

**Department of Latino and Hispanic Caribbean Studies
Rutgers University—New Brunswick/Piscataway**

**DOCUMENTING LATINO LIVES
(595:402/070:407 + 595:403/070:408)
Spring 2017**

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Office hours: Mondays 3-4PM or by appointment (LSH)

Class hours: Mon 12:00 - 3:00 PM
Class location: LSH-A256
Lab hours: Thurs 12:35 - 1:55 PM
Lab location: Fordham Media Lab,
Douglas Library

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This video production seminar uses the medium of video to explore contemporary issues that affect the lives of Latinos in the United States. Training will take place during a semester-long series of discussions and practical exercises which will prepare students to produce their own 10-minute documentary films about any aspect of Latino life. In addition to advanced production techniques, emphasis will be put on narrative structures and storytelling strategies in ethnographic and documentary films and the distinct representational techniques, dilemmas and possibilities these hold for representing Latino social experience.

II. REGISTRATION

This course is a 4-credit course. It consists in a weekly 3 hour class held in Lucy Stone Hall (Livingston) + a weekly lab (one class period) held in the Sharon Fordham Media Lab in the Douglas Library. Students must register for both the 3-credit class (595:402 or 070:407) and the 1-credit lab (595:403 or 070:408). All four credits apply towards the major in both Anthropology and Latino and Caribbean Studies.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES

After completing this course students will have acquired:

- The ability to communicate effectively about contemporary Latino issues through the medium of video
- An understanding of ethical and representational issues in visual representations of Latino life
- Mastering of visual and digital story-telling techniques
- Basic filmmaking skills including shooting observational and/or shoot-to-edit footage.
- Basic video editing skills in Premiere CC.

IV. COURSE FORMAT

The seminar is divided into three main parts:

- 1) Project development, production techniques and exercises, pre-production of individual projects (Jan/Feb)
- 2) Project production, shooting, and weekly screenings of raw footage and edited scenes (Feb/March/April)
- 3) Postproduction, rough-cut screenings, final cut screenings, and final presentations (April/May).

The course consists of a weekly 3-hour long seminar held on Mondays in which we will discuss representational issues in the context of screening weekly shooting and editing exercises. Weekly 80 min labs will be held on Thursdays from 12:35 to 1:55pm in the Sharon A. Fordham Multimedia Lab in the basement of the Douglass Library to demonstrate equipment and for Premiere CC workshops and exercises. For opening hours and a list

of available equipment, see <http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/fordham>

The Monday seminars will mostly be run as production meetings. Students will present their footage and scenes by explaining them in terms of their function and meaning for the whole project. You should also outline your ethnographic strategies, discuss the problems you faced in producing the scenes (and how they were managed) and introduce possible new questions that the material raises for your projects. Students will incorporate feedback on edited scenes and re-cut them to screen again the following week. Prof. Berg will screen additional film examples throughout the semester that offer possible film styles for consideration. The Thursday labs will be spent mostly learning production and post-production techniques and address common questions that have come up in the shooting and editing sessions.

A final screening open to the public with a reception to follow will take place on Thursday, May 4, 2017, at 6:30PM at the Rutgers Cinema on Livingston Campus.

V. REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Each student must direct, produce, shoot, and edit his or her own 8-12 minute film as the final deliverable for the course. In addition, all students are required to work in crews on the films of your peers. The main criteria for evaluation of work in the course is student participation in the production meetings and on crews, timeliness with work, students' acquisition of standard techniques in documentary video production and how well you articulate the terms and the choices you make in various aspects of production and editing in the final documentary projects.

Attendance & Participation (25%)

The active participation of every student in each class is fundamental to the success of this course. Many sessions will be dedicated entirely to discussing your work and that of your peers and you are expected to be an active and engaged member of the class. Absences will greatly affect your ability to keep the pace in the course *and* also your final grade. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. I strongly recommend that you calculate your transport time accordingly to arrive on time for each class noting that the Monday class and the Thursday lab takes place on two different campuses. If you have transportation issues that make it difficult for you to arrive on time due to our irregular schedule please let me know.

