

**UMBC UGC New Course Request: ART 317 Intermediate Narrative Production**

Date Submitted: 5/4/17

Proposed Effective Date: SP18

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**COURSE INFORMATION:**

Course Number(s)	ART 317
Formal Title	Intermediate Narrative Production
Transcript Title (≤30c)	Int. Narrative Production
Recommended Course Preparation	Art 324 AND/OR ART 325
Prerequisite NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, a prerequisite is assumed to be passed with a "D" or better.	ART 306, with a "B" or better AND Visual Arts Milestone
# of Credits Must adhere to the <u>UMBC Credit Hour Policy</u>	3
Repeatable?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Max. Total Credits	3 This should be equal to the number of credits for courses that cannot be repeated for credit. For courses that may be repeated for credit, enter the maximum total number of credits a student can receive from this course. E.g., enter 6 credits for a 3 credit course that may be taken a second time for credit, but not for a third time. Please note that this does NOT refer to how many times a class may be retaken for a higher grade.
Grading Method(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reg (A-F) <input type="checkbox"/> Audit <input type="checkbox"/> Pass-Fail

**PROPOSED CATALOG DESCRIPTION** (Approximately 75 words in length. Please use full sentences.):

This class is designed to encourage an organic exploration of narrative cinema, to strengthen trust in your own ideas and instincts, and heighten your curiosity about experimental modes of storytelling. Though we will cover some areas of technical expertise as they relate specifically to narrative film production, students are expected to have a basic understanding of cameras, lights, microphones, and editing. Students will work independently to produce their own short narratives, as well as engaging in a study of contemporary narrative cinema.

**RATIONALE FOR NEW COURSE:**

Cinematic Arts is revising the three core courses in our curriculum to provide a more in-depth study of narrative and documentary filmmaking in order to highlight the technical and conceptual concerns that are specific to each genre. Currently the curriculum tries to cover documentary, narrative, and experimental film practices and histories in one introductory level course. We believe that parsing these out into two intermediate level courses will provide a more in-depth and complex course of study for students, allowing them to master more filmmaking practices. This course is a requirement for our BFA majors, and is one of two courses (the other being ART 316 Intermediate Documentary Production) that our BA students along with those taking the Cinematic Arts Minor can choose from. Students are required to take the proposed ART 306 Introduction to Cinematic Arts before taking this course, where they will learn about film/video as an artistic medium, as well as gaining basic production and post-production skills. ART 317 Intermediate Narrative Production will build on that foundation, and expose students to techniques and methodologies that are specific to the area of narrative film production. This course will be taught every Spring semester.

**ART 317: INTERMEDIATE  
NARRATIVE PRODUCTION**  
Date & Time  
Professor Jules Roskam  
Office: FA219A  
[jrosskam@umbc.edu](mailto:jrosskam@umbc.edu)

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This class is designed to encourage an organic exploration of narrative cinema, to strengthen trust in your own ideas and instincts, and heighten your curiosity about various modes of storytelling. The class structure will include discussions on readings, films, and critiques of student work in progress, as well as some lecturing and workshops. Students will work collaboratively in production teams, producing their own work, and the work of others. Though we will cover some areas of technical expertise as they relate specifically to narrative film production, students are expected to have a basic understanding of cameras, lights, microphones, and editing. Students will work on their ability to understand and critically engage with narrative films through regular written reflections.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- To develop an intermediate understanding of narrative filmmaking methodologies
- To understand the various roles available on an independent film production, and learn how to manage a small crew
- To understand how to translate the written word to the screen, through careful use of cinematic techniques, and directorial methodologies
- To develop a critical awareness of the social and political implications of the stories we tell

## **GRADING**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Assignment 1: Location as Story	150	15
Assignment 2: Character and Improvisation	150	15
Film Reflections	100	10
Final Project Proposal and Pitch	100	10
Work in Progress Screening	100	10
Final Project: Scene Study	250	25
Class Participation	150	15
<b>Total</b>	1000	100%

## **PARTICIPATION AND EXCHANGE**

Participation does not mean you should just talk a lot. In order to be a good "class participant" you should: ask questions of the instructor, your classmates, and yourself; contribute insights about the course material and your classmates' comments; and work to create an environment in which everyone is comfortable contributing. This means saying "I don't get it" when you don't, explaining concepts when you think you do "get it," asking questions, making space and time for your classmates' comments, bringing up examples, theorizing, challenging, and analyzing.

