

FOUNDATIONS PRACTICE
VM131 / Section L04 / Spring 2025
Tu/Th 8:00 - 9:45am, Ansin 503
4 Credits

Instructor: Jennifer Walker
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Office Hours: Fri 12-1pm (remote, by appt)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this course, students will explore and experiment with visual and media art design and production within a critical framework. Students will learn to employ technology and techniques safely, creatively, and ethically in a manner that respects all members of a collaborative creative group and society. Effective project management skills will be implemented to work through stages of the creative process as students produce work using tools while considering conceptual, ethical, and aesthetic decisions.

An interdependence between media theory and practice will be explored through co-enrollment in VMA Foundations – Media Studies.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Explore the range of options and processes for creating visual and media-based work.
- Develop a knowledge of best practices and technologies to be utilized in the making of creative work.
- Select creative tools and processes driven by the communication of ideas and concepts.
- Conceptualize, propose, and execute a creative vision as an individual.
- Consider the ethical questions, structural power imbalances, and hegemonic cultural values involved in making and interpreting creative work.
- Consider issues of sustainability and ways to conduct creative work using green production strategies.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

There is no required textbook to purchase for this course. All readings will be distributed via Canvas.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS:

- One 64GB or larger class 10 SDXC cards for use with the Fuji X-T3
- One 8GB or larger regular SDHC card for use with the Sony PCM-D10 audio recorder
- Four AA batteries to power the Sony PCM-D10 audio recorder
- One 1TB or larger external hard drive (Mac compatible)

EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE TO BORROW FROM THE EDC:

Camera

Fuji XT-3 w/ 18-55mm (Students must supply SD card)

Fuji Batteries

Sound

Sony PCM-D10 recorder (Students must supply SD card and batteries)

Sennheiser ME66 Shotgun Microphone, Boom Poles, XLR Cables

Electric

3 Point LED Light kit

Gel Kits/Flex Fills

Accessories

Tripods, and Monopods

**Procedures for borrowing equipment from the EDC and securing location permits will be covered in detail during a class period early in the semester.*

GRADING AND ASSESSMENT:

Attendance	20%
Journal	15%
Exercises	15%
Projects	40%
Midterm	10%

It is expected that all assignments will be handed in on time. For each day an assignment is late, five points will be deducted from your grade for that assignment.

Assignments will be graded on the basis of creativity, technical proficiency, and the application of theoretical concepts covered in class.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is required and will be part of your grade. You should plan to be present in class, participate in activities, and invest yourself in this course. More than three absences will result in the lowering of your final grade.

Journal

Students will maintain a journal for this course as way to organize their work, thoughts, and ideas. Written assignments (reflections, learning statements, etc.) will be posted in journals, as well as links/embeds of all final versions of exercises and projects. Further information about creating journals will be shared during class.

Exercises

During the first half of the semester, students will familiarize themselves with the use of equipment and apply concepts covered in class by completing a series of weekly production exercises. These exercises will start out as in-class work and will typically be finished over weekends as homework. Exercises are meant to prepare students for work on larger projects assigned later in the course.

Projects

Four larger projects will be completed over the second half of the course. Each project will require students to engage in a different type of media-making: fiction, documentary, experimental, and interactive.

Midterm Exam

An in-class, closed-book midterm exam will be given during week eight of the semester. It will consist of approximately fifty multiple-choice, fill in the blank, matching, and short answer questions. This exam is given to ensure that students fully understand the concepts covered during the first half of the semester so they may be applied to projects completed during the second half of the course. All material on the exam will be covered in class.

There will be no final exam.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

This schedule should not change dramatically during the term, but I reserve the right to make minor adjustments as the course develops.

Week One

Course Overview & Art/Creativity

TU 1/14	Topic: Course Overview & Introductions
TH 1/16	Topic: Art & Creativity Activity: Journal Making

Week Two

Narrative Structure & Cinematography

TU 1/21	Topic: Narrative Structure Activity: 'The Stutterer' Screening & Discussion
TH 1/23	Topic: Cinematography Activity: Storyboarding

Week Three**Mise-en-Scene & Critique**

TU 1/28	Topic: Mise-en-Scene Activity: 'Grand Budapest Hotel' Screening & Discussion
TH 1/30	Topic: Feedback & Critique Activity: 'White Earth' Screening & Discussion

Week Four**Audio Production & Post-Production**

TU 2/4	Topic: Sound & Audio Recording Activity: Audio Field Recorder Workshop
TH 2/6	Topic: Audio Post-Production Activity: Adobe Premiere Audio Editing Demo & Practice

Week Five**Video Production & Post-Production**

TU 2/11	Topic: Video Production Activity: DSLR Camera Workshop
TH 2/13	Topic: Video Post-Production Activity: Adobe Premiere Video Editing Demo & Practice

Week Six**Scriptwriting**

TU 2/18	No Class - Monday Schedule
TH 2/20	Topic: Scriptwriting Activity: Deconstructing a Scene