Assignments (40%)

The best way to learn about video production and filmmaking is by doing it. The course is designed for students to get hands-on experience with a number of different shooting and editing techniques. To that end all students will complete regular exercises – weekly or more frequently. In the beginning of the semester, the exercises will form the basis for class discussions on technical aspects of film and video-production. The exercises should be brought to class on the due date on your external harddrive as a .mov, QT, or MPEG-4 file or uploaded to your Vimeo account or YouTube channel before class. Every student must hand in ALL exercises on the due date! All exercises will be graded and the sum of assignments/exercises will be worth 40% of your final grade. Please note that the assignment schedule at the end of this syllabus is tentative and may be subject to change throughout the semester. All assignments will be discussed in class prior to their due date.

Assignment 1: One page description of project idea

Assignment 2: List of relevant documentaries + clip from favorite documentary

Assignment 3: Video Exercise 1—Basic observational shooting techniques

Assignment 4: Revised and amended project description

Assignment 5: Video Exercise 2—Shoot an event or process for editing

Assignment 6: Video Exercise 3—Reshoot exercise 2 in a different style.

Assignment 7: Video Exercise 4—Shoot a short 2-min handheld interview

Assignment 8: Video Exercise 5—Shoot an interview using natural light and B-roll

Assignment 9: First draft of film treatment

Assignment 10: Shoot and edit scene with own project footage

Assignment 11: Short video packages (A-roll, B-roll, subtitles, titlecards, etc.)

Assignment 12: Final project proposal incl. revised treatment

Production Journal (10%)

All students must keep a bound notebook as Production Journal for their individual projects. These will consist of project development notes, concepts, narratives, shot lists, plans, contacts, records of ethnographic circumstances, feedback from production meetings to be addressed in editing, and other notes. You should get a bound notebook for this to prevent losing pages. In addition to the production journal, I recommend that you get an accordion folder to keep handouts as well as other course materials and readings organized and accessible.

Journals are due in class on **Thursday 4/27/2017**. All journal entries should have a header that includes the date and time, and a title that identifies the class, lab, shooting event, or editing session. The journal will be graded on a 1-10 point scale and is worth 10% of the final grade. Your journal will be evaluated for: 1) consistency and completeness – whether there are journal entries for all classes, shoots, and editing sessions; 2) form – whether the journal entries conform and/or respond to the questions, ideas, and lessons outlined in the class session; and 3) engagement – whether the journal entries reflect a general engagement with the practice of video-making in general and with your project in particular.

Final Films (25%)

The final version of your 8-12-minute documentary film, which will be screened publicly at the end of the semester, is worth 25% of the final grade. Final cuts are due as a digital Quicktime file in class on **4/27/2017**.

Final grades will be calculated according to the following grading scale:

A = 93 and above; B+ = 89-92; B = 81-88; C+ = 77-80; C = 70-76; D = 65-69; F = 64 and below.

VI. READINGS AND COURSE MATERIALS

Required readings:

Anthony Q. Artis (2014). *The Shut Up and Shoot Documentary Guide*. Focal Press. ISBN: 9780240824154

All the rest of the readings for the class come from a variety of sources and will be available on the Sakai course site. You will also find pdf.s of the equipment and FCP manuals on Sakai. Please note that assigned readings may change during the semester depending on the dynamics of our class discussions and our collective needs. Make sure to check in on Sakai for updates on readings.

We will also make extensive use of the following free online video tutorials:

Adobe Premiere: <https://helpx.adobe.com/premiere-pro/tutorials.html>

Lynda: www.lynda.com.

If possible, you may want purchase the books listed below for your reference, but they are not mandatory (selections will be posted on Sakai):

Recommended books (selections available on Sakai):

Ilisa Barbash and Lucien Taylor (1997) *Cross-Cultural Filmmaking: A Handbook for Making Documentary and Ethnographic Films and Videos* (listed below as “CCF”), University of California Press. ISBN: 0520087607

Sheila Curran Bernard (2011) *Documentary Storytelling, Third Edition: Creative Nonfiction on Screen*. Focal Press. ISBN: 0240812417

Michael Rabiger (1998) *Directing the Documentary (Fourth Edition)*. Focal Press. ISBN: 0240806085 (*Used cheap copies of the fourth edition is available on Amazon – don't buy the more expensive new fifth edition!)

