

semester **CINEMA**

COURSE OFFERINGS

WINTER-SPRING 2026



FOR MORE INFORMATION

**www.SemesterCinema.org or email Nicole Doerges
at nicoeldoerges@gmail.com.**

Semester Cinema – 2026 – Winter/Spring Film Intensive
Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* + Dashiell Hammett's *Red Harvest*
+ Documentary Feature (TBA)

Please review these descriptions to better understand how we'll organize our semester together. Feel free to ask questions or suggest ideas for any of the classes and workshops. Film and book lists will also be adjusted by faculty, as needed.

The Sundance Experience will be a field trip prior to the start of classes, to the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah.

Students will be required to take Core Courses and are expected to enroll in one Filmmaking Craft Workshop. Some might decide to switch Craft Workshops after a week – that's fine. During production, we try to support students, within limits, who want to rotate to an additional department for a portion of the time. Students who have a special interest in directing can also rotate out of their department into the Director's Circle for some days where they can shadow and consult with the director on choices, strategies and practices being employed to achieve filmmaking goals.

We will have a spring break from 5pm on Wednesday, March 11th to 5pm, Sunday, March 15th.

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FILMMAKING CRAFT WORKSHOPS (students choose one)

- * Page 30. Camera, Lights, Sound (2 credits)
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APPLICATION OF CREDITS

We provide guidance on how credits should be allocated – although individual schools and students may choose to allocate them differently. For example, some schools will allocate Film Production to the Arts, Film, or Studio Arts and others will call it Communications credit. Some credit could alternately be allocated to theater, since students' work in costumes, set building or stage management is relevant to theater study. Our screenwriting work could be allocated to English (creative writing) - or Humanities – since our story is based on literary work by Henrik Ibsen, three-time nominee for the Nobel Prize for Literature and Dashiell Hammett, in whose name America's most prestigious crime fiction writing award is given.

We see Cinema Studies as Humanities credit. Cultural Studies could be divided between Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences since we'll dig into the time, place, culture and politics of our stories and characters and their creators. We'll also survey a range of documentaries which we'll contextualize.

Our Craft Workshops can also be somewhat flexible. They are most applicable to film or theater credit, but we had a Middlebury College student who focused on historical contexts for our adaptation of Jack London's autobiographical novel set in 1909. She informed our screenwriting discussions – and contributed research for production design and costumes. She was able to claim some history credit for the specific work she did and how she reported it to both her home school faculty and a history professor we attached to our project.

Students sometimes undertake independent study with us, as well – focused on their particular interests and needs. For *Major Barbara*, a student examined how Shaw's satire compares with that of visual artists of the same period. Another was interested in looking at satire in theater during the period prior to Shaw – both in Europe and Latin America.

We work to accommodate student interests and to allow our curriculum to be somewhat elastic, as long as students specify the work they will undertake – and how it will be evaluated.

THE NARRATIVE STORY WE'LL FILM

We're currently working to develop our screenplay for the upcoming iteration. We'll continue to hold optional monthly Zoom meetings for students who would like to follow the progress, weigh in on specific scenes or the deliberations about the script as a whole. Students are also invited to submit written script notes or re-draft scenes and submit them for consideration.

We'll also produce a feature-length documentary during our time together – and students interested in documentary filmmaking will make it – and are invited to join our discussion on that film's subject. In 2024, we shot a feature-length doc about the housing crisis on Nantucket. That film is now starting to circulate to film festivals.

We want our narrative students to be aware of the work taking place on our documentary side. Likewise, we want documentary students to gain understanding about narrative. To that end, core courses will include each area of study, dialogue and screenings.

For our narrative film, we'll try something new, by merging two stories –Henrik Ibsen's Tony-winning play, *An Enemy of the People*, and Dashiell Hammett's acclaimed novel, *Red Harvest*.

Red Harvest is a 1929 thriller set in a small town consumed by still-festered conflicts between union activists and strikebreakers after a labor dispute. The novel is considered the very first example of writing that would lead to its identification in the “noir” genre – so-named by French film critics who discovered and loved American crime films, after World War II.

Red Harvest follows Hammett's recurring detective character "The Op," who is called into town to look into police force corruption being reported by a local newspaper editor. The first problem: the editor who called him in was murdered right before his arrival. The Op remains in town to investigate, thrusting himself into the town's political turmoil and, in the process, threatening his own life and sanity.

Written in 1882, *An Enemy of the People* tells the story of Dr. Thomas Stockmann, a physician who discovers that the water supply to his town's drinking reservoir and newly built bathhouse is contaminated. He acts immediately to inform his community about this urgent public health matter, and he sets out to expose the truth in the local newspaper - but he faces opposition from local leaders and his brother, the mayor, who are concerned that the revelation of the scandal could upset the status quo and even wipe the town from the map.

We love the action, suspense, noir mood and vivid characters in *Red Harvest*. We're drawn to the ideas of family and community and the rich, timely themes that include environmentalism, whistleblowing, risk-taking for something larger - and democracy - in *An Enemy of the People*. For our adaptation, we're inviting four of five characters from *An Enemy of the People* to enter the world and interact with characters from *Red Harvest*. Through each draft, we will draw them ever-deeper into a shared narrative world. We currently plan to set the film in 1957 – and we may shoot it in black-and-white. We see Dr. Stockmann as a woman – named Ebba.

An Enemy of the People has had two recent revivals: one in 2023 in London's West End starring Matt Smith (*Dr. Who*), and another in 2024, which was directed by Tony-winner Sam Gold (*Fun Home*). This Broadway production won Jeremy Strong (*Succession*) the Tony Award for Best Actor for his portrayal of Dr. Stockmann and received four additional Tony nominations.

Henrik Ibsen, who also authored *A Doll's House*, *Hedda Gabler* and *Peer Gynt*, is considered one of the most influential playwrights in Western literature and is known as “the father of

realism.” He is the most frequently performed dramatist after Shakespeare - and was nominated three times for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Dashiell Hammett’s name is closely associated with the advent of film noir, due to the adaptations of his work for films including *The Maltese Falcon*, *The Glass Key* and *The Thin Man*. Film noir is arguably the most influential and popular of all film genres. It was first identified by French film critics who couldn’t see American pictures during WWII. After the Nazi ban was lifted in 1945, French audiences feasted on a cornucopia of Hollywood gangster pictures marked by a darkened mood, taut suspense, femme fatales, clipped and pointed dialogue, and vivid, unpredictable characters haunted by skeletons in their closet.

Film noir was noted for its striking cinematography, often rendered in a stunning black-and-white inspired by German Expressionism. Favorite noir locations included wet nighttime streets and tense offices with shards of light filtered through venetian blinds.

American critics initially disparaged the early noirs that were frequently low-budget B-movies intended to screen as the second feature on a double bill. This was back in the days before television when more than 30 million Americans went to see movies every week. Hollywood worked overtime to keep up. Film noir articulated themes well-suited to modern times, as our society grappled with the aftermath of world war, the possibility of nuclear conflict, a loosened morality and inexplicable crime driven by greed and desperation in a dog-eat-dog universe. These films came of age at a time when existentialism – the philosophical movement that focused on the individual’s experience in the face of an uncertain existence - was also influential.

Red Harvest has yet to be made into a film, though there have been several attempts since its publication. Two-time Academy Award-winning writer and director Bernardo Bertolucci (*The Last Emperor*, *The Conformist*) wrote an adaptation in the 70s that had Robert Redford, Jack Nicholson, Warren Beatty up for the lead role, but the project faltered. Martin Scorsese also tried to take it on. Hammett’s writing has been a major source of inspiration for the Coen Brothers – Miller’s *Crossing* was inspired by *Red Harvest* and *The Glass Key* – as was Akira Kurosawa’s film, *Yojimbo*. Clint Eastwood’s character in Sergio Leone’s *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* and the other works in the *Dollars Trilogy* was inspired by Hammett’s *Continental Op*.

We’re excited by the creative and intellectual opportunities and challenges this hybrid story will present for our students and crew. Our key task is to make it resonate as something powerful, fully original – and timely.

OUR DOCUMENTARY PROJECTS

In addition to participating in our discussions of our narrative project, our documentary department undertakes a collaborative feature length documentary. The choice of subject matter will be decided once students are enrolled for the project. Students conduct research;

plan production; recruit and interview subjects; operate camera, sound, and lights (where needed); secure permissions and releases; and lead post-production. For 2024, the collaborative documentary investigated the housing crisis on the island of Nantucket, where average home costs are \$3.5 million. Students faced a number of challenges, including the fact that many people with vivid stories were reluctant to speak on camera, because of the precariousness of the housing situation – and the fear that, in such a small community, they could be stigmatized for revealing their personal circumstances. Despite this, the finished film is having a substantial impact – and has started playing film festivals and community screenings.

Students will also have the opportunity to make a short documentary of their choosing, that draws from their study of different modes of documentary production – including direct cinema, *cinéma vérité*, reflexive documentary, poetic documentary, investigative/activist documentary, essay film, mock documentary, or portrait documentary. Each of these documentary forms will be studied in class, including examples and theoretical placements of each within the documentary form and genre.

For this short documentary, students will have the choice of working individually or in a small group of two or three.

See the documentary craft workshop description for more information.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students should familiarize themselves with program policy on academic dishonesty before using any sources for your written work. This information will be provided in writing at the start of the semester. All written assignments handed in during the semester must be written by the student alone. Plagiarism is highly penalized and undesirable.

The Sundance Experience – SC324
1 credit – Core Course – Spring 2026

Faculty: Semester Cinema producers

Meeting Times: Sunday, January 25th through Sunday, February 1st.

Overview

This thread in our overall film intensive experience fully immerses students in the contemporary realm of independent filmmaking along with its analysis and criticism, through the daily screening of world-premiere short and feature length films, industry panels, and networking events at the pre-eminent American film event—the Sundance Film Festival.

