Course Syllabus: Senior Production
College of Fine Arts
MCOM 4243 Section 201
Spring 2026: FA D101, TR 12:30PM - 2PM

Contact Information

Instructor: Jonathon Quam
Office: D106
Office hours: MW 1PM-3PM, TR 2PM-4PM
Office phone: (940) 397-4849
Cell Phone: (469) 394-8227
E-mail: Jonathon.quam@msutexas.edu

Course Description

Course Identification
This capstone course introduces students to the art and practice of documentary filmmaking, bringing together the knowledge and skills they've developed throughout their Mass Communication studies at MSU Texas.

Productions
Working in teams, students will produce a 12–15 minute short-form documentary. The project will draw on every stage of the process—preproduction research, proposal writing, interviews, lighting, observational shooting, and editing—culminating in a complete, well-researched, and technically proficient narrative.
In addition to production, student teams will take on the responsibilities of outreach and promotion, including public engagement and media interviews.

- Students will produce an original documentary between 12 and 15 minutes in length.
- Students will examine ethical, legal, organizational and other aspects of the mass communication world.
- Students will improve their written, oral and visual communication skills.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Required Materials: UHS-II SD Card (32, 64 or 128Gb)

Recommended Purchase: 1TB External Hard Drive – Samsung, WD, G-Drive

Suggested Reading: *In the Blink of an Eye* (2nd Edition), Walter Murch, 1995

Suggested Reading: *Sight, Sound, Motion* (7th ed.), Herbert Zettl, 2016

Study Hours and Tutoring Assistance

I offer one-on-one tutoring at the request of the student. Anyone is welcome to request extra assistance.

Student Handbook

Refer to: Student Handbook

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. Office of Student Conduct

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this Moffett Library webpage to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grading

Course Grade - List all graded assignments with their point value and or percentage of total grade. Letter Grade Scale indicate the overall points or % to letter grade scale for example 1270 to 1137 = A.

Table 1: Assignments and Grade Percentage

Assignments	Percentage
Final Documentary	50
Deadlines	25
Weekly Reports/Conferences	5
Smaller Assignments/Projects	10
Participation/Cooperation	10

Table 2: Grades by Total Percentage.

Grade	Points
A	90-100
B	80 to 89
C	70 to 79
D	60 to 69
F	Less than 60

Projects Required

Each student will complete a variety of single and team productions designed to give a hands-on study of advanced production techniques including: media packages, studio productions, multitrack audio editing, short films, and event/performance based projects.

Quizzes

There will be no quizzes in this class.

Exams

There are no exams in this class. **Documentary screenings will be Friday May 15 @ 12pm.**

Readings

Readings will be added through the semester. These are not required; but they are supplemental materials designed to help you master your production skills.

Mid-Term Exam

There will be no mid-term.

Final Exam

There won't be a final exam. We will meet at the required exam time to watch your final short films.

Extra Credit

There is no extra credit for Senior Production

Late Work

Deadlines will be assigned to individual shoots. Meeting these is essential to your professional growth. The world works on deadlines. Meet the deadlines, up to 25% of your grade depends on it.

Make Up Work/Tests

If you miss a production date, there is no way to make it up.

Important Dates

- Last day for term schedule changes: January 23, 2026
  Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Deadline to file for graduation: February 16, 2026
  Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" March 4, 2026
  Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled. Although in general students are graded on intellectual effort and performance rather than attendance, absences may lower the student's grade where class attendance and class participation are deemed essential by the faculty member. In those classes where attendance is considered as part of the grade, the instructor should so inform students of the specifics in writing at the beginning of the semester in a syllabus or separate attendance policy statement. An instructor who has an attendance policy must keep records on a daily basis. The instructor must give the student a verbal or written warning prior to being dropped from the class. Instructor's records will stand as evidence of absences. A student with excessive absences may be dropped from a course by the instructor. Any individual faculty member or college has the authority to establish an attendance policy, providing the policy is in accordance with the General University Policies.

Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. ***Assignments and***

tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings. Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. ***Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!** There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world which is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into D2L**.**

Instructor Class Policies

Each student will be allowed 2 absences for any reason. If you are to be absent on the date a project is due, you must still turn your project in on time. Beyond these two absences, the student will lose 10% of their final semester grade for any absences for any reason that is not university approved. Missing a production day will result in a failing grade on that production.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Student Wellness Center, (940) 397-4140.

Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled "*Run. Hide. Fight.*" which may be electronically accessed via the University police department's webpage: [*"Run. Hide. Fight."*](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University MSU Catalog

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule:

The schedule is broken down in the table below.

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams
Week 1 01/19 – 01/23	**COURSE INTRODUCTION** **Lecture**: Documentaries vs. Other Forms of Narratives **Screen**: *Madison In Pieces*
Week 2 01/26 – 01/30	**TOPIC SELECTION** **Lecture**: Defining a good story/Writing the proposal & treatment **Screen**: selected short docs
Week 3 02/02 – 02/06	**REVIEW OF EQUIPMENT** **Lecture**: Cameras and Editing **02/03: TOPIC SELECTION PROPOSALS DUE** **02/05: SOURCE LIST W/CONTACT INFO DUE, INITIAL CONTACTS MADE**
Week 4 02/09 – 02/13	**Lecture:** Composition: textual and subtextual **Optional**: Conferences
Week 5 02/16 – 02/20	**Seminar**: Interviewing/Sources **Lecture**: Image/Lighting Design

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams
Week 6 02/23 – 02/27	**Lecture**: Lenses & Composition **Lecture**: Sound Design in the Field **02/28: SEQUENCE LAYOUT DUE**
Week 7 03/02 – 03/06	**Lecture**: Sound Design in Premiere/ProTools **Editing Review**
Week 8 03/09 – 03/13	**SPRING BREAK**
Week 9 03/16 –03/20	**Editing Review** **Lecture**: Legal and Ethical Dilemmas
Week 10 03/23 – 03/27	**Work Day** Scripting Discussion
Week 11 03/30 – 04/03	Mandatory Conferences **Postproduction Planning**
Week 12 04/06 – 04/10	**WORK WEEK** **04/09: STRINGOUTS DUE**
Week 13 04/13 – 04/17	**WORK WEEK** **STRINGOUT NOTES**
Week 14 04/20 – 04/24	**04/20: POSTER, TITLES & SHORT DESCRIPTIONS DUE** **04/22: ROUGH EDITS DUE BY CLASS**
Week 15 04/27 – 05/01	**04/28: ROUGH EDIT NOTES RETURNED** **WORK WEEK**

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams
Week 16 05/04 – 05/08	**Conferences** **12/05: PICTURE LOCK CUTS DUE BY 5PM**
Week 17 05/11 – 05/15	**FINALS WEEK** **Final Date: 05/14, 10:30AM-12:30PM** **Final Cuts Due by 8AM on 05/12** **Test Screening 05/14 @ 12PM** **Screenings 05/15 @ 12PM**