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 course explores and focuses on the fundamentals of screenwriting with an emphasis on short subjects. Students will learn how to move from a compelling idea to a solid narrative structure, develop and sustain a central theme, build believable characters and craft authentic dialogue, all while satisfying the technical requirements of a modern screenplay.

AS.455.613. Immersive Experiences and New Technologies: Storytelling for an Interactive Audience. 3 Credits.
This cross-disciplinary course brings together our Writing and Immersive Storytelling & Emerging Technologies concentrations to collaboratively develop, design and build an interactive XR game experience. Students will engage with technologies such as mixed and augmented reality, 360-degree navigable environments, WebXR, volumetric capture and 3D scanning. The course will include group and individual assignments outside of class to expand and challenge the student's exploration of the intersection between creativity and technical prowess. This course blends storytelling, character development, worldbuilding, and emerging technologies to create an immersive experience.** This class requires Approval from the Course Instructors (Jason Gray and Sig Libowitz, who are co-teaching the class) to be admitted. Interested students should answer the three questions sent to you by Program Director, Sig Libowitz, and send their answers to both Professors Gray and Libowitz (at jgray44@jhu.edu and sig.libowitz@jhu.edu, respectively).

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.455.621. 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 filmmakers 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.455.634. 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.455.639. 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. Cinematography Workshop. 3 Credits.
A cinematographer is instrumental to crafting the look, tone, and texture of a film. In this course, students will explore the fundamental aspects of the camera department's creative and technical role on set and in pre/postproduction. These roles will include but not be limited to that of Cinematographer, Camera Operator, Gaffer, Key Grip, Assistant Camera, and Colorist. Through a series of screenings, discussions, and hands-on workshops, students will learn foundational responsibilities, overlap, and creative intention of each of these roles. This in-class process will then be translated to group and individual assignments outside of class that continue to challenge the student's exploration of the intersection between creativity and technical prowess. Students will work with a variety of cameras from manufacturers such as Arri, Red, Sony, and Blackmagic Design, as well as editing and color correction software such as Davinci Resolve. Camera topics include everything from fundamental camera settings & trouble shooting to on-set data management, color management and color science pipelines.

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

<p>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. </p><p>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. </p>

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.

An intensive writing course exploring and applying fundamental and advanced concepts of screenwriting to major projects for film, television and online platforms. Students will bring their own project focus to the course – narrative feature, narrative shorts, web series, series pilots – and engage in weekly workshop readings and critiques of their works-in-progress. The goal will be a complete and polished script or series of scripts by the end of the course. The course will also include weekly topics of in-depth instruction on structure, character development, authentic dialogue, scenes and sequences, thematic coherence, and finding your voice as a writer, all tailored to the projects selected by students.

AS.455.651. Advanced Documentary Production II - Post. 3 Credits.

This course will lead students through the practical applications of documentary post-production within a professional environment. Students, working experientially with faculty, will take the designated project through a rigorous and detailed postproduction process (including potential production opportunities for additional interviews, b-roll and reshoots). Working within strict timelines and a defined budget, students will be provided the opportunity to earn key crew roles 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.

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.455.655. Producing the Narrative Short. 3 Credits.

This class will guide students through the process of developing, packaging and producing short form content (i.e., short films, web series, etc). We will learn about fundraising, budgeting, festivals and distribution. Beginning with an initial concept, students will develop a treatment and pitch deck, draft a schedule and budget, explore the grant writing process, and work through the planning phases of pre-production, production and post. By the end of the class students will have at least one packaged short form project on the path toward realization.

AS.455.656. Screenwriting: the Narrative Short. 3 Credits.

This course will investigate questions of thematic cohesiveness, plot construction, logical causality, character behavior, dialogue, genre consistency, and pace within the framework of short form screenwriting. Through a process of drafting, workshop, and revision, students will complete at least 2 short screenplays that demonstrate purposeful execution of narrative intent. The course will illustrate and analyze the power of visual storytelling and character development with the goal of communicating that story to a cinematic audience. Students will create texts that initiate the production of emotionally powerful and immersive cinematic experiences.

AS.455.657. Editing Fundamentals: Narrative, Emotion, and Flow in the Short Film. 3 Credits.

Robert Bresson said that "a film is born three times... First in the writing of the script, once again in the shooting, and finally in the editing." Editing a film is one of the most important aspects of narrative filmmaking. Most professional directors arrive on the set with a good sense of how the scene they are about to shoot will eventually be edited. This class will focus on teaching the fundamentals of film editing by looking at techniques, tools, and approaches to understand what makes for a good cut and how to shape both a performance and a story (matching visual action, visual fluidity, pacing, transitions, montage, time manipulation, and time ellipses). We will discover how story beats are revealed and how the audience connects with the characters, as well as how to employ the elements of question and answer to build suspense and surprise. The class will focus specifically on the short film, an essential format for filmmakers in their early careers, as we define the different types of shorts (narrative, non-fiction, commercials) and learn how they employ different cinematic languages and story structures unique to the format. By the end of the class, you will know the rules, but also when to break them - all in service of the story and an emotional experience.

AS.455.658. Workshop for the Immersive Storyteller: Skills & Training. 3 Credits.

This enhanced 12-week course takes a deeper dive into the tools and techniques learned in the Foundations of Immersive Storytelling: Theory and Practice course. The curriculum is designed to equip participants with enhanced skills in 360 video production, WebXR content creation, 3D scanning and the utilization of Unreal Engine for scene creation with 3D assets.

AS.455.659. Intro to Visual Narratives. 3 Credits.

Beginning with an introduction to camera and the foundations of cinematography, this class will take a hands-on approach toward the definition and understanding of visual storytelling. Through a sequence of practical applications, students will come to understand the concepts of space, volume, pacing, composition, eye control, and various other cinematographic techniques and their applications within the worlds of physical production, ISET, and animation.

AS.455.660. Location Sound: Artistry & Technique. 3 Credits.

Beginning with a foundation in sound, this class will take a hands-on approach toward the understanding of location sound recording. Students will come to understand both theoretically and practically how to use sound equipment, how to set proper audio levels, booming techniques, choosing mics, tentacle syncs, and best radio frequency practices, with the overall goal of how to make artistic audio choices and how to get the highest quality sound based on real-world applications.

AS.455.661. Digital Imaging and Postproduction Workflows. 3 Credits.
This class will explore the process of creating light specific show LUTs, various forms of cinematic lighting that prioritizes a predetermined postproduction workflows, and advanced editing techniques, compositing, and color correction in Davinci Resolve, as well as text, titling, and animation in both Fusion and After Effects.

AS.455.662. The Intersection of Sound & Visual Narrative. 3 Credits.
This course will explore the marriage of visual and audio crafts in the creation of narrative. We will work from the presupposition that sound and picture are intricately and inherently linked. The course will help students uncover the visual and audible elements of genre, mood, tone, and cinematic texture. Then, working through a series of introductory to medium level assignments, students will create initial MOS works that visually shape these cinematic modalities and develop audible landscapes that further define the intent and visual aesthetic of each piece. Through the incorporation of guest speakers, craft workshops featuring professionals in the audio field, and exploring professional post-production environments, the course will allow students to develop a fundamental proficiency in the intersection of sound and visual aesthetic and an understanding of the tools and methods used in their creation.

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.455.803. 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.