**Capstone Syllabus**

**NAU College of Social and Behavioral Sciences   
School of Communication   
Creative Media and Film   
CMF 470C, Independent Project**

Spring 2017

Total units: 3 credits, minimum of 3 units of "C" to pass

Professor Janna Jones

Class time: Monday and Wednesday, 2:20-3:35

Office: School of Communication, room 339

Office hours: Monday, 2:30-4, and Thursday, 11:00-11:30 and by appointment

Email: janna.jones [nau.edu](http://nau.edu)

Phone: 928-523-3596 (use this only during office hours)

**PREREQUISITES**

Instructor consent. This is one of two capstone CMF courses. Students who take CMF 470C should be in their senior year or have postgraduate status. All students in 470C must develop their projects and pitch them to a 470C committee in the semester prior to the one they register for the course. By the time the course actually begins students are already deeply involved in their projects.

**COURSE PURPOSE**

CMF 470C is an advanced course for self-motivated, highly creative students. The purpose of the course is to take the filmmaking and storytelling skills gained from previous courses and apply those skills, so to produce a culminating film festival-ready short film. 470C fosters a supportive, encouraging space for students to reflect on the creative process, exchange ideas and **critiques** with one **another, consider contemporary trends in popular culture (TV, film, and radio)** and reflect on how students' individual projects resist and subscribe to those trends, thus meeting the Liberal Studies Block of Aesthetic and Human Inquiry.

In this workshop atmosphere students are expected to participate actively in class discussions and to formulate and articulate opinions on complex issues of form, content and creativity. Obviously this course requires students to do substantial work outside of the classroom. There is a great deal of self-directed independent work in this class, as our largest goal is to have complete, polished, amazing films ready to submit **to** two film festivals at the end of the semester. Submission to two film festivals is 10% of your grade for the course. Much of our class time will be used to help students accomplish this goal.

This capstone meets the following Liberal Studies Essential Skills:

1. Effective writing (weekly written reflections/assessments of filmmaking- process)
2. Effective Oral Communication (weekly in-class film critiques and weekly in-class accounts of filmmaking process)
3. Creative or Aesthetic Thinking (final outcome: film festival-ready short film)

In addition, this course fulfills the Aesthetic and Humanistic Inquiry Liberal Studies Distribution Block by involving students in the study of the human condition through philosophical inquiry, ethical reasoning, and analysis of the various forms of films and film creation. This will be applied through the examination of a variety of films and through development of relevant and ethically bound character-centered films utilizing Aristotelian narrative structures and other forms of filmmaking (experimental or music video) that lead to projects that deepen human understanding.

COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this course, students will:

1. Apply professional standards to the creation of one culminating film festival-ready short film that meet the artistic expression of filmmaking, specifically the short film; this will be assessed through the critique of dailies, rough cuts, and final film projects. **This meets the CMF Major Learning Outcomes.**
2. Develop and revise one short film project based on faculty and peer critiques and audience responses. **This meets the CMF Major Learning Outcomes.**
3. Utilize tools of creative/aesthetic thinking in the artistic expression of filmmaking. **An essential skill of Liberal Studies.**
4. Write effective treatments and/or scripts that conveys the organizational structure of the story through an analysis or presentation of characters, locations, purpose, and plot, as well as the supporting materials of the production, including budgets, storyboards, shot list, schedules, floor plans; this will be assessed through written creative briefs. **This meets the Liberal Studies Effective Writing essential skill.**
5. Present an effective pitch orally that convinces an audience (professor, classmates, and others) that this project should be produced, utilizing compelling log lines and story presentation through clear articulation, body language, volume, and visual aids to support your case; this will be assessed through the presentation of creative briefs. **This meets the Liberal Studies Effective Oral Communication essential skill.**
6. **Produce one** film that reveals elements of the human condition through the artistic conventions of cinematic storytelling that is ethically grounded; this will be assessed through written self-assessment, discussion of how your film project engaged in your imaginative vision, socio-cultural context, ethical values, and aesthetic judgment. **Aesthetic and Humanistic Inquiry Liberal Studies Distribution Block**

**REQUIRED READING**

**All** readings we do in class will be found on Blackboard Learn

**RECOMMENDED READING**

New York Times, LA Times, The New Yorker, Harpers, [salon.com](http://salon.com), [johnaugust.com](http://johnaugust.com),

[raindance.org](http://raindance.org), [twitchfilm.com](http://twitchfilm.com), [thefutoncritic.com](http://thefutoncritic.com), and [boingboing.net](http://boingboing.net)

**ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES** As a culminating capstone experience, each project must show the team's ability to apply **the tools of creative/aesthetic thinking** so to develop, write, produce, direct, shoot, light, record sound, edit, create a sound design, engage in color correction and grading, and screen a fiction,

documentary, experimental, or music video. Each project must contain the following paperwork: Development of the story (treatment/script), notes from any interviews, a budget, contracts, releases, location notes and photos, shot list, visual storyboard, floor plans, and weekly written assessment. Each project is pitched multiple times to multiple audiences.

