

LMC 3406 Syllabus

Video Production, Section A, 3 credits
Fall, 2026

Instructor Information

Instructor: John Thornton

Email: jthornton30@gatech.edu

General Course Information

Course Description

This course is a hands-on introduction to the foundational concepts, tools, and techniques of video production. Students will explore the essential roles of the director, cinematographer, sound recordist, and editor as they learn to craft compelling visual stories. Emphasis is placed on storytelling through composition, framing, shot design, camera movement, editing, and sound. Through lectures, workshops, screenings, and in-class production exercises, students will gain practical experience in pre-production planning, visual storytelling, and post-production editing. The course culminates in the production of a collaborative micro short film, allowing students to apply their skills in a final project that reflects their creative and technical growth.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Identify and apply the core elements of visual storytelling, including character, conflict, and resolution.
- Demonstrate an understanding of basic film grammar, including shot types, sequences, and continuity principles.
- Compose and frame shots that communicate story, emotion, and visual clarity.
- Operate digital cameras and utilize basic cinematography techniques, including lighting design and camera movement.
- Record clean, sync sound, and understand the roles and tools of the location sound team.

- Edit footage using industry-standard software to build coherent, visually engaging scenes.
- Apply post-production techniques, including sound editing, music, and color correction.
- Collaborate effectively in small production teams and rotate through key crew roles.
- Manage the stages of video production from concept through final cut.
- Critically analyze short films and production work using industry terminology and technical criteria.

Required Course Materials

Textbooks

Voice & Vision: A Creative Approach to Narrative Filmmaking by Mick Hubris-Cherrier

Tools and Software

10 to 15 GB of cloud-based storage (iCloud, Google Drive, Dropbox, or Box)

Smartphone with HD video capabilities

Mini LED Flashlight

Leather Work Gloves

Multitool

Grading Policy

Evaluating creative work, especially in a visual medium like cinematography and production design, is inherently subjective. However, grades in this course are grounded in clearly defined expectations: the application of course techniques, thoughtful execution, creative intent, and evidence of effort and growth. Assignments are assessed on both technical proficiency and conceptual strength—how well the work communicates an idea visually, whether it reflects the goals of the assignment, and the degree to which it pushes beyond the basic requirements. **Working hard and completing all required elements is expected and valued, but it does not automatically guarantee an "A"; higher marks are reserved for work that demonstrates exceptional clarity, creativity, and command of techniques.**

A (Excellent/Exceptional Work): 90-100%

An "A-level" submission exceeds expectations in both concept and execution. It demonstrates mastery of visual language and a clear artistic vision. The work uses

composition, framing, lighting, color, and production design purposefully and cohesively to enhance narrative or emotional impact. The creative decisions appear thoughtful, and the overall execution feels intentional and refined.

B (Strong/Above Average Work): 80 – 89%

A “B-level” submission fully meets the assignment requirements and demonstrates solid technique, organization, and visual coherence. Composition is considered, framing is deliberate, lighting and color choices support the mood, and production design contributes to the visual world. While it may not take significant creative risks, it shows a good understanding of course concepts and an apparent effort to apply them meaningfully. Some elements may be underdeveloped or slightly inconsistent, but the overall work is thoughtful and effectively executed. B-level work reflects progress and attention to craft, even if it stops short of being exceptional. Creative risks may be present but not fully realized, or the execution may be solid with minor inconsistencies. Overall, it shows substantial progress and developing fluency in cinematic craft.

C (Satisfactory/Meets Minimum Requirements): 70 – 79%

A “C-level” submission meets the basic expectations of the assignment but lacks clarity, cohesion, or conceptual execution. The student applies some course concepts but often does so inconsistently or superficially. Additionally, there may be missteps in framing, uneven lighting, unclear production design, or underutilized color and camera treatment. Technical execution is rough, with noticeable issues in lighting, framing, continuity, or design. The piece feels rushed, underdeveloped, and there are apparent missed opportunities to enhance visual storytelling. C-level work demonstrates effort but does not fully realize the potential of the assignment.

F (Below Expectations): < 70%

A “F-level” submission falls short of assignment requirements in key areas. The work illustrates minimal effort, lacks clear intention, or disregards fundamental techniques. There are several problems with composition, lighting, framing, or production design that significantly undermine the effectiveness of the piece. The work is incomplete, poorly executed, or shows minimal application of course content. D-level work does not reflect the standards expected in a creative production course and is not suitable for portfolio inclusion.

Assignments:

Exercise: 1 Scene, 10 Angles

Exercise 2: The Ballerina and the Shoemaker Rough Cut

Exercise #3: Final Project Pitch and Presentation

Practical Exam #1: Hacker Scene

Practical Exam #2: L&O Scene

Practical Exam #3: Recreate a Painting

Final Project: Micro Short Film (3 to 5 Minutes)

Written Exams 1 and 2

Description of Graded Components

Exercises, 20% of the Final Grade: You will complete five projects this semester. The projects include *1 Scene 10 Angles*, *Editing a scene from “The Ballerina and the Shoemaker,”* and *Developing a Final Project Pitch + Presentation*. Your regular **attendance** is also part of your exercise grade. I have posted the requirements for each project on Canvas. Check the course schedule for the due dates for each assignment.