Week Seven**Character Development & Lighting**

TU 2/25	Topic: Character Development Activity: 'Feeling Through' Screening & Discussion
TH 2/27	Topic: Lighting Activity: Lighting Workshop & Scavenger Hunt

Week Eight**Midterm & Lab Time**

TU 3/4	Activity: Midterm Exam
TH 3/6	Activity: Conversation Projects Post-Production

Spring Break

TU 3/11	No Class - Spring Break
TH 3/13	No Class - Spring Break

Week Nine**Documentary & Non-Fiction Media**

TU 3/18	Activity: Conversation Project Screenings/Critiques
TH 3/20	Topic: Documentary Modes Activity: Proposal Writing

Week Ten**Documentary & Non-Fiction Media**

TU 3/25	Topic: Representation in Documentary Activity: 'Waste Land' Screenings
TH 3/27	Topic: Camera Settings Activity: White Balance/Exposure Practice

Week Eleven**Animation**

TU 4/1	Topic: Animation Activity: 'If Anything Happens, I Love You' Screening & Discussion
TH 4/3	Activity: Process Documentary Screenings/Critiques

Week Twelve**Experimental Media**

TU 4/8	Topic: Experimental Approaches to Media Activity: 'Meshes of the Afternoon' Screening & Discussion
TH 4/10	Topic: Experimental Non-Fiction Activity: 'Sink or Swim' Screening & Discussion

Week Thirteen**Sound Design**

TU 4/15	Topic: Sounds Design Activity: Sound Design from Scratch
TH 4/17	NO CLASS – Makeup Day

Week Fourteen**Graphic & Web Design**

TU 4/22	Activity: Memory Mosaic Project Screenings & Critiques
TH 4/24	Topic: Visual/Web Design Activity: Designing and Creating a Website in Canva

Week Fifteen**Interactive & Non-Linear Media**

TU 4/29	Topic: Interactive Media Activity: Writing for Non-Linear Media
TH 5/1	Activity: Interactive Project Presentations

Plagiarism

It is the responsibility of all Emerson students to know and adhere to the College's policy on plagiarism, which can be found at the [Plagiarism Policy](#). If you have any questions concerning the Emerson plagiarism policy or about documentation of sources in work you produce in this course, speak to your instructor. Additionally, The Working with Research and Avoiding Plagiarism (WRAP) Quiz is available to all students through the [Writing and Academic Resource Center's self-enrollment Canvas course](#). [One-on-one consultations](#) are available.

Support for Students with Disabilities

Emerson is committed to providing equal access and support to students with disabilities, through the provision of reasonable accommodations, to allow them to fully participate in Emerson programs and activities. If you have a disability that may require accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS@emerson.edu; [617-824- 8592](tel:617-824-8592)) to make an appointment with an SAS staff member.

Students are encouraged to contact SAS early in the semester. Please be aware that accommodations are not applied retroactively.

Support for Individuals Impacted by Discrimination, Harassment, or Sexual Violence

If you have been impacted by discrimination, harassment, or sexual violence, the Office of Equal Opportunity (oeo@emerson.edu; [617-824-8999](tel:617-824-8999)) is available to meet with you and discuss options to address concerns and to provide you with support resources. Please note that because the instructor is an Emerson employee, any information shared related to discrimination, harassment, or sexual violence will also be shared with the Office of Equal Opportunity. If you would like to connect with a confidential resource, please contact the Healing & Advocacy Collective (advocate@emerson.edu, [617-824-8857](tel:617-824-8857)), the Emerson Wellness Center (emersonwellnesscenter@emerson.edu, [617-824-8666](tel:617-824-8666)), or the Center for Spiritual Life (spiritual_life@emerson.edu, [617-824-8036](tel:617-824-8036)).

Equity, Access, and Social Justice

Equity, Access, and Social Justice (EASJ) are core values and commitments of Emerson College. Diversity of identity, thought, lived experience, languages, and perspective is valued in our community, and we are committed to productive learning environments that respect and celebrate our differences. The instructor will make every effort to ensure that an inclusive environment exists for all students.

If you have concerns or general comments about what Emerson can do to create more inclusive classroom environments, you may share your suggestions with [Dr. Tuesda Roberts](#), Director for Faculty Development and Diversity.

If you have any concerns or suggestions for improving how Emerson approaches equity, access, and social justice as an institution, please do not hesitate to contact the Social Justice Collaborative (sjc@emerson.edu, [617-824-8528](tel:617-824-8528)).

Class Recording

No one may record any part of this class unless the faculty member has given them express permission to do so. Students who require that a class be recorded due to a disability should work with Student Accessibility Service (SAS) to receive an accommodation for that recording. This class is considered a private environment, and it is a setting in which copyrighted materials, creative works and educational records may be displayed. Audio or video recording, photographing, transmitting, or publishing the images of those materials or educational records without expressed consent is strictly prohibited. Any student who records a class without the faculty's permission without a registered accommodation will be referred to the Office of Community Standards. Accommodations for recording a class will be honored by your instructor.