VII. COURSE EXPECTATIONS

1. Students are expected to attend all classes and labs and participate actively in all aspects of the class. No unexcused absence or excessive lateness.
2. Everyone will stay on schedule with shooting and editing exercises as well as meet the deadlines for all written work throughout the semester.
3. When presenting work in class, students are expected to have their material **cued and ready to screen** at the beginning of each class, present the key issues they encountered, and explain choices in shooting, editing and equipment. Given the size of the class this is very important!
4. All students will offer constructive feedback on each other's work in each seminar session.
5. All students are required to use the equipment provided by the department to shoot their projects, but if you have a brand new camera of your own with XLR sound inputs then you may use your own equipment. No equipment without XLR sound input will be allowed. You must sign ALL equipment in and out of the department each time you use it and make sure to book the equipment on our class Google calendar. Students are expected to follow procedures for checking out equipment, security, and care, as well as to promptly report any problems, breaks, or lost parts to Prof. Berg.
6. Camera exercises should be collaborative! All students must participate in each other's shoots; normal crew size is a 2 or 3 person crew depending on the complexity of the shoot. Reciprocity is the rule!
7. All students must keep a Production Journal for their individual projects. These will consist of shot lists, concepts, narratives, plans, contacts, records of ethnographic circumstances, and other notes.

VII. COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 ~ INTRODUCTION ~ WHAT IS A DOCUMENTARY?

Thursday – Lab (1/19) – Fordham Media Lab, Douglas Library (12:35-1:55PM)

Introduction to the Sharon A. Fordham Multimedia Lab, Douglas Library

Discussion of course orientation, requirements, schedules, and procedures and policies on equipment

For Monday: Think of 3 possible project ideas to share in class.

Monday – Seminar (1/23) – Livingston, LSH-A256 (12:00-3:00PM)

Initial discussion of possible video project ideas – bring 3 project ideas to share with group.

Introduction to cameras, sound equipment, tripods, and accessories

Read: *Shut Up and Shoot*, pp. 6-15 and 38-45 + Curran Bernard, Ch. 1 (pp. 1-11).

For next Monday: Be ready to present and “pitch” your favorite project idea further.

Thursday – Lab (1/26) – OJO - class will meet at Livingston, LSH-A256

Read: *Shut Up and Shoot*, Chap 3 (pp. 113-148).

Basic camera shooting techniques

For Monday: Bring in a clip from your favorite feature-length documentary to present to the class. Be prepared to explain why it is compelling to you and the issues it raises. Make a list of documentary films relevant to your project (could be topical or stylistic connection) and make it a habit to watch at least one documentary a week.

Event: Attend screening of “Neon Bull,” CLAS Jueves de Cine, Rutgers Cinema (Livingston), 8-10PM.

WEEK 2 ~ PREPRODUCTION & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Monday – Seminar (1/30) – Livingston, LSH

Assignment 1 due: Hand in one-page description of project idea

Assignment 2 due: List of relevant documentaries + clip from favorite documentary

“Pitch #1” – Further discuss project idea.

‘Favorite Clip Film Festival’ – Screen a clip from your favorite documentary

Assign Exercise 1 - Basic observational shooting techniques: Shoot an event, activity, or process using observational style (max. 5 mins). Used fixed and moving handheld camera; shoot things and people in motion, use zoom, etc.

Thursday – Lab (2/2) – Fordham Media Lab, Douglas Library (12:35-1:55PM)

Screen: Video Exercise 1 – Observational footage of an activity. Discuss.

WEEK 3 ~ FROM PRE-PRODUCTION TO PRODUCTION & SHOOTING STYLES

Monday – Seminar (2/6)

Read: *Cross Cultural Filmmaking*, Ch. 1 on “Documentary Styles;” Ch. 3, “Picture” (pp. 95-130).

