

## RTA 973 Independent Project: Media Production

Fall 2014

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	Office Location:	RCC 234C (in the Transmedia Centre)	
	Office Hours:	by appointment	
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<b>Lab Assistant:</b>	TBD		
<b>Time &amp; Location:</b>	Wednesdays, 4-7pm, RCC361 starting Wednesday September 3 <sup>rd</sup> .		

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### About the Course

#### Course Description from the Ryerson University Undergraduate Calendar:

*In this course senior students produce professional level audio, video or new media projects following a carefully designed planning process. This course is for that individual student who wishes to stretch their technical, organizational and, most importantly, creative skills on a project that does not fit within the constraints of the fourth year Master Thesis. (Formerly BDC 976).*

*Lect: 3 hrs.*

*Prerequisite: BDC 301/RTA 311 or BDC 302 or BDC 303/RTA 313 or BDC 304/RTA 314 or MPM 106/RTA 201*

#### WHAT YOU WILL DO IN THIS COURSE:

Pitch, Prepare, and Produce your own media production using your existing knowledge, skills, creativity, and time management. The project must be do-able within the existing short time-frame--there are only a few short weeks between completion of the planning paperwork and the date of the first rough-cut screening! You must be confident in your abilities to complete the project to a professional standard. Students in this class as well as other classes are required to assist each other as production crew, etc.

The class will meet as a group during scheduled weeks only (see weekly outline below). Some mandatory or optional workshops may be scheduled. Individual meetings will be set up during the term between student and professor as required or as indicated in the course outline.

Because this course is based on independent production, students choosing this class should:

- Be organized
- Have strong time management skills
- Be able to set and complete personal goals and deadlines
- Have a sufficient production skill set upon entering the course to complete the intended project.

**Note:** This course has a big workload. Expectations are high and the time frame is short. Students should have sufficient existing skills in the area(s) of production required, as well as strong self-organization and time-managements skills, to carry out their proposed project.

## Course Goals (Learning Outcomes):

By the end of this course, students will:

- Understand, through hands-on experience, the planning, production, and post-production processes for a major media production
- Have an idea of the cost of producing such a project in professional facilities
- Develop skills in self-discipline, initiative, and time management through working on a project independently
- Improve on their existing skills in media production

## Weekly Outline

Week	Topic/Activities:	Assignment Due:
1 Sept 3	Introduction to course – expectations, evaluation, requirements Project ideas: inspiration & examples	
2 Sept 10	Students to present their project pitch to the class <b>5 minute max on Pitch + Q&amp;A</b> <b>Pitch package due the next day by 4pm</b>	<b>Pitch Package Due Thurs Sept 11 by 4pm</b>
3 Sept 17	Location Recording workshop – mandatory for all students with a video component in their production	<b>Preliminary Paperwork due</b>
4 Sept 24	Editing workshop – mandatory for all students who have not yet learned how to use Adobe Premiere	<b>Completed Paperwork due</b>
5 Oct 1	*	
Oct 8	*	
6 Oct 15	READING WEEK	
7 Oct 22	Rough cut screening	<b>Midterm Report due</b>
8 Oct 29	Rough cut screening	
9 Nov 5	*	
10 Nov 12	*	
11 Nov 19	Screening of completed student projects. Attendance is mandatory! Location to be announced.	<b>Final Production due</b>
12 Nov 22	Screening of completed student projects. Attendance is mandatory! Location to be announced.	<b>Final Report due Magic 2 forms due</b>

\*No class scheduled. Individual meetings may be set up at the request of the student or the professor, or workshops may be scheduled according to student interest/needs.

## Evaluation

### Final Grade:

Your final mark in BDC 976 will be calculated following this breakdown:

Initial Paperwork Package(s)	10%
Midterm report & Rough Cut Screening	10%
Final Production	60%
Magic 2's	15%
Final Report	5%

**NOTE:** Because this course is based around one major independent project, students are advised that the course does not lend itself to early feedback which may assist in deciding whether to drop the course before the drop deadline. Students can expect a grade only on their paperwork package before the course drop deadline.

