerson account for sending emails to staff & faculty. See below for accessing your Ryerson email account.

Activating Your Ryerson Online Identity

To access many of Ryerson's online resources, you must first activate your Ryerson online identity by completing a series of web forms available via <http://www.ryerson.ca/accounts/>. During the activation process, you will obtain a username and create your initial password. Once activated, your Ryerson online identity provides you with access to:

- Google Apps
- Ryerson email
- The Central Computer Labs including the Library and KHW71
- The my.ryerson portal and learning system
- RAMSS (via <https://my.ryerson.ca>)
- Other servers and applications needed

Notice to Students with Disabilities:

Students with any disability (e.g. learning, medical, physical, sensory), illness, or condition that requires academic adaptations should discuss the situation with the professor and/or contact the Access Centre (<http://www.ryerson.ca/accesscentre/>).

Written Assignments:

All written assignments are expected to be properly formatted and cited using **MLA style** (unless otherwise indicated by your professor). Guides and references for using MLA style can be found through the Ryerson University Library as well as the Writing Centre. See <http://writingcentre.blog.ryerson.ca/files/2012/05/MLA.pdf>

Fact-Based Media Assignments

For assignments or projects in which real people and/or real events are to be featured (e.g. news stories, features, documentaries, interviews, etc.), students are expected to adhere to the highest standard of truth in reporting: all information included should be checked for accuracy and any guests/interviews/sound clips/etc. used must be real. Fabricating interviews or information, or using actors/friends to pose as someone they are not, etc. for the sake of an assignment are serious transgressions of media ethics and will not be tolerated.

English as a Second Language:

Ryerson University offers support to students who may require improvement in their overall English language communication skills. Please visit **English Language Support** at www.ryerson.ca/studentsservices/els/

Accommodation of Student Religious Observance:

At the start of the term, students who have religious observance obligations which will lead to absences from campus or academic activities during the semester should download the "Student Declaration of Religious Observance" form from <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/forms/relobservforminstr.pdf>. Present a copy of the form to the professor **within the first two weeks of classes**. The professor and student will then consult to reach an agreement on a reasonable means to address the situation.

Learning Success

Learning Success (<http://www.ryerson.ca/learningsuccess>) helps students make the transition to university learning, develop sound learning strategies through tutoring options and course-based study groups, and achieve their academic potential by providing services in both traditional and virtual learning environments. Learning Success offers free workshops for students such as: Note-taking, Managing Tasks and Time, Ways of Learning, Critical Reading, Test Preparation and Test Anxiety, etc.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is defined by the University as "claiming the words, ideas, artistry, drawings, images or data of another person as if they were your own." (Student Code of Academic Conduct, Ryerson University, 2006, p. 2).

According to the Code, plagiarism includes:

- i. copying another person's work (including information found on the Internet and unpublished materials) without appropriate referencing;
- ii. presenting someone else's work, opinions or theories as if they are your own;
- iii. presenting another's substantial compositional changes to an assignment as your own;
- iv. working collaboratively without permission of the instructor on an assignment, and then submitting it as if it was created solely by you; or
- v. submitting the same work, for credit, in two or more courses without the prior written permission of the instructor(s). (Student Code of Academic Conduct, Ryerson University, 2006, p. 2.)

Usually one associates plagiarism with written works but it can include any work such as photographs/artwork, Internet materials, video, audio, and digital media. **The University penalties for plagiarism can be severe, ranging from getting zero on the assignment up to, in cases of prior academic dishonesty, suspension or expulsion.** Please note that you may be required to submit some or all of your written assignments to www.turnitin.com. Students who do not want their work submitted to this plagiarism detection service must, by the end of the second week of class, consult with the instructor to make alternate arrangements.

Useful links to help you understand and avoid plagiarism:

Ryerson's Academic Integrity web site: <http://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/>

Student Code of Academic Conduct policy: <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.pdf>

Cheating:

Cheating is defined by Ryerson University as:

- i. using materials or aids not expressly allowed by the instructor in an examination or test;
 - ii. copying another person's answer(s) to an examination or test question; copying another person's answers to individually assigned projects;
 - iii. consulting with another person or unauthorized materials outside of an examination room during the examination period (e.g. discussing an exam or consulting materials during an emergency evacuation or when permitted to use a washroom);
 - iv. improperly submitting an answer to a test or examination question completed, in whole or part, outside the examination room unless specifically permitted by the examination format;
 - v. resubmitting altered test or examination work after it has already been evaluated;
 - vi. presenting falsified or fabricated material, including research results; or
 - vii. improperly obtaining, through deceit, theft, bribery, collusion or otherwise, access to examination paper(s) or set of questions, or other confidential information.
- (Student Code of Academic Conduct, Ryerson University, 2006, p. 2)

The University penalties for cheating can be severe, ranging from getting zero on the assignment or test up to, in cases of prior academic dishonesty, suspension or expulsion.

Use of Laptops, Cell Phones, and Other Mobile Electronic Devices in the Classroom

Students are advised that because various learning & teaching activities may be enhanced or diminished by use of mobile devices, it is up to each professor to determine when & how such devices can or should be used by students during any given class.

Students may not take pictures, video recordings, or sound recordings in class without express permission from the professor.

RTA Policy on Offensive Materials

RTA School of Media desires to foster an environment that promotes and embraces the principles of freedom of expression, academic inquiry, and creativity. Within this context we all have a responsibility to respect the rights and freedoms of others, including the right to study and work in an environment which is free of offensive materials.

The term offensive may be used to refer to material that:

- is overtly sexual, and/or
- contains profanity, and/or
- perpetuates stereotypes (e.g. racial, gender, sexual, religious, etc.), and/or
- depicts violence, and/or
- denigrates members of marginalized groups based on various factors such as sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, class, gender, disability, etc.

Should you not be sure if your content is offensive, please follow up with your instructor before proceeding with your project. Please review the full policy which can be found in the RTA Student Handbook on our website:

www.ryersonrta.com