Discuss: Shooting styles as ethnographic practice, knowledge and experience.

Screen: Examples of film styles and their modes of address, social relations and voices.

Finish screenings of Exercise 1

Assign: Exercise 2 - Shoot an event or process for editing; max. 5 min.

Shoot observational style, handheld and with tripod for editing (Due Monday 2/13)

Thursday – Lab (2/9) – SNOW DAY ~ CLASS CANCELLED!

WEEK 4 ~ PROJECT OUTLINES & TREATMENTS / PREMIERE WORKSHOP

Monday – Seminar (2/13) - Livingston, LSH-A256 (12:00-3:00PM)

Read: In Curran Bernard, Chaps. 8-10 on Research, Pitching and Proposal Writing.

Discuss: Project outlines, Treatments, and Scripts, and Casting in class.

Demos on “Coverage,” shooting to edit in Premiere

Screen examples of raw and edited footage

Screen: Exercise 2, observational shooting styles – shoot to edit (but don’t yet edit).

Assign: Exercise 3 – DUE MONDAY 2/20. You will be asked to reshoot Exercise 2 in an alternative style (i.e. direct, vérité, reflexive, impressionistic/performative; different distances, angles, etc. (Be sure to shoot to edit.)

Thursday – Lab (2/16)

Read: *Shut Up and Shoot*, Chap 9 (pp. 284-295)

Premiere Workshop / Basic skills in digital video editing

Assignment 4 due: A one page single-spaced, revised draft of project topics will be due in class: Include your working ideas for title, topic, locations, subjects, plot, and tentative shooting & editing styles.

WEEK 5 ~ STORY-TELLING

Monday – Seminar (2/20)

Read: (1) CCF - Ch. 7, “Production - Actualities” (pp. 327-340) and (2) Curran Bernard: Ch. 11 “Shooting.”
Please also review CCF Ch. 1 on “Documentary Styles.”

Screen: Exercise 3, Shooting styles.

Discuss: How to do a project treatment, update on developments in projects.

Assign: Exercise 4 - Short 2-minute handheld interviews using wireless mics. Repeat interview using a tripod.

Thursday – Lab (2/23)

Basic skills in digital video editing / Premiere, continued

Read: *Shut Up and Shoot*, Chap 9 (pp. 296-330)

Discuss: Logging and transcribing footage + best practices in managing footage

Event: Attend screening of “El Acompañante,” Jueves de Cine, Rutgers Cinema (Livingston), 8-10PM.

WEEK 6 ~ INTERVIEWS: SOUND, SET-UP, SHOOTING WITH NATURAL LIGHT

Monday – Seminar (2/27)

Read: *Shut Up and Shoot*, Chap. 5 (pp. 183-216), Chap. 7 (pp. 247-63) and Chap. 8 (pp. 264-283)

Discuss: Shooting interviews, styles, sound and setup, organization, rapport, etc.; shooting B-roll for interviews.

Screen: Examples of various documentary interviews.

Screen: Exercise 4 – 2-minute handheld interviews.

Assign Exercise 5 - Shoot an interview using natural light. Shoot b-roll with good natural sound record room tone.

Thursday – Lab (3/2)

In class editing of exercise 5: Edit interview footage and B-roll into a 2-minute clip

*For Next Week: First draft of project treatments due on Monday.

WEEK 7 ~ POSTPRODUCTION I – CREATING EDITED SEQUENCES

Monday – Seminar (3/6)

Read: (1) CCF, Ch. 8, “Postproduction – Theories and Principles” (370-399) and “Postproduction – Practices and Technology” (429-442) and (2) Curran Bernard, Chap. 12 “Editing,” and Chap. 14 “Storytelling: A Checklist”

Discuss: Readings; structure and narrative forms.

Screen: Exercise 5 (2-min sequence of interview footage + B-roll)

Assignment 9 due: First draft of project treatments

Assign Exercise 6 – Shot and edit own project footage into a short scene (no interviews this time).