### Deadlines:

All assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the designated due date.

**Late policy:** Assignments submitted late will have 10% deducted per day, except in extenuating circumstances, such as a medical or family emergency. In such cases, documentation such as a doctor's note will be required. Where the student knows ahead of time that a deadline may not be met, the student should discuss this with the professor as far in advance as possible. If you are turning in an assignment late, notify your professor, and **be sure to have your assignment date-stamped by the RTA front desk.** If a late assignment is turned in with no date stamp, it will be assumed you handed it in on the date on which it was received (which may be one or two days after you handed it in) and it will be penalized accordingly.

### About the Student Productions:

The production must **NOT** be for an external, profitable organization or government organization that normally is in a position to commission a corporate production. RTA does not wish to compete with Toronto's production companies.

The student should have full creative control over the project (i.e. don't take on a project for a second party who is dictating what the project is and how it should be).

#### Standards for project content:

Productions must adhere to generally accepted standards of public taste and broadcast regulations and to university policies. In general, we expect strict adherence to the protocol of professional production in your genre reflected in attitude, preparation, responsibility, cooperation and technical proficiency.

All project produced in this course must include the RTA School of Media logo and/or animated graphic, available for download from Blackboard.

#### Copyright, Waivers & Releases:

The student Producer must retain creative and editorial control. Students own the copyright to their own production and are responsible for its content.

No copyrighted material may be used in student productions without appropriate clearances. If in doubt, check with your advising professor.

All performers in the productions must sign Ryerson's standard releases. Release forms can be found in the RTA Online organization in Blackboard.

Students are requested to fill in a release form giving RTA permission to use your project for internal or promotional purposes (i.e. to show off to faculty, staff, other students, and the general public the amazing

projects you created in RTA). Please fill in the Ryerson RTA Release form and hand it in with your final paperwork to help us show off your work. The form is in the RTA Online organization in Blackboard.

**Assessing your own ability to carry out your production idea:**

It is important to have enough knowledge and skill to meet the technical and aesthetic requirements for whatever production students choose to do. Students who choose a production technique or concept using facilities or knowledge that is not part of their curricular or personal background will be advised to propose a different project.

**Collaboration:**

In the production process you are encouraged to team up with students who have expertise in areas where you feel you could use those skills. Depending on your strengths, this may include using students in writing courses or students with advanced video production skills, audio production skills, or digital media skills.

**Access to Studios:**

...is never guaranteed. Book early to avoid disappointment. Waiting until late in the game and then discovering the studio or equipment you need is not available when you're available is not considered reasonable grounds for a deadline extension.

**Detailed Assignment Descriptions:**

**Initial Paperwork/Pitch Package(s)**

Please refer to the detailed description of this assignment provided separately, as the initial paperwork requirements and due dates will differ depending on the medium you've chosen.

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**Midterm Report** (due week 7)

The midterm report should be 1000 words and should include:

1. Updated production schedule: completed and pending with dates
2. Successes thus far
3. Ongoing problems requiring solutions AND your proposed solutions
4. Indicate whether you would like to set up a meeting with your supervising professor to discuss any issues.

Any references to external works/ideas must be properly cited using MLA format.

The midterm report & rough cut screening together will be assessed as 10% of your mark, based on how well you are progressing with your work, the quality of the work done to date, and whether you are meeting your deadlines.

**Grading scheme is as follows:**

- 0-4: unsatisfactory progress
- 5-6: satisfactory progress
- 7-8: good progress
- 9-10: excellent progress

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**Magic 2's** (forms due Week 12)

RTA 973 is not a group project course. As such, your classmates will be relying on you to participate in their projects in a variety of production roles. While it is hoped that you will all make yourselves available as much as possible to assist each other in realizing your individual visions, it is a requirement of this course that you take on at least 2 significant roles in your classmates projects, such as research, directing, lighting, camera, production coordinator, web page design, programming, graphic design, animation sequences, set design, editor, recording, mixing, music composition, soundtrack/sound design, or a major talent role.

