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.


**Additional Resources**


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
- Social Movements - Grass Roots and Mainstream
- Technology, Internet Activism
- Economics, Social Marketing and Social Entrepreneurialism
- Propaganda, Advertising, Persuasion and Influence
- Policy and Political Campaigns
- Sub-Groups, Counter-culture, Marginality
- Witness, Personal Narrative
- Personal Growth, Consciousness, Empowerment
- 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
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
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
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
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
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