Thursday – Lab (3/9)

Capturing and organizing clips + in class editing of exercise 6

WEEK 8 ~ SPRING BREAK, MARCH 13-19, 2017 – NO CLASS!

Take advantage of the spring break to shoot new footage, log and transcribe your footage, and create a master-log for your project. Try to watch as many documentaries as you can over the break.

WEEK 9 ~ POSTPRODUCTION II – AUDIO EDITING, SUBTITLES & USING STILL PHOTOS

Monday – Seminar (3/20)

Read: (1) CCF, Ch. 7, “Archival Material” (357-363); Ch. 8, “Postproduction Sound” (405-412);
(2) Curran Bernard: Ch. 13 “Narration and Voice-Over”

Discuss: Shooting photos; copyright issues, subtitles, using text to create context, audio editing.

Screen: Exercise 6 (edited observational sequence of own footage – no interviews please!)

Thursday – Lab (3/23)

Premiere: subtitles, scanning, shooting and scanning still images.

Audio-editing in Premiere.

Assign Exercise 7 - Short Video Packages: Plan, shoot and edit a 2-minute “video package” which include all of the following elements: (A) use b-roll video and/or stills; (B) interviews/soundbites; (C) subtitles; (D) use 1-2 text pages (at any point (i.e. beg. middle, end) to introduce the subject and/or the background and/or context.

Event: Attend screening of “Videophilia,” CLAS Jueves de Cine, Rutgers Cinema (Livingston), 8-10PM.

WEEK 10 ~ THE EDITING PROCESS: FROM ASSEMBLY TO ROUGH CUT

Monday – Seminar (3/27)

Screen and discuss exercise 7 + Screen and discuss new raw project footage

Thursday – Lab (3/30)

Screen and discuss new raw project footage

Assignment 12 due: Final project proposal incl. revised treatment

For Monday: Shoot project materials + edit two new scenes

WEEK 11 ~ CUT NEW SCENES

Monday – Seminar (4/3)

Screening of new edited scenes

Thursday – Lab (4/6)

Discuss rough assembling. All students must spend time over the weekend putting together all your sequences into a rough assembly which you will screen for the class on Monday 4/10 (include all possible scenes + insert title cards for “missing pieces”)

Class visit by Alex Fattal, Documentarian and Assistant Prof. at Penn State’s College of Communications.

WEEK 12 ~ RECUT SCENES / FIRST ROUGH ASSEMBLY

Monday – Seminar (4/10)

Screening and feedback on rough assemblies. Continue to work on rough assemblies for the rest of the week towards your rough cuts before Thursday's lab.

Thursday – Lab (4/13)

Discussion and feedback on rough assemblies, continued.

WEEK 13 ~ ROUGH-CUT SCREENINGS

Monday – Seminar (4/17)

Present first rough-cuts of project sequences

Thursday – Lab (4/20)

Class visit by Ari Maniel Cruz, Director of *Cuando Cante el Gallo*.

Continue to edit rough-cut project sequences – incorporate feedback from 4/17 seminar.

Event: Attend screening of “Cuando Cante el Gallo,” CLAS Jueves de Cine, Rutgers Cinema (Livingston), 8-10PM.

Possible Class Trip to the Tribeca Film Festival (April 19-30, 2017). Details TBA. Stay tuned!

WEEK 14 ~ FINE CUT + FINAL CUT SCREENINGS

Monday – Seminar (4/24)

Screen Fine Cut of projects + take notes on feedback—even the smallest details!

Thursday – Lab (4/27)

Output Final Cuts – this is the final version of the digital project files for public screenings.

Read: *Shut Up and Shoot*, Chap. 9 (pp. 323-330)

Discussion of distribution, online releases, submitting to festivals

WEEK 15 ~ THE GRAND FINALE

Monday – Seminar (5/1)

Prof. Berg will be in Lima for the Latin American Studies Association Meetings.

Please use this time to finalize and output your projects.

Thursday – (5/4) Final Public Screening

The screening will take place at the Rutgers Cinema, 6:30-8:30PM

LCS will host a “Cinco de Mayo” reception prior to the screenings from 4-6PM.