I believe the open exchange of ideas is extremely important in the classroom. I hope to create a learning environment where students can disagree and debate with one another, but still respect each other as classmates and peers. This means that while you may be strongly opposed to an opinion expressed during a discussion or critique, you should never use personal attacks to get your point across. I expect students to not only express their ideas, but to genuinely listen to the ideas of others and to offer reasoned responses. If, at any point, you feel

uncomfortable with something someone said in class – including myself – I encourage you to address it so that together we can work to resolve the issue.

Class participation is worth 150 points and graded as follows:

<b>A (125-150 pts)</b>	<b>Miss no more than 1 class</b> , be prompt, complete all the readings; consistently add questions, ideas and reasoned opinions to class discussions, critiques and group activities; actively contribute to the success of the class, your own learning, and the learning of others; act as a leader in group assignments; bring a copy of all assigned readings to class
<b>B (100-124 pts)</b>	<b>Miss no more than 2 classes</b> , be prompt, complete all the readings; consistently add reasoned opinions and ideas to discussions, critiques and group activities; take an active role in group assignments; bring a copy of all assigned readings to class
<b>C (75-99 pts)</b>	<b>Miss no more than 3 classes</b> , regularly complete the readings; occasionally add reasoned opinions and ideas to discussions, critiques and group activities; participate in group assignments at a moderate level; bring a copy of all assigned readings to class
<b>D (50-74 pts)</b>	<b>Miss no more than 4 classes</b> ; complete readings irregularly, rarely participate in discussions and critiques; take a minimal role in group assignments
<b>F (below 50 pts)</b>	<b>Miss 5 or more classes</b> ; failure to participate in group assignments, or attend class regularly but display disruptive behavior that makes it difficult for the instructor to teach and students to learn. For example, talking with your neighbor during discussions, lectures, or presentations; refusing to follow the instructor's directives; making inappropriate comments during class discussions or critiques (i.e. comments that are completely off topic, personal attacks on classmates, refusing to take the material and course seriously)*

Assignments are graded using the following rubric:

<b>A (90-100)</b>	Assignment is carefully and systematically completed; Response illustrates the student's thorough understanding of the subject matter as evidenced through appropriate illustration of key concepts, and a high level of critical engagement; Responses are completed according to assignment parameters; Projects are well developed and show evidence of solid creative engagement and reflection; Intent is clearly communicated and supported.
<b>B (80-89)</b>	All major pieces of the assignment are responded to; Responses illustrate basic understanding of the subject matter as evidenced through appropriate illustration of key concepts; limited level of critical engagement; Responses are researched and completed according to assignment parameters; Projects are developed and show evidence of creative engagement and reflection; Finished projects and written responses clearly communicates intent.

<b>C (70-79)</b>	Student responds to most elements of the assignment; Response illustrates basic understanding of subject matter; Limited amount of adherence to basic parameters; Ideas are not fully developed; The students lack of engagement makes it difficult to communicate intent.
<b>D (60-69)</b>	Student responds to some elements of the assignment; Response illustrates limited understanding of subject matter; Little to no adherence to basic parameters of assignment; The intent is not clearly communicated.
<b>F (59 or less)</b>	Student does not respond to the components of the assignment; Response does not illustrate an understanding of the subject matter; No adherence to basic parameters of assignment; The intent is not communicated.

## ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are due on the date indicated in the syllabus – late work will not be accepted.

All written assignments must follow the following guidelines:

- Times or Times New Roman, 12pt font
- Standard 1-inch margins
- At the top right-hand corner of the paper must be your full name, the name of the course, and the assignment name
- File must be saved as a PDF and be titled the following: Your Name\_Assignment Name\_Course Number (eg: JulesRoskam\_FinalProjectProposal\_ART346)
- Files must be uploaded to BlackBoard prior to class on the due date listed.

