

Assessment 2023/2024

Submitted 3/30/2024

Film Studies Minor

Danny Plotnick, Program Director, dplotnick@usfca.edu

Film Studies Mission Statement

The Film Studies minor at USF is a liberal arts-based program that combines film practice and film theory. In today's media landscape, being able to tell a story in 3-5 minutes with video and audio is an essential skill for artists, activists, journalists, citizen filmmakers and creative professionals. Our program teaches students how to analyze historical and contemporary film movements, as well as how to use the tools of the trade to create their own personal works, and to be creative and innovative storytellers in their own right.

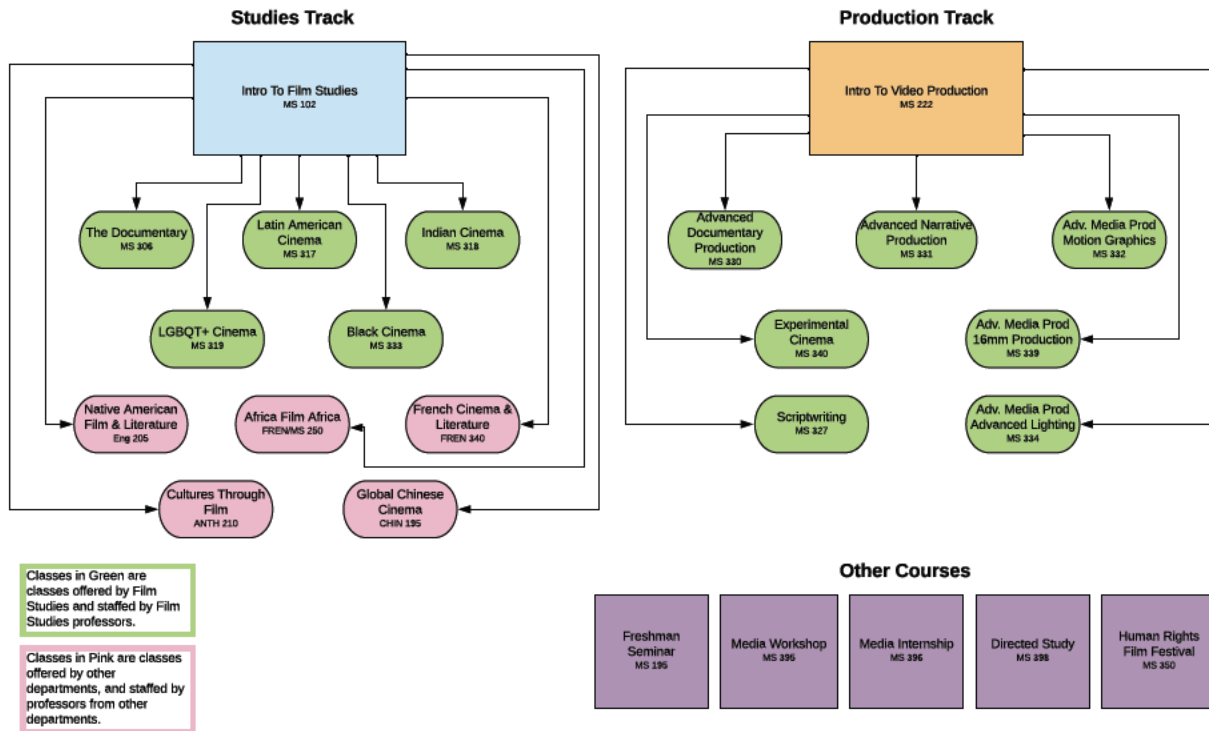
The Film Studies Minor works within, and is infused by, the USF Jesuit mission, which stresses ethical decision-making and promotes social justice goals. Students graduating from the program should not only demonstrate a deep understanding of media in contemporary society, and be able to create short video works; they should also reflect the University's social justice mission in their concern about the ethical values of the media system and its role in serving human needs. Graduates of the program have gone on to careers in media writing, directing and producing; museum and festival curation; video and broadcast journalism; graduate study in film production; non-profit video production; advertising and marketing; and elementary and high school teaching.

Program Learning Outcomes Film Studies

- a. Students should develop an understanding of the language of film.
- b. Students should be able to analyze and critically discuss the aesthetic quality of contemporary videos and films and should understand the formal and rhetorical devices to understand film language on its own terms.
- c. Students should gain an understanding of film as artistic expression and understand how film communicates ideas through image and sound.

Film Studies Curricular Map

Film Studies Courses



PLO Being Assessed

Outcome C: "Students should gain an understanding of film as artistic expression and understand how film communicates ideas through image and sound."

Methodology Used

For each project, students receive extensive feedback in the form of raw footage critiques, rough cut critiques and final critiques. They receive feedback from their fellow students and from the instructor. After each critique session, students have the opportunity to incorporate the feedback that they receive into the cuts of their film. Students can receive more feedback at any time during the post-production process by attending office hours.

Each film is critiqued in the following five areas.

1. Is the **Story** unique and told in an effective way? Taken into consideration are the following.

- Is the story unique?
- Is the plot clear? Can we tell what's happening in the story?
- Is there underlying thematic content?
- Is there a discernable arc to the story?
- Is there a beginning, middle and end?

2. Is the **Cinematography** effective? Taken into consideration are the following.

- Is the film well shot?
 - Is the film well composed?
 - Is the film well lit?
 - Is the film in focus?
 - Are the compositions comfortable?
- Does the style of cinematography help tell the story?
- Did the student shoot enough material/coverage to support the story?

3. Is the **Sound** effective? Taken into consideration are the following.

- Has the production sound been recorded in a clear and audible manner?
- Is there any level of sound design? If so...
- Are the levels good in the mix?
- Does the sound design help tell the story?

4. Does the **Edit** strategy serve the story? Taken into consideration are the following.

- Does the editing scheme support the clarity of the story?
- Does the edit strategy serve as a storytelling device?

For the assessment, each film is rated on a scale from 1-4 for the above categories. A narrative analysis is also attached to each category. The scale is as follows:

- 4-Excellent
- 3-Above Average
- 2- Average
- 1-Below Average

Project Notes:

Here are the notes on the assessed projects.

