

LONDON

FILM AND MEDIA INSTITUTE

a partnership of



University
of Pittsburgh

LNDN FILM 3366 Urban Scavenger

CAPA London Film Program

Fall and Spring

Course Description

This is a course in critical filmmaking – the exercise of the camera and the edit suite in the service of ideas and analysis. A degree of familiarity with DSLR cameras and editing software is assumed, but support will be on hand for those who are new to filmmaking. The main objective of the course is to produce a 5-10 minute essay film about some aspect of London. We combine practical exercises in filming and editing with a close look at the tradition of the essay film, and a consideration of how the essayistic might also infuse contemporary screen culture. Students are encouraged to make connections with the themes of their other courses, especially *City Symphony*, which goes over the ways in which filmmakers have been inspired by the city throughout the history of cinema. By closely integrating practical elements with theoretical sessions, we hope to draw connections between the discourse on urban consumer society and the images surrounding it, between collecting objects and editing, between the order of things and creating a political narrative.

Students will be asked to gather ‘fragments’ – one or several shots and/or audio recordings – in response to themes. The fragments will be uploaded to a dedicated video blog and reviewed by the whole group at different points during the term. We aim to build a habit of constructive criticism so that students are comfortable sharing work-in-progress and improving it. They will then move on to planning and producing their essay film, with a number of deadlines built in for footage reviews and rough cut screenings to ensure progress and development.

Their essay films will be screened for a final assessment with all faculty in the last week of term. The final assessment is a critical text documenting the experience of making, refining and screening the film, so that students can reflect on their process.

Course Aims

This course sets students up with a theoretical framework and practical skillset with which to begin their own turn behind the camera. Students will be prepared by the readings, screenings and discussions on the course to experience the city with a critical and documentary approach, both self-reflexive and observational. Through making and reviewing regular audio and visual recordings they will integrate filmmaking into their academic thinking. Through strong links with the *City Symphony* course, it will encourage students to reference historical and theoretical aspects of film and the urban experience. The principal outcome of the course will be a 5-10 minute essay film on London.

Requirements and Prerequisites

It is assumed that all students have some basic video experience. The camera, sound recording and editing skills needed for this course will be taught in week one, and the first exercise in gathering visual and audio footage in the field will be supervised. Technical support will be available for students working on their own films in the second half of the term.

Learning Outcomes

- 1) Learn camera and audio recording skills, strengthening them through weekly documentary exercises
- 2) Learn and exercise skills in editing and the construction of a film narrative
- 3) Explore and understand the essay film tradition
- 4) Write and produce a short film essay

Developmental Outcomes

Students should demonstrate: responsibility & accountability, independence & interdependence, goal orientation, self-confidence, resilience, appreciation of differences.

Class Methodology

Methods of instruction will include screenings, in-class presentations and analyses, filming sessions, field trips, review sessions and editing supervision.

Field Components

CAPA provides the unique opportunity to learn about the city through direct, guided experience. Participation in field activities for this course is required. You will actively explore the Global City in which you are currently living. Furthermore, you will have the chance to collect useful information that will be an invaluable resource for the essays/papers/projects assigned in this course.

Urban Scavenger will involve many field studies and practical assignments. Students will need to dress appropriately (for bad weather) and take responsibility for the filming equipment they are borrowing; they will also be expected to navigate London's public transport system unsupervised in order to meet for trips/classes in various locations around the city.

There will be several screenings put on as part of this course, and in addition students will be encouraged to attend the LFC's general 'London on film' screening series through the term.

The assigned field component(s) are:

- Greenwich River Boat Cruise
- East London Street Art Tour

Students are also strongly encouraged to participate in **co-curricular** program activities.

Assessment/Grading Policy

Descriptor	Alpha	UK	US	GPA
Excellent	A	75+	93+	4.0
	A-	70-74	90-92	3.7
Good	B+	66-69	87-89	3.3
	B	63-65	83-86	3.0
	B-	60-62	80-82	2.7
Average	C+	56-59	77-79	2.3
	C	53-55	73-76	2.0
Below Average / Poor	C-	50-52	70-72	1.7
	D+	46-49	67-69	1.3
	D	40-45	60-66	0.7
				1.0
Fail	F	<40	<60	0

Grade Breakdown and Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Assessment Task	Grade %
Filmed Fragments	30%
Essay Film	40%
Critical Self-Assessment Text (Approx. 1000 words)	20%
Attendance	10%

Assignments, Papers, and Presentations

Filmed fragments (30%)

In week 2, students will be given some themes and asked to create a short (40 second) video or audio recording in their own time and upload it to the private course vlog. They should also write a short blog entry explaining how each short clip relates to the theme. The submissions will be discussed in class during review sessions. Students must create five submissions, each worth 6%.

