

Advocacy Video – Level 2 Video Production Course

**Course Description**

Advocacy video is video with a purpose -- used to train, teach, motivate, shock, inspire, and raise awareness, consciousness and funds. As the internet provides more opportunities for the independent journalist and activist groups form global alliances, the advocacy video will become an increasingly powerful tool for social change.

In this course, students interested in the potent intersection of media, action and society will explore the difference between "advocacy," "news" and "propaganda," how to evaluate a video's effectiveness and how to use the non-narrative form for emotional, political impact. As a backdrop, we will address the roles of mass, interpersonal, developmental and rhetorical communication theories in theories of social change.

Students will work individually and in groups on a series of exercises that explore the advocacy potential of the production *process* as well as the product: from media training, witness and performance video to traditional documentary and public service announcement. For the final project, students will be encouraged to make contact and/or collaborate with their communities, non-profits, families, clubs or special-interest groups.

**Course Outline**

We will explore various ways that video can be used as a tool for social change by individuals or organizations with diverse political and social concerns –the environment, race, gender, health, education, labor, housing, culture, politics, art, etc.

For the midterm, each student will present research on any relevant topic that supports the final project such as an analysis of an organization's use of video, a review of tapes available on a particular issue, an investigation into the costs of distribution or the daily life of a freelance video journalist. The emphasis will be on finding primary resources and/or building relationships that may lead to the final project.

The final project may be a complete video piece or a project that includes video in some way. The video may take any form (PSA, mini- documentary, news package, fund raiser, music video, etc.) that is deemed most effective. The project should include some evaluative or feedback process.

All final projects will represent a substantial amount of fieldwork, research, networking and production and will be accompanied by a formal presentation.

Students will be graded on class participation and the completeness of their final projects.

**Suggested Readings**

Because this is a production class, I've suggested a few readings meant to provoke and inspire. Throughout the semester, I will email links to related organizations and other resources.

Freire, Paulo. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. 30th anniversary ed. New York: Continuum, 2000.

Gladwell, Malcolm. The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference. Boston: Back Bay, 2002.

Harding, Thomas. The Video Activist Handbook. 2nd ed. London ; Sterling, Va.: Pluto Press, 2001.

Pearce, W. Barnett and Stephen W. Littlejohn. Moral Conflict: When Social Worlds Collide. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997.

### **Additional Resources**

Bonk, Kathy, et al. The Jossey-Bass Guide to Strategic Communications for Nonprofits : A Step-by-Step Guide to Working with the Media to Generate Publicity, Enhance Fundraising, Build Membership, Change Public Policy, Handle Crises, and More. The Jossey-Bass Nonprofit and Public Management Series. 1st ed. San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass, 1999.

Meikle, Graham. Future Active: Media Activism and the Internet. London: Routledge, 2002.

Wallack, Lawrence Marshall. News for a Change : An Advocate's Guide to Working with the Media. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 1999.

Wilkins, Karin Gwinn. Redeveloping Communication for Social Change : Theory, Practice, and Power. Lanham Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000.

You might also browse the web, Amazon or online journals to see what's available in areas that interest you. Thinking and writing about media advocacy has exploded in recent years. Here are some areas to search:

Education, Media and Computer Literacy	Policy and Political Campaigns
Social Movements - Grass Roots and Mainstream	Sub-Groups, Counter-culture, Marginality
Technology, Internet Activism	Witness, Personal Narrative
Economics, Social Marketing and Social Entrepreneurialism	Personal Growth, Consciousness, Empowerment
Propaganda, Advertising, Persuasion and Influence	News, Mass Media, Agenda Setting
	Health, Development, Environment

1/26 - Class 1

Introduction

Logistics and Requirements

A broad look at advocacy – Process, Product and Evaluation

Power, Policy, Problems and Psychology –

Where Change Happens and Theories of Change

Non-Causal Alternatives – Chaos, Viruses, Butterflies and

Appreciative Inquiry

Evaluation

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In-Class Exercise: Identifying Values – where to go for dinner?

Camera Review

Homework: Please read article "Lessons in Evaluating Communications Campaigns"

<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/pubs/onlinepubs/lessons/intro.html> or download as pdf

[www.mediaevaluationproject.org/HFRP2.pdf](http://www.mediaevaluationproject.org/HFRP2.pdf)

Take particular note of the policy/individual continuum, various theories of change, the case study diagrams and where your interests lie

2/2 - Class 2

News

News Paradigms and Alternatives

Events

Adversarial Models

Agenda Setting

Video News Releases

See: Greenpeace, cpj.org (Committee to Protect Journalists)

In-Class Exercise: stand-up journalist exercise, shoot and edit

Homework: shoot and edit a VNR or news package

2/9 - Class 3

News Continued

Review of post techniques

Sound, titles, finishing

In-Class Exercise: Screen and critique, edit

Homework: re-shoot, re-edit, prepare to present final package

2/16 - Class 4

Interviews

Review Interview Techniques – sound and lighting

Exploring boundaries - POV, empathy, objectivity, contexts

Asking hard questions

“Real People” and Experts

In-Class Exercise: 2-camera broadcast interview set-up

Homework: shoot and light a formal sit-down interview

Analyze the process and prepare clips to present

2/23 - Class 5

Media training

Media training – packaging the message and the messenger

In-Class Exercise: media training exercises

Homework: give a media training session,

Analyze the process and prepare clips to present

3/2 - Class 6

PSA

Social Marketing

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Training, Fundraising

Narrative and non-narrative styles

Proposals and budgets

In-Class Exercise: PSA storyboards, crews

Homework: produce, shoot edit 30 second PSA

3/9 - Class 7

**Midterm** presentations and discussion of Final Project

3/16 - Class 8

Witness

Give a voice

Personal/political video, family history, archives

Video evidence and documentation

Covert methods

Legal issues

See: Shoah Visual History Foundation Project, RAWA

In-Class Exercise: getting personal

Homework: shoot a personal interview, eyewitness account, or gather "evidence"

Analyze the process and prepare clips to present

### **Spring Break**

3/30 - Class 9

Getting Coverage and Direct Action

Using a camera crew to call attention/lend credibility to an organization,  
event or action

Using a camera for direct action, education or intervention

In-Class Exercise: Screen "Wet-Dreams and False Images"

Homework: use the camera to call attention to your action -- make notes about how people  
respond to you as a camera crew

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4/6 - Class 10

Media "Literacy"

What is Literacy/ Who is "illiterate?"

Does the literary model apply?

Educating viewers about "preferred" and "alternative" readings

Access and Authorship

DIY and the-means-of-production

Politics of self-expression

Teaching video production as a tool for empowerment

Examining authorship, the "crew" and alternative organizational methods

Alternative Audiences

Distribution – festivals, internet, groups

See: Girls Inc. and [themediaspot.org](http://themediaspot.org)

In-Class Exercise: experiments with alternative organization

Homework: teach video to someone, or experiment with concept of "authorship"

Analyze process and present what worked, what didn't, show clips

Class 11 -14

Classes will address issues raised earlier but with a focus on individual projects:

What is your purpose? Who is the audience?

What will make your project effective? How will we measure that?

Style and aesthetics

Ownership and authorship

Budgeting and permissions

Is it propaganda, news, art? does it matter?

In-Class Exercise: pre-production, screen rough cuts, edit, critique

Homework: Final Projects

5/11 - Class 15

Final Screening