I have assessed one class from Fall 2023 and one class from Spring 2024.

At the end of this section, I have included a table that summarizes the findings.

Assessment of Final Projects from:

Narrative Fiction Film Production (MS 331-01)

Fall 2023

Professor: Danny Plotnick



Story – Score 3.5

Overall I think your story is working. Narratively, I get what's going on. I still feel like the emotional impact needs to be enhanced. Part of that will come as you smooth out the edit. But from a narrative standpoint, and from a writing standpoint, I think what you have is strong, and you have accomplished what you set out to do.

Cinematography – Score 3.75

The film looks really good. The camerawork is nice. The compositions are nice. You have a talkie, conversation-based film and you do a nice job working with your coverage. I like the grade of the bandshell scene. I do think the two shots you toggle through in the living room scene feel a bit mismatched. One is more contrasty than the other. The beach scene looks great. I love the silhouette shot. I also like the reverse shot of them. You did a good job cleaning up the issue of the sun going down. That's nice.

Editing – Score 3

This is the area that still needs work. The editing rhythm and flow are not quite there. We looked at a lot of specific examples. When you set up the flashbacks and the flash forwards, create a consistency in terms of timing, in terms of how long the black pauses are there. Often you have 3 nice shots in one of those sequences, and then a 4th shot that is too different, or introduces a new idea. When those crop up, I get taken out of the emotional flow. Conceptually, I like what you are doing there, but you can finesse the execution there. The moment when Jesse gets mad and blows up, we are looking at an empty wall. That's an important emotional moment that gets lost because we are looking at the wrong shot. We need moments like that to absolutely land. The cigarette sequence is a bit confusing, and that throws us off the trail at a key emotional moment. Really pay attention to how we get into and out of scenes. There are some nice moments at the edit level, as well. I like that opening montage. I like your overall structure. I think that creates energy. I love the moment when the woman walks away. The timing of that is nice.

Sound – Score 3.25

The overall sound design is good, but you need to work on the mix. Jesse is a bit buried in the mix at times. We really need to hear him. I feel like I am missing some key moments in that opening scene, where you are really establishing the states. Between the odd rhythm of some of the cutting of the flashbacks and the sound mix, I am missing key narrative moments that will emotionally root me in the story.

The film is close, but needs to have more emotional impact. Cleaning up some of the above will help. Also, think about if there are ways where after someone says something that is narratively

or emotionally important, can you open up some space to let that emotional info sink into the audience before you jump to the writerly rejoinder. I think that is missing as well. I want more emotion coming through.

Recut: I really like what you've done with this latest cut. The flow and rhythm are much better. The timing of the flashbacks and black flashes work much better. The cutting of the main scene with the brothers is so much nicer. There are some really nice cuts ("You only care about yourself" moment). Jesse getting mad. The fade out on "Let's go for a drive." into the beach scene. Really nicely done. The audio also seems cleaner. I appreciate all the hard work.



Story – Score 3

At it's core, I like this story. Right now I feel like the narrative is coming across, but some of the film's style is getting in the way of the emotion. There are a lot of choices you are making that get in the way of the narrative and emotion.

Cinematography – Score 4

The film looks great. I love the way you have shot it. The new painting scenes look fantastic. The dripping paint on the canvas look fantastic. I love the way you shot the GGP scenes. You did a nice job with all the coverage. The classroom scene is a bit drab, but you did a good job making it feel like a legit class with just 3 people and an instructor. So your control of the camera is excellent. And, the incorporation of the motion graphics really kills. Great work.

Sound – Score 2

The dialogue recording is pretty good, but occasionally your guy is distorting. I don't remember that from the raw footage, so go back in and figure out what happened. The big issue is the music choices. I don't think they fit with the film. It feels like Marvel, then it feels like horror, and then, apparently, like an inspirational commercial. But the Marvel and horror vibes undercut the emotion. I can't figure out what kind of film I'm watching with those choices. When we stripped the film of music, it played much better. Let the acting carry the emotion in the park scene. You have good actors, so let them do their business and your film will be stronger. I didn't mind the music as much in the second classroom scene and the final scene. But maybe there is a better piece out there. I at least see what the music is doing and it emotionally matches. The sound mix is all over the place as well. The dynamic range of the audio is a bit too extreme. Not going to worry about that, because you are going to change that all up anyway. But you can do a lot with much less music.

Editing – Score 3

The overall edit of the scenes is working. As I discussed, I would lose the cutting in of the canvas. That is overdone and it destroys the flow and emotion. The painting scenes are great. The second classroom scene is great. The final make up scene has a nice flow. You know how to cut for emotion, so don't get too clever. Your acting and your cutting are going to carry the day. So strip it down and lose those canvas moments and the film will breathe much better.

■, I appreciate that you are doing all these fun stylistic things. That's great. But some of them are not working. Get back to basics and I think the film is going to be so much more successful. I have faith in you. I also appreciate how hard you have worked in this class, and how you have incorporated the motion graphics work into the narrative class.

Recut: This cut feels so much better. I like the new piece of music you have. Eliminating all the other music and the quick cuts of the painting make the film a bit more conventional and better. I would say that the grade of the classroom scene feels a bit muddy. I think I would bring up the exposure. But all told, this works so much better.

■ – Story

Score 3.25

The overall narrative is shaping up. I think there is more narrative clarity in this new cut. As mentioned in class, the end doesn't fully land. Her getting the roll happens so quickly, and then there is the cut to Jess. That is leaving people a bit confused, so you really need to come up with a strategy that helps land that ending. And I do think that we still need a little more emotion coming through, which I'll touch upon below.

Cinematography – Score 3.25

What is here is nice. There are times where I do feel you need more coverage. When the lead enters Jess' room, cutaways of the room. You have the pills, but 2 or 3 things that will show Jess' compromised state. Those type of shots can help add to emotion. I feel that whenever someone speaks in that scene, we see them talk. We need more reaction shots. Maybe you have those. The dance scenes are nice, but I want more coverage there as well. Again, maybe you have those, and that's an editing choice. The fact that the flashbacks in the first scene feel like they are the same location of your subject walking. More variety to help open up the film.