Essay film (40%)

As their final project, students will make a 5-10 minute essay film. Editing training will be given at the beginning of term, and edit stations and technical support will be available throughout the term. Films will be assessed on both technical and critical grounds, with marks given for engagement with the historical and theoretical precepts of the course.

Critical self-assessment exercise (20%)

After handing in their films students will be expected to submit a 1,000-word report in which they will evaluate their experience of urban filmmaking and draw connections between their practice and theoretical topics discussed during the term. This will also give them an opportunity for self-assessment and to provide a statement about their practical work, which will then be taken into account when assessing their essay films.

Dress Code

Students should dress appropriately for the weather as the course will include many field studies and practical assignments.

Course Materials

Equipment

Students are required to supply and bring their own hard drive (2TB recommended). DSLR cameras and tripods, and sound recording equipment, will be available on loan, and students are also encouraged to use their own smartphones as additional backup recording devices. Editing stations with Adobe Premiere will be available for students to use when putting together their own film, with an additional option of acquiring Adobe Premiere under an educational license for use on their own Mac computers, however students are not required to bring or use their own computers.

Reading and film material

Background readings are specified for many modules of the course, please see the weekly schedule for these. They will be available as PDFs before the start of term. Students are expected to come to class having read the relevant material beforehand. Links to film material available online, or occasionally to DVDs available for loan, may also form part of this preparatory work and students will need to undertake this viewing prior to class. There is an additional list for optional further reading.

Required Readings:

- Ackroyd, Peter. Excerpt from *Thames: Sacred River*. London: Chatto & Windus, 2007, pp. 7-19.
- Rascaroli, Laura, 'The Essay Film: Problems, Definitions, Textual Commitments,' *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, 49, no. 2 (2008), pp. 24-47.

Resources:

For guidance on using copyrighted materials, please consult the Pitt Library Film Studies page:

<http://pitt.libguides.com/c.php?g=12123&p=64813>

For guidance on correct citations and referencing, please consult the Pitt Library Citation Style Guide:

<http://pitt.libguides.com/citationhelp/mla8thedition> . MLA Style is recommended.

SUNY-Oswego On-line Library Resources

Students are advised to review assignments and readings. If you do not have access to sufficient additional resources from your home institution to complete the coursework for this class, you may request access to the on-line library resources of SUNY-Oswego: <http://libraryguides.oswego.edu/c.php?g=500670>. To access this resource, you must request access during the first week of the program.

Weekly Course Schedule

Session 1	
Filmmaking Basics	Filmed fragment assignment set
Students will gain familiarity with the camera equipment. They will learn about composition and framing and undertake some practice outdoors. Introduction to the course assignments.	

Session 2	
Field trip meeting on the South Bank at Caffè Nero Oxo Tower, SE1 9PH, nearest tubes Waterloo or Blackfriars.	
Required reading: Ackroyd, Peter. Excerpt from <i>Thames: Sacred River</i> . London: Chatto & Windus, 2007, pp. 7-19.	
Mudlarking	
We will explore the historic and cultural significance of the Thames, and discover some of the urban detritus washed up on its foreshore. Students will practice using the cameras and sound recording equipment and collect footage for editing in the future. The session will take place at a riverside location, and will include a Thames beach walk.	

Session 3	
Editing exercise	Deadline and review of 2 filmed fragments
After an editing tutorial, students will edit their mudlarking footage into a 1m sequence as a practice exercise	

Session 4	
Required reading: <i>Rascaroli, Laura, 'The Essay Film: Problems, Definitions, Textual Commitments,' Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media, 49, no. 2 (2008), pp. 24-47.</i>	
The Essay Film: Definitions	
We'll look at the theoretical underpinnings of the essay film, with examples from Chris Marker and Agnes Varda among others. Besides discussing possible definitions, we examine how the essayistic comes across in contemporary forms of moving image culture such as vlogs and digital art.	

Session 5	
Required preparation: Come to class with ideas for your film	
Your Essay Film: Concepts, Planning, Scheduling	
A workshop session to help students pitch and conceptualise their films, and plan production.	

Session 6	
Required preparation: Production plan	
Your Essay Film Production Planning	Deadline and review of 3 filmed fragments
Tutorial sessions to discuss essay film production plans. Commencement of principal photography.	

Session 7	
Independent filming around London	
Principal photography	
Having informed tutors of their plans, students will go out filming for their essay films.	

Session 8	
------------------	--

Required preparation: Some principal photography undertaken	
Preliminary Rushes Review	
Having completed some principal photography for their films, students will screen rushes for a class review.	

Session 9	
Editing tutorial and footage assembly	
Premiere advanced editing tutorial. Students will work towards a rough cut at the Lab edit suites. Tutors will be available to advise and help resolve technical issues.	

Session 10	
Rough cut screening	
Screening of rough cuts followed by group feedback.	