### 1. Assignment 1: Location as Story

Choose a location off campus. What's in a space? How do spaces tell stories? Or, how do we tell stories *about* spaces? Pick a location and make a 2-3 minute video that tells the story of that location. You can and should record both sound and video to tell this story, but no dialog can be used.

### 2. Assignment 2: Character and Improvisation

Create at least one character (and no more than three) and shoot one scene that is developed through improvisational techniques (as explored in class). The focus is on the development of the scene through improvisation and not on your technical prowess. So, the scene can be shot as though a rehearsal, where location is implied rather than perfectly staged. The one technical thing you must pay attention to and execute well is sound; otherwise we will not be able to hear what's happening. The final scene should be approximately three minutes long. For this assignment you will record all of the improvisations that you do leading up to the final scene. On the due date, you will bring upload one mp4 file that has all of the improvisations, in order, including the final scene. Additionally, you will upload a separate mp4 file to show in class that only has the final scene.

### 3. Final Project Pitch and Proposal

Students will be required to write a formal proposal (based on the Sundance Grant) for their final project, including a full budget and production schedule. Students will translate this proposal into a 5-minute pitch, which they will give in class. The class, along with a guest judge, will vote on one project to fund and that project will receive a small amount of money to put toward their production. Pitches should be creative, informative, and well-rehearsed.

### 4. Work-in-Progress Presentation

You are expected to have a full rough-cut of your project. This means that at least 90% of all visual and auditory materials are present in the cut. Rough-cuts should not exceed 12 minutes in length. It will be up to you to direct and focus feedback to areas – and questions – that are of particular concern. You will be evaluated on your rough-

cut as well as your ability to effectively direct this feedback session.

## **5. Final Work Presentation**

Your final video will be a careful scene study and should be 5-7 minutes in length. You can use a script that you've written, or you can choose to do your own translation of someone else's script. If you choose to remake a scene from a film that already exists, your scene must take a radically different approach; this is not an assignment in emulating a director's work you like. Instead of trying to make a complete 5-7 minute film, you will focus on perfectly executing 1-2 scenes of a film. Your complete project must be uploaded as a .mp4 file to the class folder on Box before class begins on the final crit day. You will be evaluated on the originality of your concept, your technical abilities, and your ability to contextualize your work within the larger landscape of narrative filmmaking.

## **Reflection Papers**

For every feature-length film screened in class, or assigned for viewing outside of class, you are required to write a 2 page reflection on the film, paying special attention to the ways in which narrative functions within the piece. The focus of your reflection should not be on whether or not you liked the film, it should be discussing the various techniques the film uses to develop a narrative structure. The document should be titled the name of the film and your last name (eg: Threads of Belonging\_Roskam) and uploaded to Blackboard within one week of the viewing date.

## **CRITIQUES**

Learning to critique or assess art is a vital part of an artist's growth. While I believe critiques are often useful for helping students understand the strengths and weaknesses of their work and how others interpret it, they can be damaging when the class does not adhere to certain ground rules. In this course we will strive to create a safe environment where students can both give and receive useful, constructive critique. We will use a range of critique processes including self-critiques, creative responses, partner critiques, and small group and full class critiques. Ground rules and questions to address will be discussed before beginning the critique process.

## **ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS**

It is mandatory that you show up (and on time) for class. Being late to class two times (or leaving early) is equal to one absence. You may miss two classes before your grade is affected. Starting with your third absence, your grade will be lowered by one letter grade for each absence.

I am not here to manage your attendance. If you are going to miss a class – for any reason – please do not email me. The only time you should email me to tell me you're not going to make it is if you are meant to be showing your work and/or presenting to the class on that particular day. If you have an excused absence, please bring documentation to the following class period.

You are expected to show up for class not just bodily, but intellectually. Those who attend class but remain non-verbal, semi-comatose, or fully asleep will not be considered in attendance. Presence is mental and emotional, as well as physical.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Use of cell phones, pagers, games, laptops, etc is not permitted in class. If you need to use your laptop or other electronic device in order to take notes, or record lectures, please speak with me about this.

