

ECO 691VM

Video Media for Science Education and Conservation

Fall 2014 (2 credits)

Tues 1:00-2:15 pm
Holdsworth 105

Dr. Andy Danylchuk
danylchuk@eco.umass.edu

Dr. Bethany Bradley
bbradley@eco.umass.edu

Dr. Todd Fuller
tkfuller@eco.umass.edu

Dr. Ezra Markowitz
emarkowitz@eco.umass.edu

Brief Background

Today's society is more visual than ever before. The rapid expansion of the Internet in the 1990's followed by the proliferation of smartphones and tablets in the early 21st century have put people across the globe in front of screens not just capable of text and photos, but video media as well. Almost simultaneously, high definition digital video cameras and video editing software have become affordable and accessible to the masses, allowing more people to tell a story, perhaps their story, through video media. This wave of independent video production and filmmaking has resulted in a redialing of who is behind the camera, how projects are funded, and how products are marketed and distributed.

Science and nature are facets of our world that lend themselves well to this 'digital media revolution'. Video media can transform the complexities of science and nature into something more tangible and tractable. Video media can bring the vast web of life to a level that people can relate to. From atoms to the atmosphere, and ocean depths to mountain peaks, video media already has a track record of bringing science and nature home for people. Once the raw natural world and scientific innovations were entertaining. Currently the only place for real (not reality) classic science and nature video is on public broadcasting television stations and the Internet. In fact, the proliferation of streaming video and video on demand are allowing discoveries in sciences and nature to reach an audience faster than ever before. This is not only changing the demand of potential audiences, but also changing the expectations of scientists to become good communicators through digital multimedia.

As a greater awareness of sustainability becomes global, how can the 'digital media revolution' be used to deliver an authentic and accurate message that is both educational and entertaining? Can digital media in a diversity of forms be used to positively affect change in the way human societies respond to scientific discoveries and environmental urgencies? With the rapid evolution of the digital media industry, can yesterday's documentary filmmakers and nature cinematographers keep up and make the most out of their productions? How can video media and digital media in general be used to propose solutions to environmental issues in an unbiased way? How can conservation practitioners and researchers use digital media?

Course Description

The objectives of this course are to engage graduate students and senior undergraduates in discussions about how video media can be effectively used to enhance conservation efforts, ranging from fundraising to affecting public policy. We will critique a series of digital media products related to conservation, dissect them regarding their message, and work backwards to reexamine the conservation issues the producers hoped to address. Students will be charged with leading critiques. We will also have a series of guest lectures from media professionals that will reveal the realities of the rapidly evolving world of the digital media revolution.

Expectations

It is expected that students show up for class, be awake, be engaged, and learn. Although this is a lecture-based course, it is expected that students will not only listen but also actively participate in discussions that will surely develop. Whether you are planning to focus your career on fish and fisheries, forests and forest-owners, or ultimately decide to do something completely different, it is our hope that students walk away from the course with a broader and informed perspective when it comes to using digital media to communicate about conservation.

Evaluation

Executive Summary assignment (25%), storyboard assignment (25%), class participation and attendance (50%). DETAILS TO COME

Grade Scale

94-100 = A	87-89 = B+	77-79 = C+	66-68 = D+
90-93 = A-	83-86 = B	72-76 = C	60-65 = D
	80-82 = B-	69-71 = C-	< 60 = F

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

The University requires honesty of all its members in their academic work. Honesty is necessary to the learning process, and is integral to the atmosphere of genuine inquiry and intellectual curiosity that the University seeks to foster. Academic dishonesty not only contradicts the expectations of a community whose central purpose is the pursuit of intellectual endeavor, it violates University rules and regulations, a fact of which all students must be aware. See the web site http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/ for further information.

SPECIAL NEEDS:

Please contact me if you have special needs or requirements in order for you to take and participate in this course. The web site <http://www.umass.edu/disability/> has additional information.

Class Schedule

Date	Subject	Facilitators
02 Sept	No class	
09 Sept	Why Video Media for Science Ed?	Team
16 Sept	Elements of video media production	Guest: Sarah Curry
23 Sept	Understanding your market	Guest: Greg Hamilton
30 Sept	Finance and fundraising	Guest: Isenberg Team
07 Oct	Treatment and storylines	Guest: Chris Haak
14 Oct	Film theory	Guest: Film Studies
21 Oct	Production 101	Guest: Joe Cunningham
28 Oct	Good, bad, ugly – video critiques	AJD is away
04 Nov	Videography 101	Guest: Doron Schlair
12 Nov (Wed)	Post production 101	Guest: Sarah Curry
18 Nov	Distribution	Guest: ???
25 Nov	Did it make an impact?	Guest: ???
02 Dec	Course Summary & Review	Team

Moodle

All course material, including the syllabus, lectures, and assignments will be posted on Moodle (<https://moodle.umass.edu/>). Power Point presentations used during lectures will be posted on Moodle the day before the lecture so that students can print out the slides if they desire (although I discourage this since it eats up trees!). I do not provide lecture notes, so it is imperative that you come to class since just relying on the PowerPoints will only get you so far.

All grades will be posted on Moodle allowing students to track their performance. Please also check Moodle regularly to see if the instructor or TA is available to chat outside normal office hours.