Session 11	
Working on final cut	
Students will work towards a final cut integrating comments. Tutors will be available to advise and help resolve technical issues.	

Session 12	
Finishing final cut	
Students will produce and export a final cut of their film. Tutors will be available to advise and help resolve technical issues.	

Session 13	
Final screening session	Film essay assignment due
Students' films will be screened with feedback from faculty.	

Critical self-assessment text is due after session 13.

Attendance, Participation & Student Responsibilities

Attendance: CAPA has a mandatory attendance policy. Attendance is taken at the beginning of every class. Unless otherwise expressed by your instructor, the first time a student has an unexcused absence for a class, his/her grade will not be impacted. The second time a student has an unexcused absence in that class, it will result in a 3 percent reduction of the final grade (for example: an A- [92] will become an B+ [89]). The student will be placed on academic probation at this time. Three unexcused absences per class will result in failure of the course. A pattern of three absences in more than one course will result in dismissal from the program.

Excused Absences: Absences are only excused for medical reasons, for a family emergency or for a religious holiday. To request an excused absence, students must contact excused.absence@capa.org ahead of time and provide evidence (e.g. a doctor's note) of the reason for his/her absence, otherwise the absence will not be excused. Even if the student knows the absence will not be excused, the student should still contact CAPA to inform CAPA they will not be in class.

In addition to contacting excused.absence@capa.org, it is the responsibility of the student to contact his/her instructor and make up any missed assignments.

Class Participation: Students are expected to participate actively and critically in class discussions, and the participation portion of the class will be graded accordingly. Students must read assignments BEFORE the class, and come in on time. Participation is a vital part of your grade: students are expected to participate orally in seminars and in online forums and discussions in a critical and evaluative manner; to interact with the faculty and fellow students with respect and tolerance;

and to actively engage in discussion. Derogatory or inflammatory comments about the cultures, perspectives or attitudes of others in the class will not be tolerated.

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability should contact the instructor and/or the director of academic affairs privately to discuss your specific needs.

Academic Integrity: A high level of responsibility and academic honesty is expected. Because the value of an academic course depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work and class behavior. Plagiarism, self-plagiarism and cheating can result in dismissal from the program.

Self-plagiarism, copying an assignment entirely or partially to submit to a different class in an attempt to receive credit twice for one piece of work is unacceptable and considered cheating by duplication. Students risk receiving an "O" for any assignments in which they have duplicated their own work.

All substantial writing assignments (typically anything worth 20% or more of the final course grade) will be run through the plagiarism checking software Turnitin when submitted via CANVAS. See CAPA's Academic Standards and Policies for more information and resources on plagiarism.

Sexual Misconduct, Required Reporting, and Title IX: CAPA The Global Education Network is committed to encouraging a safe and healthy environment at our seven CAPA centers. This commitment includes the understanding of, and applicable adherence to, the guidelines outlined in Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX necessitates that US universities provide equity in all educational programs and activities without sex discrimination.

CAPA understands the implications of Title IX compliance for our institutional partners and thus endeavors to support this compliance as a vital aspect of partnership. The safety and security of all students during a program is a matter of crucial importance to CAPA. To facilitate this, CAPA encourages students to openly disclose any and all information that is Title IX relevant so that CAPA staff can provide support and connect students with appropriate resources. Because students may not understand the implications of Title IX abroad, CAPA will work to advise students about the resources available through Title IX and explain the importance of compliance in Title IX reporting. CAPA will work to build student confidence in CAPA's status as a mandated reporter by outlining the advantage of disclosure for the student, reassuring them that any information disclosed will not be used in an inappropriate manner, and stressing that individuals will only be informed on a need-to-know basis

Use of electronic equipment in class: All devices such as laptops, i-pods, i-pads, netbooks, notebooks and tablets, smartphones, cell phones, etc. are **NOT** allowed unless you have express permission from the faculty or you have been instructed to do so. If you require an accommodation to use any type of electronic equipment, inform the Associate Director of Academic Affairs at the beginning of Term.

Use of Electronic Translators: In Language courses students are NOT allowed to use electronic translators for writing texts in the target language: those submitting compositions and texts of whatever kind translated in such a fashion will receive a final F grade for the course.

Late Submission: Late submission of papers, projects, journal entries, pieces of homework and portfolios is only permitted with prior approval. A request must be made to the relevant Faculty member no later than two days prior to the due date. Late submission without prior approval will result in a full alpha grade penalty. In either case, work cannot be submitted after feedback has been provided to the rest of the class on the relevant assessment or one week after the due date whichever comes first, after which point a grade of F will be given for the assessment.

Behaviour during Examinations: During examinations, you must do your own work. Unless specifically instructed by the lecturer or instructor, talking during an exam is not permitted, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any failure to abide by examination rules will result in failure of the exam, and may lead to failure of the course and disciplinary action.