

AS.455 (FILM AND MEDIA)

Courses

AS.455.610. Foundations of Immersive Storytelling: Theory & Practice. 3 Credits.

This introductory course will provide students with the tools and the mind set for making compelling VR/AR experiences. While the industry is nascent, the technological and storytelling innovations move forward at breakneck speed. Students will also, each class, dissect to understand the approaches to the current catalog of immersive experiences, ranging from 360 film, to animation and room scale installation experiences, often with creators who made them to understand challenges and lessons learned. Subsequently, after this overview, students will have the option to build their own prototypes and, also, to support a VR/AR project housed within the program with a leading artist.

AS.455.611. Screenwriting Workshop. 3 Credits.

This will be an intensive writing class that will go from basic film idea through the development of a three act outline to the completion of a full first draft screenplay. Each student is required to come to the first class with one or two ideas for a completely new screenplay. Please do not bring anything for which there is a previous outline, treatment, or draft of a script. The focus of the class will be the structure of the feature screenplay as a function of thematic coherence—the structure of the film is determined by what the story means. We will analyze films by act, sequence, and scene to understand dramatic action as a tension between different possible outcomes. There will be five weekend intensive workshop sessions, divided between Friday evening and Saturday that will include some lecture components, some viewing and discussion of films, and reading and discussion of student work. Between the weekend workshops there will be weekly writing assignments and individual Internet or telephone conferences. Expect a relatively heavy workload. A completed first draft screenplay will be a requirement for completion of the class.

AS.455.613. Stories Matter: How immersive experiences and new technologies create social change. 3 Credits.

This course will explore the ways in which emerging technologies and immersive media—including artificial intelligence, mixed reality, machine learning, spatial computing, and blockchain—can be used to advance the goals of social impact and social justice. Covering the topics of interactivity and storytelling, it will also discuss questions of flow, agency, design thinking and human centered technology. Each session will include case studies, and there will be presentations by leading experts in the field, followed by in-class discussions. Students will be expected to design and prototype original immersive projects, as well as read and write short essays throughout the semester.

AS.455.615. Episodic Writing Workshop 1 – The Pilot. 3 Credits.

This course will expose students to the mechanics and realities of writing an original pilot for a television series, from concept through beat sheet to draft. Each student will finish the semester with a mini-series bible, a detailed outline and the first half the draft of the pilot. Dramatic goals, character arcs, operational themes will be a few of the many subjects covered.

AS.455.618. Episodic Writing Workshop II - The Writers' Room. 3 Credits.

Imagine your one hour dramatic pilot script has just been picked up to series, congratulations. Find out what really happens in the writers room to turn one pilot into many episodes. Learn how to add depth to your original characters, create new ones and develop future storylines. Having already completed or substantially completed a one hour dramatic pilot script is a plus, but not required. Taught by Tammy Ader Green, a writers room veteran and the creator/showrunner of the long-running Sony series “Strong Medicine.”

AS.455.619. Business of Non Fiction Film & TV. 3 Credits.

In an era of record-setting festival acquisitions and a thriving demand for nonfiction content from television, theatrical and streaming platforms, it is evident why our cultural moment has been described as a modern “golden age” of documentary filmmaking. But for an aspiring filmmaker, what is the best way to break through and navigate this terrain from the business perspective? Covering avenues related to storytelling approach (feature-length, series, short form etc.), producing and exhibiting work (pitching, budgeting, fundraising, proposal-writing, festival strategy, distribution, etc), and the organizations and outlets on the forefront of documentary decision-making, this course aims to situate students in the contemporary market of nonfiction filmmaking. Over the course of the semester, students will develop an idea for a nonfiction film or series into a refined pitch and proposal, applying the strategic knowledge gained from a series of lectures, screenings, case studies, and conversations with established industry professionals and filmmakers.

AS.455.620. Fundamentals of Business 1. 3 Credits.

This comprehensive business seminar is centered on presentations and interactive sessions with experts in the field, the study of relevant case studies and the creation of sample plans and strategies by the students. During the first semester we cover such subjects as entertainment law, film finance, production, marketing, public relations and distribution. Emphasis is placed on analyzing and recreating actual and relevant case studies and business situations. Other subjects include sales estimates, comps, tax credits, festivals, release strategies and the art of the pitch.

AS.455.621. A Filmmaker's Guide to Protecting Your Work: Intro to Intellectual Property & Entertainment Law. 3 Credits.