Editing – Score 2.75

This is where you need to push yourself. I like the flashbacks in the opening scene, but the rhythm and the cutting strategy can be finessed. Also, let the audio from the flashbacks roll under that whole scene, and then you can be savvy about when the flashback audio cuts out to snap us back into the reality. We talked about the odd shot of the pills. That is so quick and sudden. See if you can infuse more emotion into this scene. Can you infuse the dichotomy of having to perform happiness and encouragement, when you are scared and upset inside. That needs to come across. In the first dance scene, push the anguish shots down stream. Let's see her get lost in her happy place, before those bad thoughts encroach. In the final scene, do we need the flashback to the practices? I also think the fade out of the song is odd. Again, that is part of landing that scene.

Sound – Score 3.25

The dialogue is clear, so that is nice. I think the big thing to work on is the challenge around hearing the same song twice in such close proximity. That feels weird. So maybe the first time, it is eq'd to make it sound like it is coming from the phone, and then it swells and gets big in the

audition. Or can we hear different parts of the song in those different spots. You need to figure out a sound design approach for that.

■■■■, this is shaping up, but you need to spend some time in the edit room to get this over the finish line.

Recut: ■■■■, nice work on making so many changes. I like how the sound from the flashback plays throughout the first scene. I like that you added more cutaways in the scene in Jess' room. I like the close up of them holding hands. That helps create emotion. One or two more moments like that would be great. I like the lyrics of the new song, and the fact that you now have two different songs. I think the cut of the audition is better. I like that we stay with her throughout, right up until we get the montage of flashbacks. It does make it feel like it is a more solid ending. Nice work.

■■■■
Story – Score 3

Editing – Score 3

The narrative is starting to come through. The restructuring you did since the rough cut is really helping ground us in the film. Up until the GGP scene, the story is making sense. I still feel that once he has his big frustrated moment, I'm not sure what is narratively happening in the GGP scene. If he is observing, give us another element to tell us that. You create structures within the film that guide us. His log book that tells him how to communicate, the animated section where he writes his notes. You need some combo of those elements in the GGP scene. I would see what would happen if you lost that scene. Yes, the film will be shorter, but perhaps it will be tighter and make more sense? I think in the editing, you need to connect ideas a little more. He reads the book, gets instructions on how to communicate, then cut to him trying that. You have a lot of shots in between those moments. Smaller edit notes: Cut on action a little more, that will bring more energy. Use a dissolve or dip-to-white or something to transition between the opening credits and Wyatt's arrival. You can sell that a little more. Watch out for title-safe with your titles.

Cinematography – Score 3.75

The film looks great. The animation is amazing. All those little touches of his book, the animations for him writing his report. These are great. I also know how much time those took. So much great detail here. I love the costuming. I love that you used the city in a great way.

Sound – Score 3.5

Your use of music is excellent. I love the opening music for the credits. I love the other songs you use. There is part of me that feels like you should have more music throughout. The film feels long to me, but maybe you can create energy or bring more mood with more music. Maybe the GGP scene works if a greater sense of melancholy and disappointment is present. And maybe that is created by music. What if he is talking to himself about how frustrated he is. Just reuse the Peanuts' voice and subtitle it. I keep harping on the GGP scene. That's the scene that needs to be elevated. Maybe you can create the meaning with the sound.

██████, this is shaping up, but it needs a bit more work to elevate it, and you can do it. I know you have time constraints, but there is a next level this can get to.

Recut: This edit is so much tighter. The film moves better and has greater narrative clarity. I like that right after he looks at the book and sees how he is supposed to get human's attention, we cut right to the scene of him doing so. And then there are some more Union Square moments, but those are the best one's where he see him trying to make contact or feeling sad. Then the ripping up of the earth is more connected to his frustration. I like how you have now infused meaning into the GGP scene. By putting subtitles re: new methods, that helps justify that scene. And then by putting in his notetaking in that scene, this now feels like a complete scene. The bear head scene cuts so much tighter now! And they disappear! Nice work! (95)

██████ Story – Score 3

As we talked about in the rough cut, people were a bit confused about his being an alien. I don't know if that has been cleared up. Obviously, at the end it has been cleared up – and that is fantastic. I love that moment. But bringing that clarity into focus earlier will be beneficial.

Cinematography – Score 3.75

The film look really good. This is shot so well. The scene from the headlands. Those are gorgeous. I love how you shoot him looking over the cityscapes. That is so nice. This is the strength of your film. I like the Motion Graphics/Visual Effects you have brought. The final scene is great. I like what you are trying to do with the rainbow filter elsewhere, but as we discussed, I don't think you are using it in a consistent way. You need to create a consistency, and perhaps with that his alien nature will become more clear.

Editing – Sore 2.75

I still feel the film is a bit clunky, especially at the outset. Once we get to the Headlands, things seem to settle in. But in the first act and start of the second act, the rhythm feels off. This affects the story. I also feel like you can cut for more comedy. There is a lot of funny here, but it gets undersold by the edit.

Sound – Score 3.5

The film sounds good. The dialogue is crisp. I wonder if you can add more effects. Definitely at the end. But maybe even throughout. I'm not sure that is the answer, but I would try it. Maybe he has some sound that accompanies his weirdness. Not sure about that, but it maybe worth a try. There is some audio clicking at the edits that you should try to clean up.

██████, I appreciate the effect you added, but by not recutting since the rough cut, I feel you squandered a lot of time to improve the piece. There is a solid piece in here, but you have to put in the time.

Story – Score 4

[REDACTED], this film is so much fun. It brings so much energy. At the narrative level, it is really working. We get into Rawan's fuzzed-out mindset right away. The film has a really slow build, and then once it takes off, it goes, and we are swept up in it. I love the sudden nightmare open, and how you mirror that at the end. I feel you also did a much better job landing that ending. That is all really nice.

Cinematography - Score 3.75

The film looks great. You cover a lot of ground. You have a lot of control over the camera. The compositions are nice. The lighting is really nice. We always know what we should be looking at. The one scene that could use some finesse is the first outdoor scene. Some of the shots feel very blue. Also, shot-to-shot, I believe there are some grading inconsistencies in that scene. By the way, I liked the inclusion of the notebook with the drawing on the ground in that scene. And you know, I love that determined-walking down the hall scene. So visually striking. And I love the way we see the vision of Hazel. I love how those visions are shot. You've got the horror-vibe down.