Each person in the team submits and presents a weekly assessment that reflects, considers and describes the filmmaking and storytelling process in their culminating capstone project. In addition, students present weekly verbal critiques of their own and one another's projects.

Film reflection papers, presentation and critique 50

Revision of work culminating in final film 40

Submission of final film to two film festivals

(Evidence of submission required) **10**

Total points 100

**ASSESSMENT OF FINAL FILM PROJECTS   
For an A: (36-40 points)**

Effective pitches that convince an audience (professor, classmates, and others) that this project should be produced, utilizing compelling log lines and story presentation through clear articulation, body language, volume, and visual aids. Team meets all deadlines. There *must* be weekly progress on **all** research, preproduction, production, and postproduction. Team meets professional standards for budgets, fundraising, copyright permission, shot list/storyboards, permits, casting, directing, and editing. All paperwork and supporting materials meet the organizational structure of professional filmmaking standards. Final film utilizes a *cinematic style* with technical mastery. Final film is original and emblematic of the best of the short film: it gets to the heart of storytelling, without excess or superfluity. **This will be assessed through written self-assessment, discussion of how your film project engaged in your imaginative vision, socio-cultural context, ethical values, and aesthetic judgment. AIII**

**For a B: (32-35 points)**

The same as an A, but the story isn't full realized or the quality of the work during production reveals flaws that take away from story. Pitches, presentations, and critiques are less thoughtful and convincing for audiences (professor, classmates, and others) and writing is not as thorough or thoughtful as A standards.

**For a C: (28-31 points)**

The same as **B,** but the quality of the work is less acceptable; one area from the list in A are weak or poorly executed; self-assessment of readings missing; too many technical flaws; failed to show reasonable progress, ending with a flawed film. Pitches, presentations, and critiques are not well considered and not convincing for audiences (professor, classmates, and others), and writing is not thorough or thoughtful.

**For a D (24-27 points)**

The same as C, but the quality of work is so poor that it is not film festival-ready and/or the film is not completed by the end of the semester. Pitches, presentations, and critiques are not thoughtful or convincing for audiences (professor, classmates, and others) and writing is not complete, professional thorough or thoughtful.

**Total grade points for final grade:** A=90-100, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=60-69, F<60.

**DIRECTIONS FOR FILM REFLECTION PAPERS**

Each Wednesday (beginning on Jan. 27), all students in the 470C are required to turn in a short reflection paper on the creative process of their projects. The content of the papers should focus on (a) the work they did on the project during the last week: what went well, what did not go so well, and what new ideas/perspectives arose during the week and (b) *students should be on the constant lookout for inspiring creative work and should discuss films, TV or radio content that help them to better understand their own project and creative process.* Minimum word count is 500 words. No maximum word count. All reflection papers are due at the beginning of class. No exceptions.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR TAKING 470C FOR HONORS CREDIT**

Receiving honors credit for 470C requires a deeper level of self-reflection and an articulation of that reflexivity. A student, for example, may write a blog that provides a documentary-like, behind-the-scenes look at making a short film. The blog should include posts about pre­production, production, and post production, so to record the effort, creative collaboration, skill, and patience that go into producing a film. Because film is a visual medium, behind-the-scenes photos should be included. Screenshots, director notes, summaries of creative meetings, and a daily diary during production should also be included in the blog. Other creative modes of self-reflection are of course also encouraged; speak to me about other options for your honors project if the blog does not meet your needs.

**SCHEDULE:**

Jan 20 Introduction to course: class discusses goals for the course and builds syllabus

Jan 27 Watch 2015 470C films and critique   
Finish introduction to course

**project reflection 1 due**

Feb 3 Watch 2015 470C films and critique

2016 470C scripts in class

**project reflection 2 due**

Feb 10 **project reflection 3 due**Location photos and props

Feb 17 **project reflection 4 due**

**Feb 24 project reflection 5 due**

March 2 **project reflection 6 due**Footage/daily bonanza

March 9 **project reflection 7 due**Footage/daily bonanza

March 23 mid-term assessment of course, films   
Footage/daily bonanza

March 30 **project reflection 8 due**

Footage/daily bonanza/postproduetion

April 6 **project reflection 9 due**Postproduction

April 13 **project reflection 10 due**Postproducti on

April 20 no class

Films submitted to two festivals during this week

Email evidence of submissions to jannaj [ones@nau.edu](mailto:ones@nau.edu)

April 27 2016 470C film critiques

May 4 2016 470C film critiques

**CLASS POLICIES**

**Retests/makeup tests/missed deadlines**

All work must be submitted on time. Work that is not submitted on time will not be accepted.