By dynamically using real-life case studies as a basis for discussion and learning, students in this course will explore the legal and business affairs aspect of filmmaking. We will examine the meaning and structure of copyright law, fair use, option & purchase agreements, key crew & talent agreements, distribution agreements, tax credit/rebate statutes, music licensing and product placement deals, among other topics.

AS.455.624. Social Impact Documentary Filmmaking. 3 Credits.

In this hands on course, students will learn the basics of documentary filmmaking from development through post production and social impact. Through a series of screenings, discussions and real-time filmmaking exercises, students will engage in a process of exploration and discovery focused on honing each filmmaker's personal voice. There will be a strong focus on telling stories with a clear and provocative point of view. Students will leave the course with a strong bio and personal statement, and having completed 3-5 minute documentary on the subject of their choosing.

AS.455.625. Creative Producing & Line Producing. 3 Credits.

Through in-class projects, interactions with working producers, line producers and AD's and on-going independent productions, students will be exposed to the myriad responsibilities of producers, from the creative and on-the-field perspectives. We will explore the many elements that make up the creation of films and television shows, with a focus on a producer's creative input from development to post production to a producer's understanding of the nuts and bolts fundamentals of how to budget and schedule.

AS.455.626. Mixing Sound for Picture. 3 Credits.

This course is a practical exploration of all aspects of mixing audio for film and tv. The students will prepare to mix during the first half of the semester, topics will include dialog editing, automated dialog replacement (ADR, or "looping"), Foley, music editing and sound effects spotting as well as basic sound design. Recording of ADR and Foley will take place in the studio at the JHU-MICA Film Centre using condenser and dynamic microphones. The class will shift its focus in the second half of the semester to re-recording mixing, exploring both the technical and creative aspects of mixing. Students will learn to mix in the Film Centre's control room using Avid Pro Tools HD software for Apple macOS with proprietary and third-party software plug-ins. Upon completion of the course, students will know how to provide final mix files as well as stems, i.e. mix minus, M&E, dialog, sound effects, and music. Projects will include spotting, prepping, building and mixing a short film or series of scenes. Class will occur during a three-hour weekday evening throughout the semester in the sound studio of The JHU-MICA Film Centre, where students will work as a class to record and edit group projects and, schedule permitting, individual projects.

AS.455.630. Recording Sound for Film. 3 Credits.

This course serves as an orientation to the recording studio and the craft of capturing sound with microphones. Topics will include sound behavior (i.e., basic acoustics), human perception of sound (i.e., basic psychoacoustics), microphone theory and techniques, signal flow and processing, basic digital audio theory, and the digital audio workstation (Pro Tools and Logic Pro). Projects will include in-studio and location recordings. By the end of the semester students will be able to effectively navigate the studio at the Ten East North facility and capture sound on location for use in subsequent classes. Should be taken prior to or concurrently with AS.445.631 Designing Sound for Film.

AS.455.632. Sound on Film I. 3 Credits.

According to director George Lucas, "sound is half of the picture." Great directors have always known the secret power of sound in filmmaking. While film is certainly a visual art, take out the sound and you have lost "50% of the film," as director David Lynch has said. In this course, we follow the rapid ascent of sound in film, from early talkies to the emergence of sound as an art form of its own. We will trace the technological innovations and study the artists who helped develop the nuanced language of sound in film, surveying a variety of cinematic genres and analyzing different approaches to sound design. By the end of the course, students will have an understanding of the history of sound in film, the tools and techniques used to create soundtracks, and the essential role sound plays in the cinematic experience. The course will include extensive readings as well as viewing films, writing analytical papers and a lively ongoing discussion.

AS.455.634. Designing Sound for Film and Media. 3 Credits.

Explore the use of software and hardware as a means to create, capture, and edit music and sound for picture. Examine the role of music and sound in media and develop the skills to operate software instruments and Digital Audio Workstations. Gain an appreciation for the craft of composing music for picture - including fundamentals of music, 'spotting' a scene, and creating simple music 'cues'. Additionally, learn about editing and recording sound effects and dialogue to create complete soundtracks that incorporate soundscapes and musical compositions.

AS.455.635. Sales, Acquisitions and Marketing. 3 Credits.

This class will explore the ways films reach an audience. We will examine festival strategy and traditional theatrical distribution as well as changing ancillary and online markets. Case studies of successful marketing campaigns across genres and platforms will be used as evidence. Testimonies by guest lecturers who work in the field of distribution will supplement the core syllabus.