We will begin our semester by meeting on Sunday, January 25th in Park City, Utah where students will have access to the full range of screenings of Sundance films, panels, and filmmaker Q & As. Semester Cinema will cover housing, \$30 in daily food per diems, \$360 in ticket allowances, and ground and air transportation from Park City, Utah to our learning and filming location in Massachusetts – where we'll travel on Sunday, February 1st.

Students will plan, prepare and navigate this complex and celebratory event, to select and screen films that will stimulate up-to-the-minute considerations of contemporary theory and practices of independent narrative and documentary filmmaking. Special attention should be paid to the application of screenplay, direction, performance, cinematography, production design, editing, music, and articulation of themes, while also applying critical thinking to the context questions of point of view, representation, access and equity – in the production of narrative and documentary films they see.

Students should compare notes and jointly navigate the many complexities of Sundance. You will be expected to keep a journal about your Sundance experience – and complete a written reflection on the films you see.

Film selections for the 2026 Sundance Film Festival will be posted online in early December 2025. We will discuss this event with students before then. You should thoroughly review this year's offerings and plan a strategy to see the films you favor. Take risks in your viewing decisions – and be prepared to alter your selections, to include second and even third choices, based on the tickets you'll be able to secure.

Goals for our Sundance week include:

- To have students navigate offerings by America's leading festival for independent and international films, to experience the festival's charged content and culture.

- To have students keep a diary of the week's experience and write an overall reflection to help them record and process their experience.

Course Requirements

- **Attend films:** Students will be expected to watch Sundance film screenings and/or workshops.
- **Keep and journal/diary:** Write about your daily screenings. Reflect on your immediate responses to films – and film elements you observe – in order to provide material for your summarizing written work.
- **Response paper:** Typically, this paper should provide a personal and detailed response to the films you've seen during our Sundance week. You will be provided with several prompts that will ask you to provide detailed critiques of films and compare specific filmic elements in your overall viewing experience. Take the reader into the world of the film and to specific moments that support your thesis. Cite cinematic elements that also illuminate your position. Critique aspects of cinematography, production design, direction, performance, editing, and music, where it can strengthen your presentation. Don't just re-tell the story—engage the elements that speak to you or fail to do so. Take chances with the ideas you put forward. Submit polished work that has undergone revision.

EVALUATION

Attendance/screening of films (60%)

Response paper (25%)

Written diary (15%)

Screenwriting and Directing: *An Enemy of the People* – SC325

3 credits – Core Course – Spring 2026

Faculty: Jay Craven

Meeting Times: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10am to 12pm – February 4th through March 11th.

Overview

This class stands at the center of our pre-production curriculum. This is where we come together to brainstorm, work, think out loud and enlarge the dialogue that motivates and propels everything we do.

First, we'll take a close and deep look at our story, described above and still in its development stage. Our task – to create a hybrid screenplay from two different works of literature will be challenging and – so far – a lot of fun.

Effective screenwriting requires an understanding of story structure and an ability to shape character, theme, tone, and incident to dramatic effect. Story is about character and, in our screenwriting, we'll work to build out multiple dimensions for each character, propelled by distinctive perspectives, intentions and drive. We need to engage each of these elements, to inform characters and relationships from the inside.

A film director takes the screenplay as a starting point for understanding these complex characters, motivations, and relationships. They use it as a blueprint for the production where they work to enlarge upon the script, to tell a resonant and original story. Directors keep in mind the need to create conditions that facilitate each of their collaborators' best work. Through these interactions with actors, the cinematographer, producers, production and costume designers, and key set personnel, the director works to draw everyone's best creative work into a unified and expressive whole.

We will examine and review the myriad practices and issues related to good screenwriting, using our draft *An Enemy of the People* screenplay – and ancillary research – to analyze, discuss, and revise story and character details and plan an efficient and imaginative film, within the limits of our production. Special consideration will be given to questions of character psychology and narrative perspective. Also, representations of race, class and gender, both in the writing and casting.

Directorial choices will inform our discussions, throughout. Once we're fully grounded in the script, students will fully join the brainstorming work – through a series of discussions and assignments - to imagine and discuss multiple approaches to directing each scene. We'll focus on questions of playable action, to help focus and motivate performance, character blocking,

to animate physical action for each scene, and strategies that advance character, story and theme.

Students will read and discuss relevant critical essays and interviews with leading film writers and directors, to better understand feature film theory and the range of possible cinematic approaches. Due to our substantial weekly meeting time, assignments will be largely completed during class. They will include the writing of script coverage, to identify screenplay strengths and weaknesses, as needed. Also, scene writing and revision, individually and in small groups, that will convene throughout the semester.

Student involvement in casting

From this Screenwriting and Directing class, student volunteers will also organize and attend casting sessions so that others can view audition tapes and participate in casting decisions. Students will also play a role in coordinating and facilitating actor call-backs, videotaping of auditions, and work with our casting director and actors' agents.

Director and film department preparation

We will also review location photos and the paintings, film clips, and photo images that inform discussions between director, cinematographer, and production designer, as the film's proposed look takes shape. Wednesday production meetings will carry these discussions further, into the nuts and bolts of production strategy, planning, and implementation. Film department heads will join these discussions. Students will join these meetings to report progress in their pre-production work.

Our *An Enemy of the People* project is intended as a transparent process where students and professionals share in the discussions that develop each step of the production. This class will serve as the gathering place for those ideas—and a meeting place to better understand each other.

Students will be expected to participate substantially in the class dialogues, that will form the core of classroom activity. Using this model, our goal is to build substantial and ever-evolving dialogues rooted in students' own lived and learned experience, study, and personal views - to generate individual and shared consciousness and understanding. Students advance as this dialogue develops and expands. We all progress together and no one who participates is left behind. We end up at a different place, each week, from where we started.

This dialogue is key – to advance our extensive collaboration that will be required to achieve our goal of full participation in our production. Frame your arguments, offer your voice, trust your instincts, listen to what others say, and incorporate the new ideas at each session into your own work and the work of your department.

Students will also work in small groups to develop producible scripts for their own short narrative films (see Student Short Filmmaking below). We'll stage a student film festival to showcase these films.

Classes will meet as a whole – and break into smaller groups, to deliberate relevant script, story and directing issues. Each class session will track new developments, to thoroughly and extensively discuss creative and logistical choices as we work to advance production.

Our goals include these:

- To use our critiques and deep examinations of our proposed screenplay to illustrate screenwriting principals in practice. Our plan is to advance screenwriting skills and understanding “from the inside out” – rather than the reverse. We do this under the exigencies of casting and imminent production.
- To cultivate student voices by launching a sustained dialogue that visits and re-visits each script sequence along with overall world-building, themes, characters and story through lines - to the point where this process becomes second nature to students, in ways that improve writing and filmmaking skills.
- To learn the process of effective script coverage, where students learn to analyze scripts, write concise synopses, and offer clear comments on issues of concept, structure, tone, dialogue and more. Also, to be able to present your coverage in a dialogue with the class.
- To get students so deeply imbedded into the details of our script, that their production work will be informed and guided by it—so that they may see, first-hand, the transformation of script to film where each addition of actors, locations, costumes, production design, and directorial choices enlarge our story and reveal the metamorphosis that production makes possible.
- To imagine directorial approaches to each scene – and the choices that can be made to facilitate effective performance and motivated visual storytelling.
- To study and discuss the work and authorial perspective of Henrik Ibsen and Dashiell Hammett, the writer of the original *An Enemy of the People* play – and *Red Harvest* novel.
- To use the casting process to further advance our consideration of screenwriting and direction, through the viewing and discussion of audition tapes and actors' reels.
- To include representations of race, gender, class and disability in our discussions and considerations of character and story – casting and production.

Readings and Screenings

The ever-evolving script will be our core document for active critique, debate, discussion and revision. We will also examine excerpts, where relevant, from these sources:

Our An Enemy of the People screenplay
Chinatown screenplay (Robert Towne)
The Big Sleep screenplay (William Faulkner, Raymond Chandler, Leigh Brackett)
Maltese Falcon screenplay (John Huston, Dashiell Hammett)
Double Indemnity screenplay (Raymond Chandler, Billy Wilder, James Cain)
Succession screenplay (Armstrong)
Blood Simple screenplay (Coens)
Lady Bird screenplay (Gerwig)
The Cambridge Companion to Ibsen (James McFarlane)
Film Noir (Alain Silver and James Ursini)
The Politics of Red Harvest (J.A. Zumoff)
Dashiell Hammett's Social Vision (Robert Shulman)
An Enemy of the People – Ibsen's Reluctant Comedy (Harold Knutson)
Liberalism and Its Discontents – Ibsen's Politics in An Enemy of the People (Sally Ledger)
Ibsen's An Enemy of the People – Teaching Toward An Ethical Sensibility (Peter Kahn)
Moviemakers' Master Class (Tirard)
Directing Actors (Weston)
A Film Director's Intuition (Weston)
Film Production Theory (Geuens)
Directing: Film Techniques and Aesthetics (Rabiger)

Course Requirements

- **Attend class:** Attendance is critical. Two unexcused absences will lead to a reduction of your final grade. Three or more unexcused absences will lead to failure.
- **Be prepared for class:** Complete all assignments on time and be prepared to discuss them.
- **Assignments** will include written 1) scene revisions; 2) script coverage; 3) directing notes; and 4) a final analytical paper that discusses *An Enemy of the People* story, characters, and theme – with specific focus on screenplay and directorial approaches
- **Script coverage and analysis** should provide a personal and detailed response to the material and should include your thoughts on 1) story structure, 2) thematic development, 3) characters and relationships, 4) dialogue, 5) visual articulation and unity, 6) mood and tone, and 7) setting. Be sure to include any notes for improvement. A good script should work to unify and make consistent all of these elements. Take the reader into the world of the film as it is articulated by the screenplay – and cite the script's strengths and weaknesses as they apply to each of these areas. Work to engage the script on its own terms. We will share script coverage in class, as part of our dialogue-building work focused on *An Enemy of the People*.
- **For your proposed revisions to the *An Enemy of the People* script,** tune your ear to character voices and work to advance story themes. Be mindful of mood and texture

and visual keys to tell the story. Animate characters within each scene to produce outcomes that enlarge or change existing dynamics to move the story forward. Show, don't tell, wherever possible. Identify what you believe to be weaknesses to our script and draft material to make individual scenes better and more resonant. Provide us with new perspectives on character, story, and theme.