Editing – Score 4

You are in full control of the rhythm and the pacing of the film. That is so nice. The film is really propulsive, and we get sucked in. That is all due to your control of the edit. And again, you've got a lot of coverage, but you also know how to use it. There are a lot of quick shots, and glances, and misdirection. This is a tough type of film to edit, but you really deliver.

Sound – Score 3

This is the area that you need to focus on right now. The overall sound design is nice, but your mix is all over the place. Some scene are really loud, some are quiet. You need to exercise the same level of control over the sound mix as you do over the edit. Also, we talked about the eq on a couple of scenes – the bus stop, the first exterior scene. I feel like the male voices have too much high end and are starting to sound a bit unreal. So spend a session cleaning that up. Your film deserves that.

[REDACTED] - Great job. I love this film. You have accomplished what you set out to. But now just finesse that audio to get it over the finish line.

Recut. The sound levels are much better now. The previous mix was all over the place, but everything is in line now. I would thank the professor who gave you permission to shoot in the Thacher Gallery.

Story – Score 3.5

[REDACTED] The narrative is coming across. Your actors are great, and as an audience member, I am rooting for them. I'm invested in them. There are two areas that you can play with. As mentioned, the transition to the second scene, when they are at the café discussing her failed meeting.

Logically, I don't know how the film gets there. It feels to sudden. I wonder if you put the title between the first scene and that scene, if that will create the feeling that time has passed and we will better accept that transition. The other scene in question is the final scene. I think you did a great job recutting that scene, but I wonder if there is logic in the suggestion of making it shorter. Give us that moment and end there. I'm not certain about that, but it's worth considering.

Cinematography – Score 4

The film looks really good. You covered a lot of ground. So kudos to you, especially because you didn't have a lot of help. The shot of your female lead with the wall lights behind her. That looks so good. Some of the exterior opening shots are fantastic as well. You should be really proud of the camera work and the amount of coverage you got. I liked the choreography of their collision as well. Obviously, scene 3 has that warp stabilizer issue that needs addressing.

Editing – Score 3.75

The film has a great pace and rhythm to it. I think you've now done a better job placing all the page turns. That sits in the film better. I don't know if you changed that, or if the music makes it feel more solid. Either way, it works. The film has a light and breezy feel and so much of that is coming from the edit. Again, the transition to the second scene needs to be finessed. Because that happens so early, it is important. Maybe you can come up with a solution. The out of sequence photo gift scene also might be worth looking at. I almost feel you can pull out the second part of that scene. Shortening the film couldn't hurt, and I don't think anyone would miss that moment.

Sound – Score 3.5

I really like the use of music. That helps create the mood, and the breeziness. This is a very sweet film, and the music cues help sell that. In class some folks had some issues with a couple of the cues, so I'd play around and see what you come up with. But the overall design and timing and mix is very nice. I love the sparkly sound at their collision, though I think you can play with the timing of that. The rough cut was much more dour, and this cut is so much more alive and romantic, and I feel that your use of music is paying dividends for you. As discussed, I think there is some eq work that needs to be done in the second scene. His voice is starting to sound unnatural. The rumble in the photo gift scene is odd to me as well.

■■■■■, great work. It's clear you put a lot of work into this film, and worked really hard on it. Some minor fixes will get this over the finish line.

Recut: ■■■■■ I like the new first song. I think that works better. I noticed you fixed your warp stabilizer issue. That said, that scene is a bit shaky and not in keeping with the rest of the beautiful cinematography. I heard an audible gasp in the audience when it was revealed she had died. Really nice work.

██████████
Story – Score 3.75

This has really come together. The narrative was coming across in the rough cut, but the mood and tone were not right for the story. The changes you made, have helped set this into the right frame of mind, and therefore the story is becoming more impactful. I also like the new lines that you brought in for the voice of the mom. That really helps hook us in during the third act. As discussed in class, I think we do need a tonal shift right at the end, to make things more warm, more cozy, more family. That will help land the end, and create an emotional shift for your character. I want to feel that a bit more in the closing moments of your film.

Cinematography – Score 4

The film is really beautiful. You should be proud of that. So many amazing shots. And then, on top of that, you have your special effects. I really wasn't sure how that was going to work when you proposed it, but it is a pretty stunning effect. So good on you for envisioning that and then executing that.

Editing – Score 3.75

The film has a nice rhythm and pace to it. I like some of the choices you made between the rough and final cut at the edit level. I like introducing Zack out of focus. I like the timing of the introduction of the weird guy. I like the decision to superimpose the weird guy over the drawings and then over the lead. Those are nice tactics that help get us in her mindset a bit more. That mental space wasn't there for us in the rough cut. And then I like the Zach reveal, particularly how it plays off against the mom's voice. The structure you came up with is really working.

Sound – Score 3.5

I like that you pulled back on the sound. The horror-vibe of the rough cut wasn't working. Your solution was to strip away some layers, and that worked. I do like how you recorded Bria. I like the eq on that. Though, you need to bring in room tone so it feels like it is really in the space. I think you can bury the scream in the sound mix a bit. And I would try a sound effect that is not a heartbeat for the obvious heart beat moment. The foley on the paste sound. Great work and glad you went out and created it. So visceral!

All told, really nice job, ██████████. I know you put in a lot of effort to get it to this point. I would spend a little time finessing sound to get it over the finish line.

Recut: Nice work on adjusting the audio in the final scene. I like the sound bed you created for the mom's phone call. That sits in the mix so much better. I also like the inclusion of the little bit of guitar coming through. That's nice as well.

██████████,
Story – Score 3.5

██████████, I appreciate that you were willing to transform your story from what you wrote and what you intended. Unfortunately, what you shot didn't allow you to execute that initial concept at the level you wanted. You could have reshot, which you didn't have the bandwidth

for. What you did was work with what you have to create a story that worked with the available material. Good on you for recognizing that. That is incredibly difficult to do. I think you need to clean up the first act a bit. I like that you went with the story in the café as a conversation between friends. We need to hear that a little better to really settle us in. And then in the fight scene, she turns away too quickly or seems to be smiling. So that needs to land better.