Should there be insufficient Magic 2 opportunities to ensure that everyone meets this commitment, a Magic 2 opportunity can be completed by fulfilling a role in another course. If you are unsure if your Magic 2 commitment will qualify for credit in this course, please consult your supervising professor.

For each Magic 2 you carry out, you must fill in a Magic 2 form and have the producer of the project you worked on sign it for you. Magic 2 forms are available for download from the Blackboard course website.

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## **Final Project** (due Week 11)

Students may choose to produce dramatic, comedic, corporate, experimental, research or any other type of video, audio or digital media programming. The project can have a broad or very narrow appeal but you are encouraged to produce something that allows you to make a personal statement and something that is useful to both you and some public. Productions are expected to be of top-notch quality, in both technical/production aspects and content aspects.

Examples of types of projects students may choose:

- drama (audio, video, interactive, transmedia)
- comedy (audio, video, interactive, transmedia)
- instructional or informational material (audio, video, interactive, transmedia)
- web sites
- smart phone application
- animation
- music video
- music recordings
- documentary (audio, video, interactive)
- experimental audio/video/digital media
- installation art (audio/video/digital media)
- live event media
- live to tape studio production
- advertising campaign
- games (video game prototype, alternate reality game)
- other ideas are welcome

Each student will pitch their specific idea in class in week 2. Ideas will be subject to approval by the professor.

Students are advised to keep the scope of their project focused. For example, it is unlikely you can produce a 30 minute video doc/drama/comedy/etc. in this class, but you will be able to produce a shorter one (5 – 12 mins) or even an extended trailer to accompany a script or storyboard for a longer one.

### **To submit final project:**

Final projects will normally be submitted to the drop box folder provided for this course, but in the case of an unusual project such as an installation or transmedia production or ARG, please clear the submission format with your supervising professor in advance. These and other types of projects that may be live and/or interactive and do not lend themselves to simply being 'handed in' may require the student to shoot documentation of the event to hand in (e.g. photos, video, blog, etc.)

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## **Final Report** (due Week 12)

The Final Report must include:

### 1. Artist's Statement (300 - 500 words)

This is a philosophical statement that indicates why you produced this work, what this work means to you, and what you intend the audience to understand about the work or take away from the work. The purpose of an artist's statement is to inform viewers/listeners/users about your work, your motivations, your inspirations, and what you hope the viewers/listeners/users will get out of it.

### 2. Process Analysis (1500 – 2000 words)

The Process Analysis should address these questions:

- a. What aspects of the pre-production provided the greatest challenges and how were they overcome?
- b. What is the best aspect of the production and why?
- c. What elements of the production need improvement? Indicate why & how.
- d. How could you have improved your contribution to the production?
- e. What did you learn from the production process?
- f. Did you accomplish your goal(s), technically and creatively speaking? (You may want to go back to your initial project proposal and answer this question based on what you had originally set out to do.)

Note that we are looking for **insightful** answers to these questions; a demonstration that you have really thought about what you've learned from the experience and that you've gained insights about and new understandings of creative development and media production. Superficial answers will be graded accordingly.

### 3. Magic 2 forms

Complete one form for each Magic 2 you carried out and get it signed by the producer of the project you worked on. Magic 2 forms can be downloaded from the Blackboard course website.

### 4. All necessary waivers and release forms (see the RTA Online organization in Blackboard for forms).

Any references to external works/ideas must be properly cited using MLA format.

#### **To submit final report:**

The entire final report package can be uploaded to Blackboard. Please scan the signed Magic 2 forms and waiver forms for upload.

## **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](http://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>

### **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/](http://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/reobservforminstr.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](http://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.