EVALUATION

Attendance, preparation & participation in classes and production meetings (60%)

Written work and presentations (40%)

Cinema Studies: Contextualizing *An Enemy of the People* – SC326

FILMH 3981-R

2 credits – Core Course – Spring 2026

Faculty: Jay Craven and guest curators

Meeting Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6pm to 9pm – February 2nd through March 10th.

Overview

Our production of *An Enemy of the People* prompts a variety of thoughts about films that explore similar - or contrasting - narrative constructions, characters and relationships, mood, tone, time, and place. We'll watch films that prompt discussions about these elements - and explore themes linked to the world we're creating for our film. We also want to look at examples of character that can help us contextualize our own range of players.

This class will allow us to explore a number of these ideas, through our imaginative consideration of films that invite far-ranging discussion. Each session will foster expanded dialogue that interrogates and re-visits each film screened — to connect our discussion to our own planned film. As in the Screenwriting and Directing class, the process of generating dialogue is key to the learning process – and students are both welcomed and expected to participate.

For each film we view, we'll examine how each director chooses to employ film language and aesthetics to express their picture's meaning. We'll pay special attention to the role of women in noir – since we've got a female protagonist. And we'll look at the shaping and articulating roles played in each film, by cinematography, production design, lighting, editing, direction, performance, and sound. Written materials, including weekly hand-outs of reviews and scholarly writing will be distributed to advance our discussion and critical writing.

Class discussions and writing will address issues of character motivation and psychology, visual storytelling strategies, and representations of gender, race and class. We'll also focus on filmmakers that effectively built a world and created characters that resemble what we're working to create, while digging into the larger related issues under consideration. We'll note any of these films that effectively advanced cinematic language and articulated enduring themes within their genre – and what this means for how we might approach our own film.

Planned Screenings (films will be chosen from among the following):

- * *The Big Sleep* (Hawks)
- * *Reckless Moment* (Ophuls)
- * *They Live By Night* (Ray)
- * *On Dangerous Ground* (Ida Lupino)
- * *Spellbound* (Hitchcock)
- * *Kiss Me Deadly* (Aldrich)

- * *Chinatown* (Polanski)
- * *Red Rock West* (Dahl)
- * *Maltese Falcon* (Huston)
- * *Mulholland Drive* (Lynch)
- * *Notorious* (Hitchcock)
- * *Blood Simple* (Coen)
- * *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (Garnett)
- * *The Hitchhiker* (Lupino)
- * *Touch of Evil* (Welles)
- * *Sunset Boulevard* (Wilder)
- * *Bitter Rice* (De Santis)
- * *Bob Le Flambeur* (Melville)
- * *Elevator to the Gallows* (Malle)
- * *Le Samourai* (Melville)
- * *Diva* (Beineix)
- * *Hedda Gabler* (Coleman)
- * *A Doll's House* (Losey)
- * *The Life and Work of Henrik Ibsen* (Hossick)
- * *An Enemy of the People* (Schaefer)

Books (selections from)

- * *Not Hollywood: American Independent Film at the Twilight of the American Dream* (Ortner)
- * *Notes on Cinematography* (Bresson)
- * *Femme Noir: Bad Girls of Film* (Karen Burroughs Hannsberry)
- * *Film Noir* (Alain Silver and James Ursini)

Periodicals

The New Yorker
 The New York Times
 Chicago Reader
 Sight and Sound
 Village Voice
 LA Weekly
 Los Angeles Times
 Film Comment
 Cineaste
 Criterion Collection essays

Goals

- To screen films that prompt dialogue, debate, and reflection on our own planned film project – its themes, story, characters, artistic approach, period setting, representations of class, race and gender – and more.

- To familiarize students with a range of films that they have not previously seen or considered.
- To include a selection of international films to further enhance students' knowledge of world cinema.
- To improve students' critical writing skills through assignments that require them to shape and articulate their experiences of viewing, discussion and reading of associated reviews and papers.

Course Requirements

- **Attend class:** Due to the condensed nature of the class, attendance at each and every meeting is critical. Two unexcused absences will lead to a reduction of your final grade. Four or more unexcused absences will lead to failure.
- **Be prepared for class:** screen all films and read all the assignments by the day due and come to class prepared to discuss them. Class discussions will dig into film themes, characters, and narrative – along with cinematic elements of camera, lights, sound, music, production design, editing, direction, and performance. These discussions will inform our work on *An Enemy of the People* so each student should participate actively in dialogues to enlarge our conversation of our own work as well as the film studied.
- **Final Exam:** A final exam will ask you to discuss questions particular to the films we've viewed and studied. It will also direct you to answer critical questions that call for comparisons between the pictures viewed and our own screenplay for *An Enemy of the People*. Take the reader into the world of the films you discuss - and to specific moments that support your thesis. Cite cinematic elements that also illuminate your position. Critique aspects of direction, production design, cinematography, performance, editing, and music, where it can strengthen your presentation. Don't just retell the story—engage the elements that speak to you or fail to do so. Take chances with the ideas you put forward. Submit polished work that has undergone revision.

EVALUATION

Attendance & participation (70%)

Written exam (30%)

**Cultural Studies: Contextualizing *An Enemy of the People*
And Exploring the Impact of Documentary Cinema - SC327
Scholars and Visiting Artists Join Our Dialogue
2 credits – Core Course – Spring 2026**

Faculty: Caitlin Boyle and Jay Craven

Meeting Times: Fridays, 9am to 12pm – February 6th through March 6th.

Overview

As it does for cinema studies, our production of *An Enemy of the People* prompts interdisciplinary considerations of 20th and 21st century history, politics, and culture. This class will employ analytical techniques and interpretive strategies commonly employed in cultural studies – that invite us to explore what it was that influenced Henrik Ibsen and Dashiell Hammett to write *An Enemy of the People* and *Red Harvest* – and how their views and themes apply to today, across narrative and documentary film.

Consistent with our emphasis on in-class dialogue that works to enlarge our experience and understanding of our own screenplay and production, we will host visiting scholars and artists, each week, to explore with us the history, politics, culture and narrative themes that help to illuminate these explorations of Western and American culture and their relationship to environmentalism, politics, democracy, corruption, labor struggles, small towns and more. We will also invite respected figures who can engage us in a larger discussion of that can be employed to enhance our work.

Written and filmed materials will be circulated in advance of each session. Students will be expected to prepare at least two questions that they would like answered by our guests. We will review these questions in advance of our guest visits – and students will be invited to ask those questions, directly, during our sessions.

Through these weekly dialogues, students will investigate varied dimensions of culture, history, theory, practice, and technique and apply what we learn to our own story. Our goal is to advance understanding and discussion – and identify “big ideas” that further expand our dialogue about our own narrative and documentary film projects – and how they reflect the life and times that inform and shape our stories.

For contextualization of *An Enemy of the People*

Special guest prospects we’re talking to include climate activist, Middlebury College professor and writer, **Bill McKibben** (*The Flag, The Cross and The Station Wagon, The End of Nature, Wandering Home.*); **Christian Appy**, military scholar and writer (*Working Class War: American Combat Soldier and Vietnam, American Reckoning: The Vietnam War and Our National Identity*) and founding director of the Daniel Ellsberg Initiative at University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Ellsberg was one of the most prominent whistleblowers of the 20th

century, for his release of the *Pentagon Papers* that revealed massive misconduct and manipulation of information related to every aspect of Vietnam War decision making by political and military leaders; **Olivia Noble Grant**, president of the Ibsen Society of America; **Giuliano D'Amico**, director of the Centre for Ibsen Studies, Stockholm; **Mark T. Conard** (writer, *The Philosophy of Film Noir*); **Sally Cline** (author, *Dashiell Hammett: Man of Mystery*); **Sally Ledger** (author, *Liberalism and Its Discontents – Ibsen's Politics in An Enemy of the People*); **Paul Lindholdt** (author, *Greening the Dramatic Canon: Henrik Ibsen's An Enemy of the People*); and **Robert Shulman** (author, *Dashiell Hammett's Social Vision*).

We'll also stage a two-day film scoring workshop with our longtime musical collaborators, **Judy Hyman** and **Jeff Claus**. The artists will explain the process of film scoring and explore ideas for our own musical score, using students found and shared musical compositions that inspire them - to plant seeds for our score.

For continued dialogues through documentary

We will screen six documentaries curated by celebrated documentary film producer and consultant - and director of the Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival, **Caitlin Boyle**, who will convene dialogues with emerging independent documentary filmmakers whose work we screen. Caitlin organized a dynamic and illuminating documentary section for Semester Cinema 2024 - and we're excited to bring her back, since our program also includes an ambitious documentary film production. Films and filmmakers will be announced closer to our meeting times, based on availability.

The real-world issues explored in our documentary project will inform our narrative project, just as the history and politics of our narrative will inform our documentary. So, these screenings will not only immerse students in the worlds of modern documentary filmmaking and distribution - they will broaden and deepen our discussion of significant themes, expose students to various filmmaking approaches, and ultimately enrich the cultural and technical understanding needed for the success of both of the semester's productions.