Cinematography – Score 3.5

The film looks really good. The café scene is shot nicely, which is tough due to the fact that they were in a window. I like how you capture them moving through the city. The montage nature is nice. I love the nighttime and the neon glow of those shots. There is one shot on a bench that is incredibly grainy, which we could clean up with NEAT if we had time. But nice work.

Editing – Score 3.75

Again, you made this film come to life in the edit. You had to abandon your initial plan, and create something brand new. Amazing work there. A couple minor issues in the montage. People don't like the DeYoung shot. I didn't mind it. But I love the way that montage scene is cut. I think you need to play with recutting her exit. Maybe a call back to her exiting in the flashback from the first scene. The shot that you use doesn't work for me, and that is critical. But I like the overall structure of your cut. It's simple but effective. Meet with friend intercut with flashbacks/Montage/break up/final shot-confession.

Sound – Score 2.75

This is the area that needs work. Obviously, you are missing the final v.o. The sound recording of dialogue in the café is too low. Can you ADR it? Do you need that moment if we can't hear it. You need to fix that. I'd bring his scream down. It feels too big. Bury that in the mix.

All told, nice work making this come to life.

██████, The leaving scene is a lot better. I like that we hear her line in that moment, and the better shot selection creates more impact. I'd still lower his voice more. I like the idea of the final v.o., but it is hard to hear. That scene becomes so much louder than the rest of the film, and the v.o. gets buried in the mix and tonally it is hard to hear. So you need to do another pass on that. As we talked about at the screening, it is still hard to hear his first line. You can keep it. I'd also try to just eliminate that line. I wonder if you need it.

██████ Story – Score 3.75

██████, This is a really fun piece. The narrative is coming across. The arc is in place. What I like most about it is how you handle the tone and tenor of the piece. The film is really funny, but it also has some serious moments. The self-doubt of your character really comes across in an emotional way. Balancing comedy and emotion can be really tough, but you manage that so well. Also, the acting in your film is great. The teacher is a weirdo, but that energy works.

Cinematography – Score 3.75

The film looks great. I love that early low, wide angle of the teacher. All the moving shots are really nice. I love the shot that scans the room and ends at the scissors. So many really nice moments. Lots of control of the camera. I think that in the hear-to-heart scene with the roommate, the color grade was a bit all over the map. You might want to fix that. And the other thing is I wish we saw the paintings a little more. That swirl that she's going for – I want to see it. You said you couldn't paint it, but that's where art direction comes in. Find someone who can deliver that for you. But you've done a nice job working around it.

Editing – Score 3.75

The film has a great rhythm to it. The flow is so natural. You have a great handle on how to edit. As mentioned, I would bring the shot of the teacher holding her hand, right after she cuts it, or right after we see the paper. Since the mark on the paper doesn't really look like blood, you want to really hit home on that idea, and your editing sequencing will help drive that point home. Obviously, there is still one scene you need to include and that is an important one. We have to see her obsession. Her pursuit of the swirl could hit home more, and that will help earn her descent into murder and madness. So that missing scene looms large.

Sound – Score 3.25

The dialogue is recorded really nicely. Everything is crystal clear. You have some left/right audio issues that need fixing. That might be an issue throughout the film. Also, there is a lot of audio clicking at the edit points. Be sure to fix that with some very short crossfades.

██████, I'm so happy how this film came out. It's really fun. I know that you have struggled quite a lot, but great job persevering!

Recut: I really like the new montage scene. I love the French fry art. I also feel like the heart-to-heart scene with the roommate benefits from the new montage. It really shows her obsession. I like how you recut the final scene as well. That works. Obviously, you have the repeated scene. It feels like you cleaned up your audio for the majority of the film. That said, I still think there is some clean up you can do in the last scene. There is a big shift in tone in the last scene from her saying "Professor" to the Professor saying, "It's been a while since I've seen you". Also, there seems to be an audio dip in that moment of realization she has. I feel like the audio should get bigger in that moment. So, look at the audio in that final scene.

Story – Score 3.5

██████, the story is coming through. The narrative is clear. I like the overall structure of the film. Right now, the issue for me is the tone. I think this can be funnier. There are some funny moments, but I think those could be coming at a quicker pace, which will help add to the mounting panic. This feels like more of a slow burn, and I'm not sure that is what you are going for.

Cinematography – Score 3.5

The film looks good. I like the way it's shot. You have a lot of coverage to work with and it gives you options for the edit. I think there are some color grading issues (especially in the room 313 and the film equipment room scenes).

Editing – Score 2.75

The overall structure is really working, but I think there are scenes that can be tightened up. In class, we talked a lot about the actual Attack scene. I think you can build up the tension there. And, as I mentioned, you need to more quickly get us from that comic moment into the more panicked moment. There is an odd transition length. In the classroom scene, there will be more comedy if you cut from her asking about which room she is in, to Andoni's turn towards her. In the book scene, it needs to be shorter. Think about mounting tension, and the bad day cascading around her. Build, build, build.

Sound – Score 3

I really appreciate that you got a friend to do your sound design and mix. That is a great call. I like some of the effects (the beeping of the book purchase). I like how the v.o., ducks under the dialogue from the real world. There are a lot of nice touches. That said, I think there is some work to do on the mix. I think there are some left/right issues. The eq of the v.o. could be a bit better somehow. I can't be more specific, but I think it sits a bit oddly in the mix. I'm not enough of a sound guy to give you precise instructions, but I'd play with that. Nora is very high-end (treble) in the first scene. Jack's great line gets a bit lost. That was hitting more in the rough cut. I would let the Smiths play out through the phone call scene. They will bring humor. You might have to duck the song down a bit for the actual call, but you can find humor where you choose to cut that song out. There may be a better sound design choice for the onset of the panic attack. Maybe certain sounds from the scene cut out and we are left in her head at that point. So this is the big area to play with that will help elevate the cut.

■■■■, really nice work. This is coming together so nicely, just a handful of more items to address.

Recut: ■■■■, the final scene is so much more effective now. I like the fracture style of the editing. I like inserting of the flashbacks. I like what you did with the audio. I like that when Nora shows up, her voice is not there, but only shows up at the end of the scene. Overall, much better. I think you recut the scene when she enters the classroom, and that is much better. I still wish the book scene was a tad shorter. I would also encourage you to do one more pass with your sound designer to clean up some of those issues. Even though class is done, you'll be happy that you did that for your reel. Nice work all semester long, Bria!