## **YOU'RE IN CONTROL**

### **UMBC Statement of Values for Academic Integrity**

"By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal. To read the full Student Academic Conduct Policy, consult [UMBC policies](#), or the [Faculty Handbook](#) (Section 14.3). For graduate courses, see the [Graduate School website](#)."

It's up to you to come to class ready and prepared to engage with your classmates on the issue(s) we will be examining. This means that you must read completely the readings and assignments and be active participants in your own education. If you do not participate in class you will not pass this class.

I am available for consultation regarding your progress in the class during scheduled meetings or via email. If you would like to schedule an appointment, please email me with possible times. If you are having problems in the class with attendance, understanding the readings, or completing assignments, please see me immediately. I can be flexible, but it's up to you to contact me if you are having problems.

## **REQUIRED AND SUGGESTED TEXTS**

All readings will be posted on Blackboard. Students are expected to print readings and bring them to class on the days in which they will be discussed.

## **WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

### **WEEK 1**

Introductions and expectations; Discuss the politics and ethics of the stories we tell; Film Crew Positions; Introduce Panasonic and Black Magic Cameras

WATCH: **Elif Shafak**: The Politics of Fiction, TEDtalk  
**Andrew Stanton**: The Clues to a Great Story, TEDtalk  
**Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**, The Danger of a Single Story, TEDtalk

### **WEEK 2**

Story and Character development – how/where to find inspiration; Narrative Structures; Introduce Assignment 1: Location as Story

READ: Butler, Blake. "Chapter 2." *There is No Year*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2011. 75-100. Print.

SCREEN: *A Letter to Uncle Boonmee*, Apichatpong Weerasethakul  
*Meeks Cutoff*, Kelly Reichardt  
*Amber City*, Jem Cohen

### **WEEK 3**

Screen and Critique Assignment 1; Introduce Assignment 2

### **WEEK 4**

Developing believable characters; Using improvisation to create character and story

WATCH BEFORE CLASS: *Morvern Callar*, Lynne Ramsay, 2002

SCREEN: *Strange Weather*, Peggy Ahwesh, 1993  
*The Amateurist*, Miranda July, 1998  
*All My Churen*, Kalup Linzy, 2003  
*Can't Swallow it, Can't Spit it Out*, Harry Dodge and Stanya Kahn, 2010

### **WEEK 5**

Writing a project proposal and pitching your work; In-class improvisation exercise; Introduce Assignment 2: Character and Improv

READ: Raphael, Amy. "Bleak Moments (1971)." *Mike Leigh on Mike Leigh*. London: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008. P 45-63. Print.  
Hoxter, Julian. "Case Study: Improvisation in Microbudget and Mumblecore Movies." *The Pleasures of*

*Structure: Learning Screenwriting Through Case Studies*. New York. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015. P 58-60.

SCREEN: *Hump Day*, Lynn Shelton, 2009

#### **WEEK 6**

Screen and Critique Assignment 2; Discuss Final Project: Scene Study

#### **WEEK 7**

Script breakdowns and shot lists; Developing feasible production and post-production schedules; Casting your film; Finding your crew

WATCH BEFORE CLASS: *The Mirror*, Andrei Tarkovsky, 1975

SCREEN: *Daughters of the Dust*, Julie Dash 1991  
*Jubilee*, Derek Jarman, 1978

#### **WEEK 8**

In-class casting call

#### **WEEK 9**

Students pitch their projects, Group A

WATCH BEFORE CLASS: *The Killing*, Stanley Kubrick, 1956

SCREEN: *Blast of Silence*, Allen Baron, 1961

#### **WEEK 10**

Students pitch their projects, Group B

WATCH BEFORE CLASS: *Ajami*, Scandar Copti and Yaron Shandi, 2009

SCREEN: *Amores Perros*, Alejandro Gonzalez Iñárritu, 2000

#### **WEEK 11**

Screen Rushes

#### **WEEK 12**

ADR workshop and post-sound design with visiting Sound Designer

WATCH BEFORE CLASS: *In the Mood For Love*, Wong Kar Wai, 2000

SCREEN: *Winters Bone*, Debra Granick, 2010

#### **WEEK 13**

Work-in-progress screening, group A

#### **WEEK 14**

Work-in-progress screening, group B

#### **WEEK 15**

Final Crits