Readings will include excerpts from books and papers including:

The Philosophy of Film Noir (Mark T. Conard)

Dashiell Hammett: Man of Mystery (Sally Cline)

The Cambridge Companion to Ibsen (James McFarlane)

The Politics of Red Harvest (J.A. Zumoff)

Dashiell Hammett's Social Vision (Robert Shulman)

An Enemy of the People – Ibsen's Reluctant Comedy (Harold Knutson)

Liberalism and Its Discontents – Ibsen's Politics in An Enemy of the People (Sally Ledger)

Ibsen's An Enemy of the People – Teaching Toward An Ethical Sensibility (Peter Kahn)

Goals

- To expand the social, political, and cultural contexts we consider as we create our own films.

- To enhance students' understanding of the theory and practice of narrative and documentary filmmaking.
- To strengthen student skills in analysis and interpretation of films, written materials and spoken dialogues that explore the place, times, cultures and creators of our stories.
- To prepare for conversation with our guest scholars and filmmakers – and participate actively in our weekly dialogues with them.

Course Requirements

- **Attend class:** Due to the condensed nature of the class, attendance at each and every meeting is critical. Two unexcused absences will lead to a reduction of your final grade. Four or more unexcused absences will lead to failure.
- **Be prepared for class:** Read all the assignments before our guest dialogues and come to class with at least two questions prepared for them.

EVALUATION

Attendance & participation (60%)

Presentation of weekly questions for our guests (40%)

Student Short Filmmaking – Narrative or Documentary – SC330
Preparation and Development for Student Short Films
2 credit – Core Course – Spring 2026

Faculty: Nicole Doerges and Max Zevon-Powell

Meeting Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10am to 12pm – February 3rd through February 26th and additional meetings during the first two weeks of classes.

Overview

Directors, actors, and creative department heads form a crucial collaborative web for any narrative film production, developing a personal mode of communication and building trust as they navigate the distinctive landscape of a screenplay that can often be interpreted in a variety of ways.

Similarly, documentary filmmakers also shape a planned film through communication and trust-building, both among collaborators and between filmmakers and their subjects.

Like every other fruitful partnership in production, these relationships depend on conversations that are imaginative, simple and direct. Effective filmmakers, especially on smaller-scale sets, create fertile conditions where everyone can raise questions, take risks, and rely on one another to achieve a common goal. For an inventive team of filmmakers, it is impossible to “know” what is being sought. It is only possible to discover it, working together.

This course will foster relationships between student filmmakers, student actors, student writers and directors, and student department heads as they work to produce a short film capable of being shot within the limited confines of local locations, available equipment, and a casting pool of their peers.

For students working on short narratives, you will be grouped and will be provided with writing prompts and/or source material from which you will produce an original and effective short film script in the genre of your choice. In addition to an overview of production logistics and timelines, class discussion will center techniques and approaches for direction and performance that yield imaginative, multi-layered articulations of character and character dynamics.

Each group will develop a script, cast from among their fellow students (and available locals), prepare a production strategy, apply cinematography, production design, and costuming choices and aesthetics, and shoot their film. Pre-production and production efforts aim to conclude by February 15th.

Documentary students will work to develop a project focus and production plan that can be implemented during the same time frame – by February 15th. As in the narrative section, you

will have access to mentors and resources to facilitate your production and enhance your learning experience.

Classes will include group dialogue – and review our work-in-progress material, allowing for critique of each project at various stages in its production. Film professionals will serve as mentors, offering logistical and narrative guidance during development, supporting and overseeing production, and leading group discussion as post-production continues through the semester. The finished films aim to be presented by March 13th.

Students who participate as actors in this course will be encouraged to prepare to audition for several roles in our *An Enemy of the People* production and attend, organize, and evaluate casting sessions with professional actors, in New York and locally, if they so choose.

Readings

Directing Actors (Weston)

A Practical Handbook for the Actor (Bruder and Cohn)

A Film Director's Intuition (Weston)

An Enemy of the People – screenplay

Other selected screenplays, TBA.

For the documentary section:

Directing the Documentary (Rabiger)

Goals

- To provide students with opportunities to develop skills, insights and instincts in the work of directing and producing.
- For documentary projects, to provide students with opportunities to brainstorm, plan, and develop appropriate films, given the time period available to organize and shoot.
- For narrative projects, to focus on the development and performance of multi-dimensional characters. And to emphasize the value of “playable action” as a method to achieve truthful and animated performance.
- To discuss and study theory of acting and of both narrative and documentary directing, according to your respective projects – and to apply these in practice.
- To facilitate production of students’ own short films during the semester.

Course Requirements

- **Attend class:** Due to the condensed nature of the class, attendance at each and every meeting is critical. Performances will be staged and discussed throughout each class, each week. Two unexcused absences will lead to a reduction of your final grade. Three or more unexcused absences will lead to failure.

- **Be prepared for class:** Complete all assignments by the day due and come to class prepared to perform assigned scenes and discuss them.
- **Script analysis** will be required for each class, for narrative projects, providing student actors and directors with personal ways to approach and perform a scene. Readings and discussions will explore a variety of ways students can “get inside” their character, to better understand scene intentions and dynamics.
- **Subject review, project planning and cinematic approaches** will be required for documentary projects, to ensure imaginative story development and effective time and resource utilization.
- **Performers, directors, and crew members** will be evaluated, based on preparation, imagination, flexibility, and truthful articulation of character and in the case of documentaries, subject matter and treatment.

EVALUATION

Attendance & participation in weekly classes and performances (60%)

Quality of preparation, direction, and/or performance (40%)

Director's Circle – Narrative
1 credit – Elective Course – Spring 2026

Faculty: Jay Craven and visitors

Meeting time: Fridays, 2pm to 4pm – February 5th through March 12th.

Overview

This course will initiate a dialogue about the practice of film directing – in general – and in ways that are specific to our production of *An Enemy of the People*. Gatherings will include discussions of our progress with our narrative project and how Jay, as director, prepares, collaborates, casts, makes script adjustments – and approaches the work required to make *An Enemy of the People* into a resonant and entertaining film.

We will involve Semester Cinema department heads in our discussion – to explore the nature and specifics of production for this project. And we'll read interviews with leading directors, to learn about their approach to the challenges and opportunities of film directing. We'll notice how each director is different, just as every actor and department is different, in terms of how they approach their work – and collaborate. Students will be invited to discuss their own short films, which they can screen for the group.

Students will also be invited to direct scenes with student actors, to bring our subtext, meaning and original characterization.

During production, this course takes a new form, with students rotating from their respective departments to shadow the director, gaining further exposure and engagement with the work and craft of narrative film directing.

Our entire program is oriented from a directorial point of view. This class will lay the groundwork for further exploration of all this and will provide students with the opportunity to offer their views on possible approaches and techniques.

Film Production – *An Enemy of the People* – SC331

6 Credits – Core Course – Spring 2026

Faculty: Students will be mentored by our diverse crew of professional craftspeople / department heads.

Meeting Times: Five days a week, 7am to 7pm – March 23rd through May 1st.

Overview

The main goal of this six-week intensive is to immerse students into the theory and collaborative practice of narrative feature film production. Based on their specific interests and faculty evaluations for their pre-production work and study, each student will be assigned to a department and position(s) that are appropriate to their interests and skills.

These assignments will be made in the interests of maximizing each student's learning potential and substantive participation—and to ensure the effective production of *An Enemy of the People*.

Production

The film production will be organized into a 25 to 30 day shooting schedule for principal photography, plus approximately 5 days of second unit photography, performed simultaneously. The *An Enemy of the People* crew will include approximately 30 professionals mentoring and working alongside approximately 40 students working as camera operators, script supervisors, sound boom operators, production coordinator, wardrobe supervisor, set dressers, editors, assistant directors, prop masters, second assistant camera, location managers, and other vital positions.

The film's cast will be determined early in the semester, with students organizing casting sessions and outreach to agents, managers, and our casting director. Students will also be invited to audition for film roles. If their work demonstrates ability and imagination, consistent with that shown by auditioning professionals, students will be cast, as they have been in each of our previous films.

Students will be expected to arrive on set at the designated call time each day and to work with their department and department heads to organize, prepare, and carry out the shooting assignments indicated on that day's call sheet. They will also be responsible for the daily wrap for their department.

Students will receive close mentoring from professionals and will be expected to develop skills, responsibilities, and accountabilities as working peers in their department and as part of the creative community developed during the class, workshop, and pre-production period for this very ambitious project. Our shared goal is for you to “own” substantial parts of the

narrative of our production. Students will also be expected to understand and practice industry standard set etiquettes, as explained and demonstrated during pre-production.

Goals

- To create a healthy creative community for the production of narrative feature films that grows directly out of our experience of learning, dialogue and pre-production.
- To foster an effective and imaginative collaboration where each participant owns a substantial part of something larger than any of us.
- To place students in fruitful learning environments led by professional mentors and facilitated by fellow students and other professionals – where the students participate as working peers in the overall group.
- To foster student voice and imagination for specific acts of creative work and the execution of our logistical plan.
- To make a good film – that reaches audiences and changes conversations about the history, culture and themes explored in our narrative.
- To culminate the entire semester’s experience of learning, dialogue and preparation – in a manner that fulfills 20th Century education philosopher John Dewey’s inspired call for “intensive learning that enlarges meaning through shared experience and joint action.”

Course Requirements

- **Attend daily production sessions:** Due to the critical importance of each crew member, attendance and full participation on set is critical. We have never before seen student absences during production. One unexcused absence will lead to a reduction of your final grade. Three or more unexcused absences will lead to failure.
- **Work with your team:** Work with your department head and fellow crew and students to ensure effective operation of your production unit. Each production job is essential to the overall coordinated production. Ask questions and communicate any concerns or needs. Your department head will contribute to the deciding of your grade in this section since he will be responsible for the overall performance of your team.
- **Be prepared:** Read the daily call sheet and work with mentors to ensure your effective participation in your department. Be proactive; anticipate production needs. A department member who has to be pushed is not working effectively.
- **Keep a production diary:** Record your experiences through diary entries that provide a specific first-person account of your work on the film. Include perspectives on how you see the film taking shape, based on your experience and previous film study. Note

details of your participation in pre-production work, script revisions, classes, workshops, and observations of casting, budget, and departmental preparations.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Students will be expected to thoroughly understand the completed *An Enemy of the People* script, including any colored page revisions, as they relate to the work of their department.

EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated based on their daily preparation, performance, collaboration and effectiveness as team members—and for their individual skills and development during production. Each student will also be graded on the quality of their production diary and final written account that articulates their experience of the shoot.

Film Production – Documentary Projects – SC332**6 Credits – Core Course –Spring 2026****Faculty:** Kahane Cooperman, Akiva Henig, and Jasper Clark Craven**Meeting Times:** Five days a week, 7am to 7pm – March 23rd through May 1st.**Overview**

The main goal of this six-week intensive is to immerse students into the theory and collaborative practice of documentary feature film production. Based on their specific interests and faculty evaluations for their pre-production work and study, each student will be assigned roles essential to the development, production and post-production of a feature length documentary film.

For more information, consult the documentary section of the Craft Workshop descriptions – since this documentary section will start work during pre-production and simply expand its continuing operation during this six-week production period.

Production

The film's subject matter – and overall direction will be decided by enrolled students – at their earliest possible opportunity. These discussions will begin prior to the start of classes – with an emphasis being on full involvement in this process of planning and selection.

Students will work in all areas of planning, production and post-production – and they will be expected to arrive on set at the designated call time each day and to work with their department heads to organize, prepare, and carry out the shooting assignments indicated on that day's call sheet. They will also be responsible for the daily wrap for their department.

Students will receive close mentoring from professionals and will be expected to develop skills, responsibilities, and accountabilities as working peers in this department and as part of the creative community developed during the class, workshop, and pre-production period for this ambitious project. Our shared goal is for you to “own” substantial parts of the narrative of our production. Students will also be expected to understand and practice industry standard documentary filmmaking etiquettes and protocols, as explained and demonstrated during pre-production.

Various student short documentary projects may also be developed and completed during this six-week production phase.

Goals

- To create a healthy creative community for the production of both shorts and a documentary feature film that grows directly out of our experience of learning, dialogue and pre-production.

- To foster an effective and imaginative collaboration where each participant owns a substantial part of something larger than any of us.
- To place students in fruitful learning environments led by professional mentors and facilitated by fellow students and other professionals – where the students participate as working peers in the overall group.
- To foster student voice and imagination for specific acts of creative work and the execution of our logistical plan.
- To make a good film – that reaches audiences and changes conversations about the history, culture and themes explored in our films.
- To culminate the entire semester’s experience of learning, dialogue and preparation – in a manner that fulfills 20th Century education philosopher John Dewey’s inspired call for “intensive learning that enlarges meaning through shared experience and joint action.”

Course Requirements

- **Attend daily production sessions:** Due to the critical importance of each crew member, attendance and full participation on set is critical. We have never before seen student absences during production. One unexcused absence will lead to a reduction of your final grade. Three or more unexcused absences will lead to failure.
- **Work with your team:** Work with your department head and fellow crew and students to ensure effective operation of your production unit. Each production job is essential to the overall coordinated production. Ask questions and communicate any concerns or needs. Your department head will contribute to the deciding of your grade in this section since he will be responsible for the overall performance of your team.
- **Be prepared:** Read the daily call sheet and work with mentors to ensure your effective participation in your department. Be proactive; anticipate production needs. A department member who has to be pushed is not working effectively.
- **Keep a production diary:** Record your experiences through diary entries that provide a specific first-person account of your work on the film. Include perspectives on how you see the film taking shape, based on your experience and previous film study. Note details of your participation in pre-production work, classes, workshops, and observations of research, budgeting, scheduling and footage compilation.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Students will be expected to thoroughly understand the production plan and schedules for successful advancement and completion of our documentary film projects.

EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated based on their daily preparation, performance, collaboration and effectiveness as team members—and for their individual skills and development during production. Each student will also be graded on the quality of their production diary and final written account that articulates their experience of the shoot.

FILMMAKING CRAFT WORKSHOPS

Students choose the department that interests them – for study, skills development, and application of these skills to pre-production and production for our film. We provide some room for switching departments, during the first week – and for rotating into a couple of departments, depending on your crew position. We work to be flexible.

Students interested in directing may rotate in and out of their departments to occasionally join the Director's Circle where they will sit by the film's director, to gain insight and provide input to ongoing deliberations. Each department will meet three times a week in three-hour sessions. Additional meetings and assignments will also be specified, as needed for the production.

ALSO: Please note our production's need for excellent **STILL PHOTOGRAPHY**. We will not convene a class for this but are hoping that one or two students will identify their interest in taking fabulous stills for our production. A student photographer can enroll in whatever craft workshop they desire – and also prepare for taking stills as a part of the production. We will provide an appropriate mentorship for our still photographer(s) and also ensure close communication and collaboration with the director and the director of photography. Please speak to Jay Craven if you are considering working in this capacity. And check out our production stills by Hamilton student Mariano Russo, from our 2024 production of *Major Barbara*: <https://mnrussobfcf.myportfolio.com/major-barbara-stills>.

Here are the departments – syllabi follow.

- Camera, Lights, Sound
- Producing & Production Management
- Production Design & Art Direction
- Costume Design
- Editing & Post-Production
- Documentary Planning & Production

Camera, Lights, Sound – *An Enemy of the People* – SC332

2 credits – Elective Workshop Course – Spring 2026

Faculty and mentors: David Dolnik

Meeting Times: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1pm to 5pm – February 16th through March 11th – and as needed for pre-production assignments.

Overview

Cinematography is positioned at the center of narrative feature film production. The Director of Photography (DP) manages a large crew that must be mobilized to facilitate each shot, each lighting scenario, and each staging of essential equipment used to shape the light for each frame of the film. The DP is the film director's closest collaborator for the overall goal of realizing a coherent vision for telling the story of the film.

This class will examine the role and specific practice of the cinematographer. We'll thoroughly review questions of shot composition, lighting strategies, camera exposures, visual language, cinematic aesthetics, scene coverage, visual storytelling, shot lists, visual continuity, shot matching, and more. Special attention will also be paid to each position within the camera, lighting, and grip departments, where each crew member performs an essential task, in sync with each other and the production as a whole.

The main goal of this production class is to immerse students into the theory and practice of cinematography and lighting for narrative feature film production. Based on student participation, specific interests, and faculty evaluations for their pre-production work and study, each student will be assigned to a position within the camera, grip, and electric departments according to his/her interests and skills. These assignments will be made in the interests of maximizing each student's learning potential—and to ensuring the effective production of *An Enemy of the People*.

Students working in this department will be assigned to positions and/or rotations including camera operators, 1st and 2nd assistant camera, second unit director of photography, second unit assistant camera, second unit 2nd assistant camera, clapper/loader, best boy grip, 3rd grip, 3rd electric, grip/electric swing, and sound boom operator. They will be expected to know these positions and their role within the feature film unit, for effective placement and performance of camera, lights, grip equipment, and sound—and to facilitate efficient and time-effective production. Students will be encouraged to ask questions and collaborate alongside professionals who will be expected to be clear and supportive mentors.

Readings (selections)

Masters of Light (Schaefer)

Three C's of Cinematography (Mascelli)

Cinematography: Theory and Practice (Brown)

Motion Picture and Video Lighting (Brown)

Master Shots (Kenworthy)

Cinematography for Directors (Frost)

Films - TBA

Goals

- To enhance student abilities in the areas of visual storytelling.
- To teach specific skills and practices in camera operation, sound recording, lighting and grip procedures and familiarize students with department organization, practices, operations and protocols
- To involve students in discussions about the planning and execution of shot lists, camera coverage, lighting set-up and grip department practices like preparations for special effects, dolly shots and more.
- To visit film locations for the consideration of camera placements, scene blocking and the maximization of locations for effective camera coverage.
- To prepare an effective team to carry out the work of camera, grip and electric departments during production.

Course Requirements

- **Attend class:** Due to the condensed nature of the class, attendance at each and every meeting is critical. Two unexcused absences will lead to a reduction of your final grade. Three or more unexcused absences will lead to failure.
- **Be prepared for class:** Complete all assignments and shooting assignments by the day they're due and come to class prepared to present and discuss them.
- **Work done outside of class:** Department mentor will determine assignments and any out-of-class work.

EVALUATION

Attendance & participation (65%)

Assignments and presentation (35%)

Producing & Production Management – *An Enemy of the People* – SC333

2 Credits – Elective Workshop Course – Spring 2026

Faculty: Deborah Sims, Carl Fieler, and Mark Farrell.

Meeting Times: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1pm to 5pm – February 16th through March 11th – and as needed for pre-production assignments.

Overview

Effective production management ensures the ability to achieve creative and logistical goals and objectives for the film shoot. Everyone on this team is crucial to the daily management of operations, allocation of resources, and maintenance of schedule and organization. The goal of this seven-week intensive is to immerse students into the theory and collaborative practice of narrative feature film production. In this class we will discuss, read about, and practice the responsibilities of a:

- Line producer
- Assistant directors
- Production assistants
- Location managers
- Script Supervisor
- Production coordinator
- Casting director and assistants
- Transportation coordinator

Topics to be covered will be extensive and will include:

- Breaking down a script
- Casting
- Scouting and securing locations
- Budgeting
- Scheduling
- Cash flow management
- Set operations
- Shot listing
- Development of daily call sheets
- Effective motivation of production personnel to advance the daily and weekly goals of feature filmmaking.