■■■■, Story – Score 3.25

■■■■, this is a really good story, and I want it to pop a little more. The narrative is very clear, so there aren't issues there. Right now, I think there are some tone issues that could be addressed. The feel of the first two scenes is just a little off. Once you can fully take control of

that, the film will start to fall in place. I think that will come with work at both the sound and edit level.

Editing – Score 3

Sound – Score 2.75

The overall structure of the film is really good. I also like how you use black throughout and how you are cutting between time frames. That is really nice. The fractured vibe of your editing structure is really nice. I love the opening line taking place in black and then how it cuts to the opening scene. As I mentioned in class, I don't love that opening song. It doesn't quite create the right mood. It almost has too much theatrical drama to it. I don't feel rooted in her panic. So I think, bringing in some ambient/diegetic sound might also help put us the mindset of your lead character and really throw us into the film. There was some question in class about how to read them frolicking on the beach. I think you need all panic and anger or you need to toggle back and forth between the happy moments and the pain. The one shot of happiness can throw us a bit.

The second scene feels a bit awkward. I think with more intentional sound design you can get that scene to work. I think shortening the singing section, and then bringing in music to play over the table scene and mixing that song with the sound from the scene will be more impactful. And then there will also be a greater audio shift when the hand slaps and we get to the domestic scene. More sound design for the stabbing. You also need to address the sound levels. They are really all over the place.


At the edit level, every now and again, I think less will be more. Cut to black on him smiling at the end. The laugh felt like too much for some people. I think even some of the close ups on her when she is quivering. Quicker shots may have more impact.

Cinematography – Score 4

The film looks amazing. The composition, the lighting, the amount of coverage you have. The film has a great visual look. I love the art direction and the sets as well. You really pushed yourself to make a film that has a standout look, and you really accomplished that.

You have the makings of a really strong film. Right now, you just need to find the tone and tighten up the first act.

Recut: The first scene works so much better. I like the song choice, and I like the added shots. That better grounds us into the film. The second scene has some better choices. Shortening the I Will Survive scene is good; I like the music over the hanging out scene; But now that scene feels too short. We need to stay in it a bit longer to get the contrast between her life with friends and the home life. I like the stabbing sound effect. I see how you mixed the baby a bit differently, and that is also more effective. I like the black and white, but I do feel like the vignette was a bit too much. But lots of improvement.



Story – Score 4 This is a really great story. I appreciate how it has progressed from the first draft to the final cut. It really has come together. The initial cut wasn't fully resonating. There is a lot of subtlety and observational moments that live between the dialogue, and you have brought that out in this final cut. Great work.

Cinematography – Score 4 The film looks great. You've given yourself a lot of coverage to work with, and that has served you so well. I like how you shoot the scenes at home, between the two roommates. We talked in class how they feel like old friends. That's a testament to your actors, and to your directors. But you also make that space feel like a home. So your staging and blocking and camerawork help solidify their connection. The park scene has a beautiful glow to it. I like how you shot the liquor store. Really nice work capturing the action of your film.

Editing – Score 3.5 Overall, the film has a nice flow to it. The interview interaction scene works so much better now. I noticed how you recut that to create more emotional resonance. We also see the photographs with more authority that pays off later in the film. I think the scene in the Skatin Place works better as well. That interaction has more narrative heft based on how you recut it. As mentioned in class, there are a couple jump cut moments spread throughout the film that don't seem in keeping with the rest of the film. Your film has this smooth flow throughout, and those jump cuts don't work for me. They take me out of the moments a little bit. So, I'd work on smoothing out those moments.

Sound – Score 3.5 Really nice job at the sound level on this film. The only area to work on is that moment where we jump to two weeks later. The audio fade is a bit quick. I would work on the audio transition in that moment. Syairah, Great job. Just a couple little smoothing clean ups needed.

Recut: I like the changes you made. The transition for the "2 weeks" section is much cleaner. The audio levels seem cleaner and smoother. And I have to say, I like the Twitter interface so much better. It is narratively clearer and it is visually much nicer. I like all the phone sounds as she is getting responses as well. Nice work!

Assessment of Final Projects from:
Intro to Video Production (MS 222-01)
Spring 2024
Professor: Danny Plotnick

[REDACTED]

Story – Score 3.5

I like the overall story. I like how you have woven together your personal story into the larger story of free comic book day, community and nerd culture. That is really nice. Right now, I think you can tighten up the section at Mission Comics – that section takes us a little bit away from the community aspect of free comic day. Some minor tightening in that section will help focus the film.

Cinematography – Score 3.75

Nice job here. I love the amount of coverage and b-roll you shot. There is a lot to look at and explore visually. The b-roll for a project like this can be difficult. It's a run and gun style, but you've done a nice job. I also like some of the shots that were staged with Kirra. That helps fill out the piece. I love the last shot, and that last sequence on the street as well. The interview set-ups look really nice as well. All told, nice work.

Editing – Score 3.5

As mentioned above, the story is really coming across. I like the overall arc and structure of the film. Right after the first Leef interview, the energy dips. This is the moment where you need to leap into the community aspect, but the energy dips a bit. That has to do with shot choice and even the odd audio transition in that moment. Tightening up that transition will pay dividends. I also feel that section runs a bit long. The film starts feeling more specifically about the shop, and less about the bigger picture items. Losing 10-15 seconds in there will get us back to the bigger picture items a bit more quickly and end up giving you greater impact. I also really like the motion graphics elements. Those are nice to add to the style.

Sound – Score 4

The film sounds great. The interviews are clean. Your audio mixing is quite nice. I also like how you use the songs.

All told really strong. A- Tighten it up and that grade will come up.

[REDACTED], Nice job on the recut. I felt like the transition from Leef to the trivia event was much smoother. And that whole section felt tighter to me. I also felt that the map section and opening calendar section felt tighter – but maybe that had already happened. I can't remember. But all told, much tighter. I would still bring up your v.o. a little bit. Also, that moment when you transition from the trivia night back to FCD, I would open that back up just a little bit. Just by a couple seconds. There is a transition to a new topic, but the two scenes crash into each other a bit too suddenly. But all told, great job.