AS.455.637. Comedy Writing - TV Spec Script. 3 Credits.

This course will expose students to the mechanics and realities of writing a spec script or pilot script for episodic comedy, from concept through beat sheet to draft. We will study, analyze and break down a specific television show then proceed to sketch out a spec episode based on that show. Each student will finish the semester with a detailed outline and the first pages of the draft. Genre, act structure, dramatic dialogue and cold-opens will be a few of the many subjects covered. In this course, students will be working on a half-hour comedy series.

AS.455.638. Technology and the Future of Humanity. 3 Credits.

Humanity at once refers both to all human beings, in their different forms and manifestations, and to standards of humaneness – including love, benevolence, care, and dignity. This course will examine questions of how are we to be in this world (individually and collectively) with technology; how are we now; and how should we be. It will do so by engaging in a wide-ranging survey – delving into questions of ethics (of information, of privacy, of environment) and complexifying what forms of knowledge we ascribe value to (drawing on indigeneity and indigenous forms of knowledge, for example). The course will then examine specific instances of humane applications of new technology in the fields of peacemaking and peacebuilding, psychiatry and intergroup relations, and storytelling by those on the margins (indigenous communities, victims of climate change, conflict and violence, and the socioeconomically disempowered). From that point, using a speculative design and thinking framework, the course will challenge students to reflect on desirable and undesirable futures, and likely futures. With a backcasting approach, the course will ask students to consider what systems, milestones, decisions, activities, policies and strategies need to be in place to effect desirable futures.

AS.455.639. The Art of "The Pitch": Developing Skills and Mastering Professional Practices. 3 Credits.

Successfully pitching your prospective film, video game, pilot script or web-series is a key factor in making your dream a reality. A strong pitch can attract financing, distribution and star cast attachments. How do you craft a pitch that is compelling and engaging, while also concise and leaves them wanting more? Over the course of the semester, you will pitch multiple projects in different mediums and learn from observing your colleagues pitch their projects. You will create look-books, pitch-decks and sizzle reels. We'll consider the use of visuals, music and props, and hear from successful writers, directors and producers about their techniques and insights from the front lines of professional pitching.

AS.455.640. Graduate Filmmaking Studio I. 3 Credits.

This course constitutes the first part of a core centerpiece of the graduate filmmaking experience. The studio meets for three hours weekly and is co-taught with the MICA MFA Program. This hands-on studio is where good, smart and compelling movies are born. Students will work in groups, particularly during their first semester. While writing and editing are often solitary activities, production is not. Great films are collaborations and students will be expected to work in teams. Group discussions and critiques are balanced with individual meetings with faculty and visits with guest filmmakers. Special emphasis will be placed on ways that filmmakers can build and reach an audience. Students will explore the diverse ways filmmakers are sustaining careers while creating high impact films. Students will have the opportunity to create a wide range of short form work while collaborating with their colleagues / fellow filmmakers.

AS.455.641. Graduate Filmmaking Studio II. 3 Credits.

This course constitutes the second part of a core centerpiece of the graduate filmmaking experience. The studio meets for three hours weekly and is co-taught with the MICA MFA Program. This hands-on studio is where good, smart and compelling movies are born. Students will work in groups, particularly during their first semester. While writing and editing are often solitary activities, production is not. Great films are collaborations and students will be expected to work in teams. Group discussions and critiques are balanced with individual meetings with faculty and visits with guest filmmakers. Special emphasis will be placed on ways that filmmakers can build and reach an audience. Students will explore the diverse ways filmmakers are sustaining careers while creating high impact films. Students will have the opportunity to create a wide range of short form work while collaborating with their colleagues / fellow filmmakers.

AS.455.642. Advanced Cinematography Workshop. 3 Credits.

The Director of Photography has instrumental role in crafting the final look of a film. In the course, the four creative roles of the cinematography department – Camera Operator, Gaffer, Key Grip, and Dolly Grip are examined in-depth. Through a series of screenings, discussions and workshops, the students learn many of the dynamics between these roles. In class, students will mount detailed and intricately lighted shots. Students will work with the Arri Amira, a professional motion picture camera. Camera topics include camera settings & trouble shooting, on-set data management, ALEXA color science, working with LogC, look management, and dailies creation. Prerequisites: AS.455.640 (Graduate Studio I) or a demonstrated basic camera proficiency

AS.455.643. The Future of Cinematic Gaming. 3 Credits.