We will also focus on the various demands of running a production from idea conception and script development through casting, pre-production, production, post-production, and distribution. The entire set of learning objectives will be drawn from established practice and applied to the production of *An Enemy of the People*.

Students will develop skills and working relationships that will carry them into production where they will play substantial roles in the production management section. During pre-production, students will also carry out hundreds of specific tasks that will mobilize the resources and set the organizational needs, parameters and schedules of production. Students in this section will also need to learn and help to teach set etiquette practices to others on the production team.

Required Texts

Students will be expected to thoroughly understand the completed *An Enemy of the People* script, including any colored page revisions, as they relate to the work of the production management department. We will also read and discuss *Producer to Producer* by Maureen A. Ryan.

Goals

- Orient students to the role of production management as the organizational hub of any production. Included: a description and hands-on demonstration of each position and its workflow.
- To teach the theory of production and set management and apply the actual running of a large set with nearly 70 crew members and a large cast – with students working in substantial positions to shape and manage each day's workflow and outcome.
- To learn and practice skills of budgeting, scheduling, organization, procurement, resource allocation and management, combined with the essential qualities of flexibility, resilience, diligence, focus, patience, stamina, generosity, resourcefulness, grace, diplomacy and imagination - as key ingredients for effective film and theater producing.

Course Requirements

- **Attend every class:** This course is an essential part of your core course requirements—and to the pre-production for *An Enemy of the People*. You are expected to attend all classes, additional meetings and field trips. If you miss a class for religious, family or medical reasons, you must e-mail the instructors with as much notice as possible. Two unexcused absences will lead to a full letter reduction of your final grade. Three or more unexcused absences will lead to a failing grade.
- **Class Participation:** You are required to be on time and prepared at the start of class. You are expected to participate in class discussion, additional meetings and have all assignments completed on the date requested. Late submissions will lead to a reduction of your final grade.

EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated based on their daily preparation, performance, collaboration and effectiveness as team members—and for their knowledge of materials studied, lectures, and demonstrations—and for the development of their individual skills and the impact of their

work during pre-production. As students emerge into different jobs, in preparation for production, they will also be evaluated for how effectively they understand and perform in this role.

EVALUATION

Attendance, participation, and pre-production (65%)

Assignments and presentations (35%)

Production Design & Art Direction – *An Enemy of the People* - SC334**2 credits** – Elective Workshop Course – Spring 2026**Faculty:** Mehula Singh**Meeting Times:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1pm to 5pm – February 17th through March 11th – and as needed for pre-production assignments.**Overview**

Production design works to unify and shape the elements of set and location – and to guide the viewer's eye so that they are transported into the distinctive world of the film.

Production designers consider all issues related to what we see on screen, from the color and texture of the plaster walls on a built set of an 18th century boarding house to the decayed bark on a fallen oak tree branch lying across a path in the woods.

Students working in this department will research and acquire props and build and dress sets to establish the world of our film – a small, interconnected town in the 1950s. Several locations will come into play and will need to be brought to life through student effort and engagement, including a lavish mineral bathhouse, a run-down hotel, the home of a wealthy widow, a bank, and plenty of gritty back alleys.

Students will learn the structure of this entire department and each job that needs to be performed in order to effectively meet the demands of production. Our Production Designer will assign readings and film screenings that, combined with their overall leadership, vision and experience, will convey fundamentals of design and the application of design principles to our unique film production.

Attention will be paid to preparation and procedures for production, set design, visual research, storyboarding, drafting of sets and floor plans, designing for special effects, designing for location, set construction, working with a limited budget and more.

Students will learn skills in script breakdown, planning a set, preparing a budget, color lighting, and related research. Readings will be assigned from selected texts, to facilitate an understanding of design theory as it relates to feature film production – and how theory informs and guides hands-on practice.

Students will take on substantial roles where they apply their theoretical knowledge to the design practices and creation required for *An Enemy of the People*, where we will create a multi-faceted and thoroughly unique world on a limited budget. Working under the guidance of mentors, students will thoroughly analyze the screenplay, identify and produce needed design elements, solve problems, respond to production developments, practice flexibility, and collaborate. All art department students will share certain aspects of the dialogue needed to develop “the big picture.”

There will be no single text. Instead, a series of selected readings will be provided. Students will be expected to keep a notebook or portfolio that will include details of their semester's work along with any drawings and photographs they create. This notebook will be handed in at the end of the semester – and reviewed by the instructor.

Readings (selections)

The Filmmaker's Guide to Production Design (LoBrutto)

What an Art Director Does; An Introduction to Motion Picture Production Design (Preston)

The Art Direction Handbook for Film (Rizzo)

Sets in Motion (Affron and Affron)

Theatrical Design and Production: An Introduction to Scene Design and Construction, Lighting, Sound, Costume, and Makeup (Gillette)

Production Design in the Contemporary American Film (Heisner).

Filmcraft: Production Design (Halligan)

Mise en Scene: Film Style and Interpretation (Gibbs).

Designing for the Screen: Production Design and Art Direction Explained (Shorter)

Production Design: Architects of the Screen (Barnwell)

Pretty Pictures (Tashiro)

Films - TBA

Goals

- To introduce students to the world of the Production Designer
- To establish a basic design vocabulary that can be used to facilitate the workflow of this department.
- To give students experience with various aspects of forming a design concept based on a script – and the ability to translate abstract verbal ideas and concepts into a visual vocabulary and structure.
- To give the student first-hand experience in the work required to break down a script, identify design elements and needs, solve problems and collaborate in substantial ways with peers and professionals, in the development and implementation of a design plan for our film.

Course Requirements

- **Attend class:** Due to the condensed nature of the class, attendance at each and every meeting is critical. Two unexcused absences will lead to a reduction of your final grade. Three or more unexcused absences will lead to failure.
- **Be prepared for class:** Complete all assignments by the day due and come to class prepared to discuss them.

- **Work done outside of class:** Department mentor will determine assignments and any out-of-class work.

EVALUATION

Attendance, participation, and pre-production (65%)

Assignments and presentations (35%)

Costume Design – *An Enemy of the People* – SC335

2 credits – Elective Workshop Course – Spring 2026

Faculty: Karen Boyer

Meeting Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1pm to 5pm – February 17th through March 11th – and as needed for pre-production assignments.

Overview

Costume design plays a crucial role within the overall design scheme for a film, articulating character details by using color, line, texture, fabric, accessories, condition of clothing, and relationship to other characters. Design personnel on a film work to explore relationships between various scenic elements (e.g. costume and setting) to enlarge the narrative.

Students will work with professional mentors and teachers to populate the imagined world of *An Enemy of the People* where very distinctive costumes will help to establish, develop, and enlarge our characters. Anything is possible – and our imaginations of all this will set the mood and tone.

Students and their mentors will interact with the director, production designer and director of photography to discuss ways to express story themes—and to develop a color palette and texture to mark each scene. They will also work with other production personnel to ensure the film’s visual continuity.

Costume students will attend sessions within the art department to better understand the overall work of production design. But they will primarily study and work with the costume designer to explore the ways in which design, in all of its various applications, can contribute to the visual world of the film. Classes will include theoretical readings and discussions, case studies of costume design in notable films, and guided work assignments that will provide hands-on research to develop visual representations that will anchor *An Enemy of the People* in 1950’s America. Using archives, photographs, paintings, drawings, and other films, students will have no shortage of images from which to draw.

Students will take on substantial roles where they apply their theoretical knowledge to the selection, design, and creation of costumes required for our film. Under the guidance of mentors, they will thoroughly analyze the screenplay for the costume needs in each scene. They will determine actor sizes, source local talent and materials, solve problems, respond to production developments, and collaborate. Students will travel to costume collections in New England and New York, especially New York’s huge Costume Collection that houses more than 85,000 costumes used by Broadway productions, Hollywood and indie filmmakers.

Once you assemble the hundreds of costumes we’ll need, work turns to organization, actor fittings, daily mobilization, costume cleaning and maintenance – and more.

Students will also develop and present individual portfolios that document and showcase their semester's work.

Readings (selections)

Costume Design: Techniques of Modern Masters (Pecktal)

Costuming for Film: The Art and the Craft (Cole and Burke)

Costume Design (Anderson)

Costume Design 101 (LaMotte)

The Art Direction Handbook for Film (Rizzo)

The Magic Garment (Cunningham)

Theatrical Design and Production: An Introduction to Scene Design and Construction, Lighting, Sound, Costume, and Makeup (Gillette)

Filmcraft: Production Design (Halligan)

Designing for the Screen: Production Design and Art Direction Explained (Shorter)

Pretty Pictures (Tashiro)

Films - TBA

Goals

- To teach the theory and practice of costume design and selection – and wardrobe management.
- To develop a costume collection that substantially enlarges the articulation of characters and story for *An Enemy of the People*.
- To build a collaborative team that can curate a dynamic costume presence for our film and manage the workflow on and off set.

Course Requirements

- **Attend class:** Due to the condensed nature of the class, attendance at each and every meeting is critical. Two unexcused absences will lead to a reduction of your final grade. Three or more unexcused absences will lead to failure.
- **Be prepared for class:** Complete all assignments by the day due and come to class prepared to discuss them.
- **Work done outside of class:** Department mentor will determine assignments and any out-of-class work.

EVALUATION

Attendance, participation, and pre-production (65%)

Written assignments and presentations (35%)

Editing & Post-Production – *An Enemy of the People* – SC336

2 credits – Elective Workshop Course – Spring 2026

Faculty: Sascha Stanton-Craven and others, TBA

Meeting Times: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1pm to 5pm – February 16th through March 11th – and as needed for pre-production assignments.

Overview

Film editing provides the platform for a creative filmmaker to fully shape the narrative, energize the images and sound, and direct the audience's attention. Indeed, it's the third time a filmmaker fully articulates the picture, after screenwriting and production.