Story – Score 3.75

Editing – Score 3.5

All told, really nice job telling the story of fandom. I really appreciate how this film transformed from the rough cut to the final cut stage. The initial cut was more about the specifics of the bands/artists they liked, and less about the nature of fandom. By restructuring your film, you have made the piece more universal. I still think the opening can be improved. I have a hard time reading that opening. I'm not quite hearing the Harry Styles/Warhol piece, and then the vibe of the talking over the energetic shots of artists performing doesn't match, and so for that first minute, I am a bit lost. But then the interviews start and you do such a nice job cutting between your two subjects. They are in conversation with each other, and that's where you really communicate your ideas. I love how you integrated all the b-roll. I love how you included personal photos as well. The final sequence is really great, and does such a nice job summarizing your piece and building on the topics your subjects were talking about. You just need to reinvision that first section.

Cinematography – Score 4

The film looks great. I like how you shot the interviews. Again, I love the amount of b-roll you gathered. That amount of footage allowed for an energetic editing style. All that footage also helped elevate the film from the rough cut stage where we were just seeing the interviews. You harnessed the power of the b-roll.

Sound – Score 3.75

The film sounds good. The interviews are clean – though Alyssa is almost distorting. So just watch those levels for future projects. I like how and when you integrate new songs that run beneath the interviews. There are some nice choices there. Also, the overall sound mix is good. I like how you incorporate the other voices over the last sequence as well. Nice job.

All told, really nice work. It is an A- for now, but work on that open and the grade can come up.

Story – Score 4

I really like how this story came together. I'm always a little leery of talking to people re: broad topics, but I love what your interview subjects had to say. I also like that one was about creativity and one was about nature. That was a good pairing, and you did a nice job getting the interviews to compliment each other.

Cinematography – Score 3.75

The film looks really beautiful. I love that it is all b-roll. The shots in the sculpture studio are fantastic. We are in it. We can feel the working of the clay. Great eye to capture all of that detail. That section is really stunning. The second half is also strong. It is a trickier beast because it calls for night shooting, which is just a bit tougher with this camera. I love the zoom shot of the moon. That is nicely done. I like choosing nighttime elements like the lit up trees. You ended up needing some stock footage to fill in for what you couldn't shoot. Those are

better integrated than in the rough cut, but still feel just a hint not in keeping with what you shot.

Editing – Score 4

The overall structure is nice. That transition moment and how you use the moon for the “o” is great. I love that there are moment where the film opens up and we are allowed time to let the interviews sink in. Little touches like that make this film work. There is a calmness to the piece and the editing rhythm helps get us there. I do like the opening now and how that transitions into the sculpture studio. That works for me. It also gives the film a certain kind of energy from the get go.

Sound – Score 3.5

I like the opening sound collage. But you need to work on the mix a bit. It is so loud compared to what follows. That is part of your goal, but it can be finessed. I did notice that section hits ODB, so you need to just drop it a bit. The quality of the interview in the sculpture studio is fantastic. I do wish the second interview was as clean. The second interview is easy to hear, just so tonally different than the first interview. That’s fine, but just something to consider for future projects.

Great work. Love the film. Try cleaning up the sound issues for that opening transition. Regardless, it’s an A.

Really nice job on the recut. I like the new opening audio. That feels much more solid. Not exactly sure what color grading you did, but the whole film looks nice. Great work.

[REDACTED],

Story – Score 4

Great job in the overall structure of the film. You do a nice job talking about caring for dogs in San Francisco, and then how dogs can help people find and create community. You had a couple different directions this film could have gone, and you did a nice job structuring your film to work with all the material, and make a piece that feels very cohesive, very on-point, but a film that also addresses a couple different dog-focused experiences.

Cinematography - Score 4

The film looks so beautiful. Particularly the first act out in the Marina/Crissy Field area. That sequence sinks us into the world of San Francisco. The overcast nature is really nice as well. I like the variety of shots at the Corgi meet up. I know you had challenges with the harsh light, but you ultimately got some great shots. All those nice moments of the dogs eating ice cream were great. That shot of that group of dogs at Crissy field is so nice as well. I also like that you got some Golden Gate Park shots as well. There is so much coverage here, and so much beautiful photography of dogs. I love a film that is all b-roll, and you did that with such an eye for detail.

Editing – Score 4

Great job creating a rhythm. I like that it is a slow intro into the dog world in the opening sequence. You establish the place, and then bring in the dogs. And that's part of what you wanted to address. Dogs in San Francisco. And the opening does that with visual storytelling. In the initial cut, I felt you needed a greater variety of shots at the Corgi meet up, and you delivered that. You had a lot of footage to choose from, and I felt there was a more judicious selection of shots for that sequence. I love the final act as well, where we are just in dog land. And again, you keep introducing new types of footage which is great in helping us keep interest. Also, love the credits. So much fun. Just make sure they are within "action safe".

Sound – Score 3.75

Overall, the audio of the interviews sound great. I think you can work on the mix in the opening sequence. I think your guy gets a bit lost in the mix. So just fine tune that. I like the music you choose. I like how you transition between scenes, especially with the music as we head into the Corgi section. As I mentioned in class, I felt the last audio clip we here felt a bit isolated and not anchored to the story as much as other points. You mentioned that how you handled the music was different in that moment. So, play around with the music to better situate that interview into that moment of the film. Again, that's your last bit of interview audio, so you really want it to land.

All told, great job. This is an A, but fine tune those couple of items!

Great job on the recut. I think the sound mix for the opening scene is better. And I like that music cue you put into that audio section near the end. That feels much more solid to me. Also, that shows the power of how minor changes can have major impact. Great job!



Story – Score 3.25

I like the story. I like the quality of the interviews. Your subjects are engaging. But right now, though I'm following the story and the structure, I don't feel as emotionally invested as I should. The key to bringing out that emotion is to bring more music to the film. I need to see and hear what they do in a clearer fashion. I want to see their creativity in action. It's there, but it needs to come to the foreground.