An introductory course that provides students with an overview of the process to create innovative and meaningful cinematic stories in the evolving field of interactive games. From concept to completion, the class will explore the creative architecture, production process and technical considerations necessary for developing for the new wave of interactive entertainment across platforms. Drawing from theoretical and production frameworks in game design, narrative and documentary filmmaking, art, immersive theatre, and motion capture—critical attention will be given to intuitive and engaging design. The hands on portion of the class will culminate with students developing a prototype for their own original interactive cinematic project.

AS.455.644. Podcasting Fundamentals. 3 Credits.

In this introductory course, students will ultimately create their own short podcasts around stories that are meaningful to them and their intended audiences. Students will enact principles of listener-centered design, they'll work to find stories worth telling, and they'll learn to tell those stories powerfully. This course will build competency in recording and editing techniques, interviewing skills, creating story structure, and understanding the potential social impact of documentary work. Students will also study current monetization strategies in the booming podcast market and learn how to find, keep, and grow an audience.

AS.455.645. Production for Creative Technology. 3 Credits.

This intermediate course takes you through the workflows of producing compelling narratives with emerging technologies like VR, AR and AI. Students will get an opportunity to work collectively on a project with the deadlines, pressures and challenges that come with delivering a quality product for a world class client. Students will also prototype existing ideas and proposals developed in other ISET courses, or new ideas generated from class, to create something that can be showcased in their portfolio, or be utilized long term as a capstone project. Prerequisite: Students must have taken as least one ISET course though some exceptions will be granted on a case by case basis.

AS.455.646. TV Series Development: Pitching, Process, Pilot. 3 Credits.

Do you have an idea for what you believe would make a great TV show? Find out what really happens in the television development process. Over the course of the semester, you will develop and pitch up to three ideas as well as write a series bible and select script scenes for one. Taught by television writer/creator/showrunner and pitching veteran Tammy Ader Green, this course will teach you what it takes to go from dreaming to streaming.

AS.455.647. Virtual Production: A New Era of Filmmaking. 3 Credits.

Lush and realistic virtual worlds that were recently impossible are suddenly commonplace. These synthetic scenes surround us, hidden in sweeping virtual backgrounds on film sets or featured prominently in seemingly endless videogame landscapes. While breakthroughs in computer graphics and game engines make this possible, new tools make it common. The hidden development conjuring up seemingly anything is a new class of reality capture and filmmaking tools that creators to quickly bring the real world into virtual spaces. These are the tools of virtual production and volumetric filmmaking. This course starts with personal stories, transforming a vivid memory into a sharable immersive experience with tools and insights from volumetric filmmaking, virtual production and game design. Students learn how to adapt a script for immersion, 3D modeling, photogrammetry scanning, and applying techniques like virtual lighting, virtual cinematography, and the basics of motion capture and volumetric capture to bring their scene to life. The course invites students to create lush and imaginative worlds immediately with common hardware – mobile phones and computers.

AS.455.648. Directing Workshop. 3 Credits.

Students develop and workshop short narrative scripts that they write. The course covers working with actors and understanding the filmmaking process from the actor's point of view. Students visualize their scripts so they are prepared to work with a Producer, Director of Photography and additional crew. The course also explores techniques of blocking and staging action for the camera, with emphasis on the practical problems and aesthetic questions that arise.

AS.455.649. Advanced Documentary Production. 3 Credits.

This course will lead students through the practical applications of documentary filmmaking within a professional environment. Beginning with actual client meetings that define production parameters, students (working with faculty) will take the project through development and preproduction into a collaborative production environment that culminates with a rigorous and detailed postproduction process. Working within strict timelines and a defined budget, students will take on lead roles to produce a series of short documentaries that fulfill (if not exceed) client expectations. The entirety of this process will be documented via a behind the scenes team, who will develop an electronic press kit (EPK) and manage the social media presence of this project. NOTE: Admission to the course requires Instructor and Program Director approval. Students are required to submit formal materials to the Instructors and the Program Director for consideration.

AS.455.650. Script to Screen. 3 Credits.

This course de-mystifies the film development process and teaches students the key tools necessary for a successful career as a film executive or producer. This course will chart the key stages of finding and preparing a good project for production. These steps include how to find, evaluate, obtain rights and shape material from the producer's perspective. The course will examine strategies employed by filmmakers who adapt existing IP and literary works to the screen. Detailed comparisons between cinematic adaptations and the novels, plays, and short stories on which they are based. Case studies of literary works that pose a variety of challenges to filmmakers.