Post-production provides the challenge and opportunity for a filmmaker to even re-make all or parts of it. Through literally thousands of choices, an editor can calibrate tension, shift relationship dynamics, reveal and shade characters and connect them to their physical worlds. Editors articulate themes, adjust rhythm and pacing, and much more. A film can be discovered, re-imagined, or even saved in post-production.

Students will work with our professional mentor who will help guide them through the post-production process that will take place during our preparation and filming of *An Enemy of the People*. Early in the semester, classes will include instruction on editing systems along with readings, demonstrations, and discussions on editing practices and techniques.

We will study terminology and concepts, learning both the rules and how to break them, as we look at the technical and aesthetic choices and the workflow for both picture and sound editing. We will examine the historical role of editing, from the earliest silent film through moviemaking today.

We will also review films screened for the Cinema Studies class and earlier projects produced through the film intensive. Special attention will be paid to the role of editing on these films. Students will also take on editing assignments related to the production of student short films and projects developed by the documentary unit.

Once *An Enemy of the People* production commences, students will work with post-production mentors to organize workflow and outfit the editing room. Daily activities will include logging and capturing of raw footage, organization of material, and development of rough scene assemblies and rough cuts that will be presented, along with film dailies, to other members of the production team. Sessions will include critiques of filmed material for artistic, narrative, and continuity purposes—and discussions about how what's being captured will influence ongoing production.

Weekly updates of edited material will be posted online, through our affiliated websites and blogs. We are also in conversation with local media to post material that will be broadcast and/or used in crowdfunding updates.

Students will take on substantial roles where they apply their theoretical knowledge to the work of post-production. They will be expected to maintain a post-production diary that outlines daily work and insights gained through the semester-long process. They will also create individual reels of edited material for open presentation.

Readings (selections)

Cutting Rhythms: Intuitive Film Editing (Pearlman)

In the Blink of an Eye. A Perspective on Film Editing: Second Edition (Murch)

Technique of Film Editing (Reisz and Miller)

Selected hand-outs

We'll review films shown in the Cinema Studies class along with previous film intensive pictures, *Wetware*, *Peter and John*, *Northern Borders*, *Martin Eden*, *Lost Nation* and *Major Barbara*.

Films

Bonnie and Clyde (Penn)

Chinatown (Polanski)

Raging Bull (Scorcese)

Breathless (Godard)

Requiem for a Dream (Aronofsky)

Sink or Swim (Friedrich)

Goals

- To foster theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the areas of editing and the post-production workflow.
- To provide technical training on the leading software applications for editing.
- To use film editing as a tool to sharpen performance, advance a clear story, engage viewer imagination and articulate potent themes.
- To stimulate dialogue aimed at useful, informed and imaginative critique of edited sequences.
- To complete a solid revised first cut of the film.

Course Requirements

- **Attend class:** Due to the condensed nature of the class, attendance at each and every meeting is critical. Two unexcused absences will lead to a reduction of your final grade. Three or more unexcused absences will lead to failure.
- **Be prepared for class:** screen all films and read all the assignments by the day due and come to class prepared to discuss them.
- **Work done outside of class:** Department mentor will determine assignments and any out-of-class work.

EVALUATION

Attendance & participation (65%)

Assignments done outside of class (35%)

Documentary Planning & Production – SC337
2 credits – Elective Workshop Course – Spring 2026

Faculty: Kahane Cooperman, Akiva Henig, and Jasper Clark Craven

Meeting Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1pm to 5pm – February 17th through March 11th – and as needed for pre-production assignments.

Overview

During the 1950s, with the invention of portable lights and cameras, filmmakers were able to take filmmaking out of the studios and into people's homes. The portability of the camera gave rise to new techniques in documentary production, among them direct cinema and cinema vérité. It suddenly became possible to create intimate non-fiction films that "got inside" complex incidents and captured multi-faceted characters. Early examples include Barbara Kopple's *Harlan County, USA*, the Maysles' *Salesman*, and David Sutherland's *Country Boys*.

This class will mount an exploration and dialogue into the theory and practice of documentary filmmaking through an examination of cinema vérité, direct cinema, reflexive documentary, mock documentary, experimental/poetic documentary, and documentary still photography. These sources will help inform our shooting style and strategy in building narrative, themes, tone, and characterization.

Through readings, discussions, and screenings, we'll study narrative construction; aesthetic choices; the blurring of boundaries between reality and fiction; questions of documentary truth and journalistic ethics; power relations between filmmaker and subject; effective character engagement and interview techniques; social, ethical, and philosophical issues surrounding non-fiction film; and the role of film in constructing and defining cultural history and memory.

We will also examine the role of critics in evaluating documentary films – and what we can learn and apply to our own work, through close readings of documentary film criticism.

Students will be expected to complete a series of readings, writings, and production assignments – and to make a short documentary, either individually or within a group.

Visiting Artists

We'll host a visiting documentary artist each week, either virtually or in person, along with a screening of their work. This series will be curated by leading documentary producer and filmmaker advocate Caitlin Boyle, whose past collaborators include DOC NYC, Cinereach, Sundance Institute, NEON, and Magnolia Films.

Student Short Films

Each student will also be expected to plan, develop and produce a short documentary film (less than 15 minutes), during the semester. This can be done either individually or in a collaboration with two or three people. Work should begin early in the pre-production period and can continue during the production period, as needed – as long as each student also participates fully in the collaborative feature-length project.

Feature length documentary project

Students will collaboratively create an ambitious feature-length documentary film. The subject matter is currently under consideration. Prospective students interested in contributing thoughts and research on the film's focus are welcome to join our ad hoc discussion group, since students will participate in the decision for what feature length project we will undertake.

Our 2024 documentary feature tackled the acute housing crisis on the island of Nantucket, where the average home price is \$3.5 million. The film has changed the on-island conversation on this issue and is now playing community screenings and film festivals – to a substantial regional audience – since this housing affordability crisis affects many places and people. We expect the film to influence policy developments.

Our next feature film should be character rich; provide opportunities for close, uninflected observation; and capture people and places in the process of discovery or transformation. Any good project takes the viewer into a surprising and little-known world (e.g. *All That Breathes*, which follows two Indian brothers who nurse injured crows back to life in New Delhi); follows unforgettable characters (*Grey Gardens* shows an eccentric older mother and daughter co-existing in a collapsing mansion); and changes the conversation (*The Thin Blue Line* reversed a murder conviction). It should be engaging, informative, nuanced, and capable of sparking curiosity or emotion.

Consider subjects that show people in motion, where there can be advances – and setbacks. This is not essential, but it provides a dramatic narrative that audiences crave. Regardless, the project must consider how best to tell a story within its tailored window, setting up some sort of journey that reveals fresh, unpredictable, fascinating characters and situations.

Be flexible and open to new developments. Take *A New Kind of Wilderness*, a film which was originally oriented around a Swedish homesteading family that practices maximum food and energy self-sufficiency and home schooling. Then the mother dies – and the film becomes about change, perseverance, mourning, growth, flexibility, gender, childhood and more. It was a candidate for the 2024 Academy Award for documentary filmmaking. The director had no idea it would lead in this new direction – but she was open to discovery and responsive to what she saw and experienced.

In class, we will focus on developing an understanding of theory, history, and practice to documentary filmmaking, generally – and, also, for the specific kinds of documentary filmmaking that can be considered and deployed. Readings, viewings and exercises will be assigned to better understand each of these styles of documentary production.

More specifics will be presented through the final class syllabus – but each of these areas will be studied. Here are examples for what to expect:

Direct Cinema

Direct cinema is a documentary filmmaking style that originated during the late 1950s and early 1960s. It emphasizes close and non-intrusive viewing, to capturing reality directly, as its being experienced, with minimal intervention from the filmmaker, using handheld cameras. The goal is to present a candid and observational view of events, allowing the audience to witness life unfolding without the influence of the filmmaker's presence.

Assignment: Shoot five-minutes of film utilizing the technique of direct cinema. Use no more than three shots.

Examples include: *Country Boys*, *Approaching the Elephant*, Jennifer Vendetti's *Billy the Kid*, *Salesman*, *Belfast*, *Maine*, *Gimme Shelter*, *Brothers Keeper*.

Cinéma Vérité and the Art of the Interview

Cinéma vérité can include direct cinema sequences – but it also employs stylized camera work, B-roll, staged interviews, and a camera that may provoke the subject or be introduced as a conscious player in the mix of elements that make up the film. Cinéma vérité often draws its inspiration from the pages of newspapers. It can be effective as a form of journalism.

Assignment: Screen and discuss examples of cinéma vérité – and how this is different from direct cinema. Conduct a well-crafted five-minute interview with a subject of your choice. Interview subject can be a student or mentor. Effectively engage your subject on an unusual, compelling, or revealing subject. Ensure good sound quality and appropriate lighting. Reveal something unexpected about a person or situation—and provide the opportunity for your subject to tell a compelling short narrative.

Examples include: *Murderball*, *Born Into Brothels*, *Streetwise*, *Man on Wire*, *Woodstock*, *Hoop Dreams*, *Harlan County USA*. Illuminating examples of effective documentary interviewing can be found in: *Fog of War*, *Sorrow and the Pity*, *John Lewis: Good Trouble*, *Fast Cheap and Out of Control*, *Meeting Gorbachev*.

Reflexive Documentary

Reflexive documentaries tell a personal story about you and your own life, experience, perception, relationships – whatever you like. But you are positioned in the first person – to make your film.

Assignment: Make a compelling six-minute first person/reflexive documentary that is visually engaging and opens a window to some aspect(s) of yourself, your family, or your personal history, experience, and/or perspective or point of view. It may be produced in a poetic style or as cinéma vérité.

Examples include: *Sherman's March*, *Blue Vinyl*, *Tarnation*, Su Friedrich's *Sink or Swim*, *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Journey*.