**Attendance**

As seniors about to enter the professional world, it is expected that students are engaged and responsible for their

own affairs.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:

You must do original work. For music, be sure to either pay for the license or engage in Creative Commons work.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

NAU's Safe Working and Learning Environment Policy prohibits sexual harassment and assault, and discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex, race, color, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or veteran status by anyone at this university. Retaliation of any kind as a result of making a complaint under the policy or participating in an investigation is also prohibited. The Director of the Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity (AA/EO) serves as the university's compliance officer for affirmative action, civil rights, and Title IX, and is the ADA/504 Coordinator. AA/EO also assists with religious accommodations. You may obtain a copy of this policy from the college dean's office or from the NAU's Affirmative Action

website [nau.edu/divelsity/.](http://nau.edu/divelsity/.)

If you have questions or concerns about this policy, it is important that you contact the departmental chair, dean's office, the Office of Student Life (928-523-5181), or NAU's Office of Affirmative Action (928) 523-3312 (voice), (928) 523-9977 (fax), (928) 523-1006 (TTD) or [aaeo@nau.edu](mailto:aaeo@nau.edu).

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a documented disability, you can arrange for accommodations by contacting Disability Resources (DR) at 523-8773 (voice) or 523-6906 (TTY), [dr@nau.edu](mailto:dr@nau.edu) (e-mail) or 928-523-8747 (fax). Students needing academic accommodations are required to register with DR and provide required disability related documentation. Although you may request an accommodation at any time, in order for DR to best meet your individual needs, you are urged to register and submit necessary documentation ([www.nau.edu/dr)](http://www.nau.edu/dr)) 8 weeks prior to the time you wish to receive accommodations. DR is strongly committed to the needs of student with disabilities and the promotion of Universal Design. Concerns or questions related to the accessibility of programs and facilities at NAU may be brought to the attention of DR or the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity (523-3312).

ACADEMIC CONTACT HOUR POLICY

Based on the Arizona Board of Regents Academic Contact Hour Policy (ABOR Handbook, 2-224), for every unit of credit, a student should expect, on average, to do a minimum of three hours of work per week, including but not limited to class time, preparation, homework, studying.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Integrity is expected of every member of the NAU community in all academic undertakings. Integrity entails a firm adherence to a set of values, and the values most essential to an academic community are grounded in honesty with respect to all intellectual efforts of oneself and others. Academic integrity is expected not only in formal coursework situations, but in all University relationships and interactions connected to the educational process, including the use of University resources. An NAU student's submission of work is an implicit declaration that the work is the student's own. All outside assistance should be acknowledged, and the student's academic contribution truthfully reported at all times. In addition, NAU students have a right to expect academic integrity from each of their peers. Individual students and faculty members are responsible for identifying potential violations of the university's academic integrity policy. Instances of potential violations are adjudicated using the process found in the university Academic Integrity Policy. The complete policy is in Appendix G of NAU's Student Handbook.

RESEARCH INTEGRITY

The Responsible Conduct of Research policy is intended to insure that NAU personnel including NAU students engaged in research are adequately trained in the basic principles of ethics in research. Additionally, this policy assists NAU in meeting the RCR training and compliance requirements of the National Science Foundation (NSF)-The America COMPETES Act (Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education and Science); 42 U.S.0 18620-1, Section 7009, and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) policy on the instruction of the RCR (NOT-OD-10-019; "Update on the Requirement for Instruction in the Responsible Conduct

of Research"). For more information on the policy and the training activities required for personnel and students conducting research, at NAU, visit: <http://nau.edu/Research/Compliance/Research-Integrity/.>

SENSITIVE COURSE MATERIALS

University education aims to expand student understanding and awareness. Thus, it necessarily involves engagement with a wide range of information, ideas, and creative representations. In the course of college studies, students can expect to encounter—and critically appraise—materials that may differ from and perhaps challenge familiar understandings, ideas, and beliefs. Students are encouraged to discuss these matters with faculty.

**CLASSROOM DISRUPTION POLICY**

Membership in the academic community places a special obligation on all participants to preserve an atmosphere conducive to a safe and positive learning environment. Part of that obligation implies the responsibility of each member of the NAU community to maintain an environment in which the behavior of any individual is not disruptive. Instructors have the authority and the responsibility to manage their classes in accordance with University regulations. Instructors have the right and obligation to confront disruptive behavior thereby promoting and enforcing standards of behavior necessary for maintaining an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning. Instructors are responsible for establishing, communicating, and enforcing reasonable expectations and rules of classroom behavior. These expectations are to be communicated to students in the syllabus and in class discussions and activities at the outset of the course. Each student is responsible for behaving in a manner that supports a positive learning environment and that does not interrupt nor disrupt the delivery of education by instructors or receipt of education by students, within or outside a class. The complete classroom disruption policy is in Appendices of NAU’s Student Handbook.

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