AS.455.651. Film Financing. 3 Credits.

Successful producing involves the bridging of the creative with the commercial. Effective producers need the skills to structure and manage fundraising efforts on behalf of their productions and establish a comfort level in defining and promoting their projects as commercial ventures. At its conclusion, students should have a working command of both the theory and the practice of raising money for film, television and new media productions and the skill-base to embark confidently on their own fundraising efforts. Students will learn of the various mindsets of attorneys, financiers, and other professionals and master the vocabulary of content as investment. Finally, students will understand how to mix- match financing strategies and approaches as is appropriate for each particular project.

AS.455.652. Digital Media: Storytelling & Strategy. 3 Credits.

We live in a world where content is queen and more money is being poured into original content than ever before, but what does this deluge of money and distributors mean for creators? In this course we'll take a dual-pronged approach to the digital media landscape—looking at business strategy and creative process in tandem to understand how to take a holistic approach to selling content in a shifting marketplace with an ever-increasing number of buyers. How is digital distribution of video changing the traditional media business models? How does a content developer create a scalable business in this environment? This course will feature a practical element in which all students will pitch, develop and produce digital content, melding business strategy with creativity to create saleable IP with potential for multiple distribution partners and revenue streams. The course will feature industry executives and independent creators as guest lecturers.

AS.455.653. Stories that Matter: Creative Decision-Making through the Lens of Cinema. 3 Credits.

Why are we drawn to stories ... and why do we react so emotionally, viscerally, even physically to flickering images on screens (of all sizes)? What techniques do the most skillful, most agile cinematic storytellers apply to affect their audience and compel us to journey alongside? This course will examine cinematic "storytellers" and the multiple creative decisions they make in some of the most impactful films of the past 50 years. By "storytellers", we include directors (of course) but also the writers, cinematographers, composers, editors, actors and other key personnel (sometimes creative producers as well) who join with the director to collaborate and elevate a story and the characters who dwell within. Discover how choices in sound, lighting, acting, music, shot selection and story/character development can dynamically and instrumentally affect the audience. Cinema provides a deeply personal lens, coupled with an enormous public reach, acting as both a reflection of - and an agent for - shifting perspectives on the world around us and our society. Together we will explore and analyze how cinematic storytellers' distinct choices on character, composition and conflict humanize our perspective on others' lives, different cultures, and complex issues far removed from our own -- and how you as developing storytellers can learn from such creative decision-making to craft your own stories.

AS.455.654. Artificial Collaboration: AI & the Creative Process. 3 Credits.

Discover the intersection of artificial intelligence and the creative process. Recent developments in generative AI tools have made it possible for amateurs to create visual art in seconds that previously would have required hours or days of expert effort. This has raised fascinating legal and philosophical questions about authorship, craft, and even consciousness. Through collaborative activities, students will develop new norms and ethics for our age of generative AI and test them while learning to use the major AI tools available. Explore the ethical implications and best methods for working with AI-generated media, while engaging in discussions about authorship and creativity in the context of artificial collaboration. Students will gain practical experience using AI tools, learn to balance technical proficiency with artistic vision, and develop a deeper understanding of the creative potential of AI as well as the ethical considerations involved in using AI tools in the creative process. The course is designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to become ethical, informed, and creative practitioners in the age of generative AI.

AS.455.666. Scheduling and Budgeting for Film & TV : Producing with Movie Magic. 3 Credits.

Movie Magic is a specialized software used throughout the industry to schedule and budget films and television. Gain practical knowledge and training for the professional world to boost your job opportunities and experience. Over the semester, you will schedule & budget multiple projects including, for example: a short film, a commercial, a documentary, etc. and learn how to properly assess and budget for travel, locations, production departments, union positions (i.e., SAG-AFTRA, DGA, WGA and IATSE) and their corresponding Pension, Health & Welfare requirements.

AS.455.800. Capstone for Film & Media. 3 Credits.

Guided by meetings with the instructor and other guest speakers from the industry, students research, develop and deliver a final project that demonstrates skill in one or both of their concentrations. Ideally, this project will be completed in collaboration with a student or students from the JHU MA or MICA MFA program who are completing their own capstone projects.

AS.455.801. Independent Study. 3 Credits.

AS.455.803. Capstone Continuation for Film and Media (non-credit).

Capstone Continuation is required for those students who have taken the Capstone Course but not yet finished the required and approved work.