Poetic Documentary

Within the world of experimental films, some artists use the documentary form to explore personal expression. Sometimes these films find oblique angles for treating familiar subjects. Sometimes filmmakers work with abstract images. Sometimes filmmakers use a poetic treatment for direct cinema or reflexive cinema.

Assignment: View and critique poetic documentaries TBA.

Examples include: *Darwin's Nightmare*, Stan Brakhage's *Window Water Baby Moving*, Chris Marker's *Sans Soleil*, *Koyaanisqatsi*, *Man With a Movie Camera*,

Investigative/Activist Documentary

An investigative documentary film delves into a specific topic or event through in-depth research and analysis, often aiming to uncover hidden truths, expose wrongdoing or shed light on important issues. These films typically use a variety of techniques, including interviews, archival footage, and on-location filming, to present a comprehensive and compelling narrative. The primary goal is to present an accurate and unbiased account of the subject matter, even if it means exposing uncomfortable truths or challenging powerful figures. These films have the ability to reach a wider audience and engage viewers on an emotional level, making the issues more relatable and impactful. An activist documentary can cross the line into evident point-of-view and advocacy.

Assignment: Discuss questions of ethics, advocacy, and bias in an investigative or activist documentary of your choice.

Examples include: *Thin Blue Line*, *Who Killed Vincent Chin?*, *Super Size Me*, *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of a Low Price*, *Roger and Me*, *Fahrenheit 911*, *An Inconvenient Truth*.

Essay Documentary

An essay documentary is a hybrid form that blends documentary filmmaking with the structure and approach of a written essay. It's a film that develops an idea or argument, often exploring a specific topic or theme in a thoughtful, analytical, and sometimes personal manner. The essay film can be self-reflective and self-referential in ways that blurs the lines between fiction and nonfiction. Unlike traditional documentaries that focus on objective observation or narrative storytelling, essay documentaries often involve a more subjective and introspective approach.

Assignment: Write a script for five minutes of an essay film of your choosing.

Examples include: *Grizzly Man*, *Koyaanisqatsi*, *Fahrenheit 911*, *Roger and Me*, *Inside Job*, *Sicko*, *Letter to Jane*, *Histoire(s) de Cinema*, *I Am Not Your Negro*.

Mock Documentary

Some filmmakers create a documentary style of production as an instrument of critique – to satirize a subject, make fun or comedy or make a political statement.

Assignment: Write a two-page treatment for a mock documentary idea. Imagine what you would film, whom you might interview – and go as far as you'd like, in conjuring what we would see or hear – including dialogue, if you'd like.

Examples include: *War Game*, *Death of a President*, *Best in Show*, *Waiting for Guffman*, *Battle of Algiers*, *Kids*, *Nanook of the North*.

Portrait Documentary

A portrait documentary presents a detailed picture of an individual. It may show their vision, challenges, obsessions, contradictions, and/or impact on people, good or bad.

Assignment: How might you approach a film like this? Whom might you choose – to show someone engaged in the process of acting on vision or making change? How might you include a portrait – even as a part of your own film?

Examples include: *Ralph Nader: An Unreasonable Man*, *Frida*, *John Lewis: Good Trouble*, *Grey Gardens*, *I Am Not Your Negro*, *Wolfgang*.

Other things to keep in mind when planning, preparing, and executing the film:

Identify your purpose

Before you start researching a topic, consider why you want to make a documentary. What is your goal, vision, or mission? What do you want to achieve, express, or explore? Your purpose will guide your research, shape your narrative, and define your audience. It will also help you to avoid topics that are too broad, vague, or irrelevant to your interests and values.

Research your niche

Once you have a sense of your purpose, start researching your niche. For example, if your purpose is to raise awareness about environmental issues, your niche could be wildlife conservation, renewable energy, or urban gardening. Researching your niche will help you to find out what topics are already covered, what gaps exist, and what trends or challenges are emerging and/or exciting to you. You can use sources like books, articles, podcasts, and other documentaries to gather information and inspiration.

Find your angle

After you have done some research, you can start looking for your angle, unique perspective or approach that makes your topic stand out. For example, if your niche is wildlife conservation, your angle could be a personal story of a wildlife activist, a comparison of different conservation methods, or a showcase of a rare or endangered species. Finding your angle will help focus your topic and create a compelling hook.

Validate your topic

Before you commit to your topic, explore whether it is feasible, relevant, and original. Ask yourself: do you have enough time, resources, and access to make this documentary? Does this topic address a current or important subject? Does it offer something new, different, or surprising? Does it align with your purpose, vision, and values?

Outline your structure

A structure is a plan that roughly organizes your content and guides your storytelling, typically composed of three parts: introduction, body, and conclusion. The introduction should introduce the topic, angle, and purpose; hook the audience and establish credibility. The body should present main points, arguments or evidence, supported by interviews, footage or data; address any counterarguments or challenges. The conclusion should summarize the main points, purpose and themes. Outlining your structure will help you to clarify focus, scope, and flow. It will identify gaps, inconsistencies, or weaknesses.

Build trust among your subject

The best documentaries are those most deeply and honestly immersed in their subject matter. Trust is the prerequisite to accessing key figures and scenes, as well as real candor and raw emotion. Ahead of production, students and mentors will work to identify and reach out to the gatekeepers of our chosen world. We will spend time with them, listen to them, and learn from them – all without the cameras rolling. This will be critical to understanding the people to speak to, the places to go, and the questions to ask.

Possible subjects – and examples of film references to them:

- A deep and detailed observation into multiple aspects of a specific place and its people. Examples: Frederic Wiseman's *Belfast, Maine* and *Monrovia, Indiana*, *Grizzly Man*, *Mind the Gap*.
- A close observation of a project or institution in motion. Examples: Amanda Wilder's *Approaching the Elephant*, Wiseman's *Welfare* and *Ex Libris*, *Some Kind of Heaven*.
- A complex portrait of people trying to make change. Examples: *Harlan County USA*, *Ren Faire*, *I Am Not Your Negro*, *The Interrupters*.
- People at work. Examples: Maysles' *Salesman*, *White Helmets*, *Driver*, *Paris Is Burning*, *Mayor*.
- People responding to regional impacts of climate change. Examples: *Thank You for the Rain*, *Chasing Coral*, *The Ants and the Grasshopper*. *Kiss the Ground*.
- A revelatory investigation. Examples: *MLK/FBI*, *Three Identical Strangers*, *The Jinx*, *The Act of Killing*.
- Practices in education and how they're working. Examples: *High School*, *Hoop Dreams*, *American Teacher*, *To Be and To Have*.
- Do prisons render justice? Are they effective at rehabilitation? Examples: *The Farm: Angola, USA*, *13th*, *The Work*, *Solitary*.
- Insects – especially the proliferation of mosquitos and ticks in our region. Examples: *The Hellstrom Chronicle*, *Nocturnes*, *The Pollinators*.
- A personal, reflective, or poetic documentary. Examples: *Sink or Swim*, *The Thin Blue Line*, *Sherman's March*, *Tarnation*, *A Photographic Memory*, *Window Water Baby Moving*.

Goals

- To foster a sustained dialogue about documentary filmmaking history, techniques, ethics, styles, narrative flow and directorial approach to subject matter.
- To screen documentary films and read film criticism in order to deepen students' awareness of the range of documentary film approaches and to better understand directorial choices and styles.
- To compare examples of fine documentary film and still photography.
- To gain proficiency with documentary film equipment, including cameras, sound recording equipment, simple lighting and editing equipment.

- To build core journalistic skills critical to documentary work, including historical and subject research, interview techniques, and story building.
- Produce short documentary films, individually or in small groups, that tell a story – along with a more ambitious collaborative documentary film that takes an original angle on a topic and focus to still be decided.
- To build a team of collaborators that can effectively plan and execute multiple plans for production over the course of the semester.

Readings

- *Directing the Documentary* (Rabiger)
- Assorted weekly hand-outs

Selections will be screened from these films, among others:

Salesman (Maysles)

Approaching the Elephant (Wilder)

Country Boys (Sutherland)

Harlan County, USA (Kopple)

The Thin Blue Line (Morris)

Sink or Swim (Friedrich)

The Imposter (Layton)

The Wolfpack (Moselle)

Sherman's March (McElwee)

13th (DuVernay)

A Man on Wire (Marsh)

Grizzly Man (Herzog)

Belfast, Maine (Wiseman)

Driver (Azimi)

A New Kind of Wilderness (Jacobsen)

Man with a Movie Camera (Vertov)

Murderball (Rubin, Shapiro)

Hale County This Morning, This Evening (Ross)

Tarnation (Jonathan Coauette)

San Soleil (Marker)

Western (Ross Brothers)

Window Water Baby Moving (Brakhage)

Course Requirements

- **Class Attendance:** Due to the condensed nature of the course and production schedule, attendance at each and every meeting is critical. Two unexcused absences will lead to a reduction of your final grade. Three or more unexcused absences will lead to failure.

- **Preparation:** Complete all assignments by the day due and come to class prepared to discuss them.
- **Contribute Meaningfully to Short and Feature-Length Documentary Projects.** Identity and follow characters in ways that illuminate their many layers and dimensions. “Get inside” your subject to discover its hidden truths. Practice cinematography that shows craft and conviction for each shot. Pay attention to sound quality. Use your imagination. Edit in a way that shapes the narrative and directs the viewer’s attention to elements that articulate theme, character, and story. When you collaborate, work to enlarge your film’s meaning in ways that show the value of shared imagination and work.

EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated based on their daily preparation, performance, collaboration and effectiveness as team members—for their knowledge of materials studied, lectures, and demonstrations and for the development of their individual skills and the quality and impact of their work. Students will also be evaluated for how effectively they understand and perform their assigned roles. These factors will be considered:

Attendance & class participation (35%)

Completed films, assignments, and/or contribution to collaborative films (65%)