Cinematography – Score 3.25

The film looks good. I like the way the interviews are shot. The b-roll for Jesse's section is really nice, but overall, I want more b-roll of them playing. The film feels very bedroom bound and one more type of element that gets us out of there, or helps dive into their music or seeing them play for longer periods will help.

Editing – Score 3.25

I like the opening montage. I like the conversational flow between the 3 of them. The overall arc and structure is nice. The film does feel a bit long to me. With more music, that may not be the case. But again, including more performance or music will help balance the talking with us becoming more immersed in their art.

Sound – Score 3.5

The interviews sound great. You need to do one pass on the mix. Jesse is louder than others. Also, there is some of that audio clicking at audio edits that can smooth out.

All told, nice work, but I feel you can take it to the next level as well.

[REDACTED], Nice job on the recut. The film does feel a little tighter with some nice edit choices. And while I think I'm getting a bit more music from them, I still feel like I want to see them perform even more. I just want to sink into the music just a tad more. The sound mix sounds much better, though. Nice job on the additional sound pass.

Story – Score 4

Really nice job conveying the story of the Plovers and Pt. Reyes. I appreciate how you pivoted. You planned on having the film information be interview-driven, but when that didn't work out, you took all the research and created a script, and that turned out so nicely. Really nice work.

Cinematography – Score 3.5

All told, the film looks really good. Again, I appreciate you going back up to Pt. Reyes to reshoot. That first shoot didn't work out the way you planned, but you learned, and then tried to fix. That is to be applauded. The more stable material from the reshoot looks fantastic. I like the stabilization and zooming you were able to do on some of the shakier footage. It does cause some artifacting that we talked about, but you just take what you learned and apply it to the new film. But all told, we are visually sinking into the nature doc aspect of the film that you were aiming for. A couple more plover shots with greater variety would help.

Editing – Score 3.25

The overall rhythm and flow is nice. I love the opening montage. I love how the space in the v.o. as you introduce Pt. Reyes. As I mentioned in class, I think the gap in the middle that is devoid of v.o. feels too long. It almost feels like we are done with the v.o. You need to tighten that up. I know that part of the issue is the song, but you have to figure that out. And then when we get to the plovers, some of those shots are just too long. I feel they are not in keeping with the rhythm of the rest of the edit. That's where you need some more shots. Maybe you can break up the shots and use smaller sections of them.

Sound – Score 4

The film sounds great. The quality of the v.o. is great in terms of tenor and technicality. I like that you got someone from one of the audio classes to record it. I like the 2 songs and the use of music. At the mix level, I think the voice fights the music just a bit. So there is a minor tweak to be done there.

Great job [REDACTED]. I appreciate the effort and perseverance on this one.

[REDACTED], nice job on the recut- I feel like the artifacting looks better. Not sure if you polished that up, or by virtue of watching on the smaller screen, I'm not noticing it as much. I still feel

like you can cut down that gap in v.o. It still feels long to me. I'm waiting for the voice to return. I also feel like some of the plover shots are still too long. Regardless, this is a strong film.

[REDACTED],

Story – Score 3.5

I really appreciate how this film has shaped up. I like the overall arc and structure. I like how you move from how one gets into music, into what their music is about, into the music community. I think there is a nice flow there. I do feel when you get to the specificity of the Knockout, that is less effective. I almost feel you can lose that whole scene. And again, that's where structurally the film seemed to be wrapping up, and then a whole new section appears, so you need to figure out how to improve that 3rd act.

Cinematography – Score 4

The film looks really good. I like the set up of the interviews. I also see all the effort put in to getting all that b-roll at the last minute. Last week, we had no b-roll. This week, we are all over the city gathering great footage. The film is really engaging because of that material. I think you can finesse that Golden Gate Park footage a bit. That doesn't always seem like it fits.

Editing – Score 3.5

Again, I like the arc, the structure the pace. In the first act, you can finesse the moment when he transitions from talking about how he got into music and then he begins to talk about his band. That is a moment where you need to create a transition. And then dealing with the third act. It feels like you have two endings sandwiching a section about the Knockout room. Focus on working out that area.

Sound – Score 3.75

The film sounds great. I really like how you mix the interviews with the music for Olin. I feel that Jesse gets buried in the mix at times. So work on finessing that.

But really nice job pushing through on this one. Make some changes and the grade will come up.

Table Summarizing Findings:

Film Studies Assessment 2023/2024				
Narrative Fall 2023	Story	Cinematography	Edit	Sound
[REDACTED]	3.5	3.75	3	3.25
Evan	3	4	2	3
[REDACTED]	3.25	3.25	2.75	3.25
[REDACTED]	3	3.75	3	3.5
[REDACTED]	3	3.75	2.75	3.5
[REDACTED]	4.0	3.75	4	3
[REDACTED]	3.5	4	3.75	3.5
[REDACTED]	3.75	4	3.75	3.5
[REDACTED]	3.5	3.5	3.75	2.75
[REDACTED]	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.25
[REDACTED]	3.5	3.5	2.75	3
[REDACTED]	3.25	4	3	2.75
[REDACTED]	4	4	3.5	3.5
Average F 2023	3.46	3.77	3.21	3.21
Intro to Video Production Spring 2024	Story	Cinematography	Edit	Sound
and [REDACTED]	3.5	3.75	3.5	4
[REDACTED]	3.75	4	3.5	3.75
[REDACTED]	4	3.75	4	3.5
[REDACTED]	4	4	4	3.75
[REDACTED]	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.5
[REDACTED]	4.0	3.5	3.25	4
[REDACTED]	3.5	4	3.5	3.75
Average S 2024	3.71	3.75	3.57	3.75
Average Both classes	3.59	3.76	3.39	3.48
Scale of 1-4 4 - Excellent 3 - Above Average 2 - Average 1 - Below Average				

Summary of Findings

Based on this assessment, I am confident that our Program Learning Outcomes are being met. Our students consistently make very strong films. They understand the importance of telling meaningful, unique stories. Additionally, they are figuring out how to use film language (image and sound) to elevate those stories. The overall quality of the film continues to improve year-to-year.

As a side note, we have been continually upgrading our equipment. In the past several years, we have moved to a style of lights that are easier for the students to use. As a result, the cinematography for their films are really solid, and improving, especially at the intro level.