Practical Exams, 20% of the Final Grade: You will work in groups of up to five to complete three Practical Exams, including **PE #1: Hacker Scene, PE #2: L&O, and PE #3 Recreate a Painting**. Practical Exams are opportunities to apply the techniques covered in the course and your ability to work effectively as a crew member. You will have time during class to prepare for the first two Practical Exams. You will film the Practical Exams during our regular class period; as such, students who have an unapproved absence from a Practical Exam will not be able to make up the assignment. I have posted the requirements for each project on Canvas. Check the course schedule for the due dates for each assignment.

Written Exams, 20% of the Final Grade: You will complete three **written exams**. You will take the quizzes on Canvas, and once an exam has opened, you may complete it at any time before the due date. The material included in each written exam is on Canvas. Check the course schedule for the due dates for each assignment.

Final Project, 40% of the Final Grade: You will work in groups of up to five to write, produce, create, and edit a micro short film. I have posted the requirements for each project on Canvas. Check the course schedule for the due dates for each assignment.

Course Policies

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. I will take attendance at the start of every session. Anyone who misses four classes or has four unexcused absences will automatically drop a letter grade.

Anyone who accumulates six unexcused absences will automatically fail. Students who arrive more than 15 minutes after the scheduled start time are considered absent. The Institute's [rules and regulations](#) for approved absences will be strictly adhered to. If you must miss class, please contact me through MS Teams **at least 30 minutes before** class time to discuss excusing your absence. If you miss an in-class exercise or film shoot due to an unexcused absence, then you will not be permitted to make it up.

Core IMPACTS

This is a Core IMPACTS course in the Humanities area. Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master the course content and support their broad academic and career goals. This course should direct students toward a broad, broad-orienting question: *How do I interpret the human experience through creative, linguistic, and philosophical works?*

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcomes:

- Students will effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance, and ethical implications of literary or philosophical texts or works in the visual or performing arts.

Course content, activities, and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Ethical Reasoning
- Information Literacy
- Intercultural Competence

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [contact the Office of Disability Services](#) (404) 894-2563 as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your needs, and to obtain an accommodation letter. Also, please schedule a meeting with me to discuss your learning needs.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you.

Course Expectations, Policies and Resources

Pre- &/or Co-Requisites

- ENGL 1102

Microsoft Teams

We will use **Microsoft Teams** as the primary method of communication in this course. I will share weekly objectives, notes, journal prompts, prereading assignments, previewing assignments, and announcements through Teams. Microsoft Teams is the **best (and preferred) method** to contact me outside of class. If you are running late or need to take an excused absence, please notify me by sending a message through Teams. Emails will not suffice in these instances. If you would like to schedule a meeting with me outside of class, please send those requests via email.

Exams

Except for Practical Exam #1, all exams are administered on Canvas and will close indefinitely after the due date. You can access the exam once it opens and can complete the exam on your own time. Forgetting, oversleeping, computer failure, power failures, and loss of Wi-Fi are not adequate excuses for an incomplete or missed quiz. Please plan accordingly.

Late Assignments and Extensions

Canvas will automatically apply a 6% **deduction per day** that the assignment is **late**, regardless of the reason why it's late. Students may request a one-time extension on any assignment **except for the final project**. Late penalties also apply to group projects. It is essential to maintain open lines of communication with your team to ensure that someone uploads the assignment on time. Students who are ill or have extenuating circumstances may request a 2-day extension on any assignment. Please send your request for an extension to me via Teams.

Viewing List

To access the assigned films, navigate to Canvas > **Pages** > "Viewing List"

Reading List

To access the articles and book sections, navigate to Canvas > **Files** > "Reading Sections"

Schedule of Classes

Week 1: Elements of Good Stories

- Reading: Voice and Vision Chapters 1 and 2; Reading Packet Article 1
- Viewing: Media Block 1

Week 2: Stages of Script Development

- Reading: Voice and Vision Chapters 1 and 2; Reading Packet Article 2
- Viewing: Media Block 1

Week 3: Visual Language of Film: Cinematic Grammar

- Reading: Voice and Vision Chapters 3 and 4
- Viewing: Media Block 2

Week 4: Visual Language of Film: Shots, Sequences, Scenes

- *Reading:* Voice & Vision Chapters 3 and 4
- Viewing: Media Block 2

Week 5: Pre-Production, Previsualization, and Production Design

- *Reading:* Voice & Vision Chapters 5 and 6
- Due: Exercise 1

Week 6: Editing Foundations: Intro to DaVinci Resolve

- Reading: Voice & Vision Chapters 19 and 21
- Viewing: Media Block 3

Week 7: Intro to Cinematography: Camera Operation and the Basics of Exposure

- Reading: Voice & Vision Chapters 10, 12, and 13
- Assignment: Written Exam 1
- Due: Written Exam 1; Exercise 2

Week 6: Intro to Cinematography: Painting with Light

- Reading: Voice & Vision Chapters 10, 12, and 13
- Due: Practical Exam #1 Previsualization Paperwork

Week 7: Intro to Location SND: Field Capture Essentials

- Reading: Voice & Vision Chapter 15

Week 8: Practical Exam #1 and #2 Prep

- Reading: Voice & Vision Chapter 6
- Due: Practical Exam #2 Previsualization Paperwork

Week 9: Practical Exam #1 Film Shoot

Week 10: Practical Exam #2 Film Shoot

Week 11: Practical Exam #3 Film Shoot

Week 12: Final Project Pitch Session

- Due: Practical Exam 1, 2, and 3 edited films

Week 13: Final Project In-Class Shoot: Days 1 and 2

Week 14: Final Project In-Class Shoot: Days 3 and 4

Week 15: Final Project Screenings