

Assessment 2021/2022

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Film Studies Minor

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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.

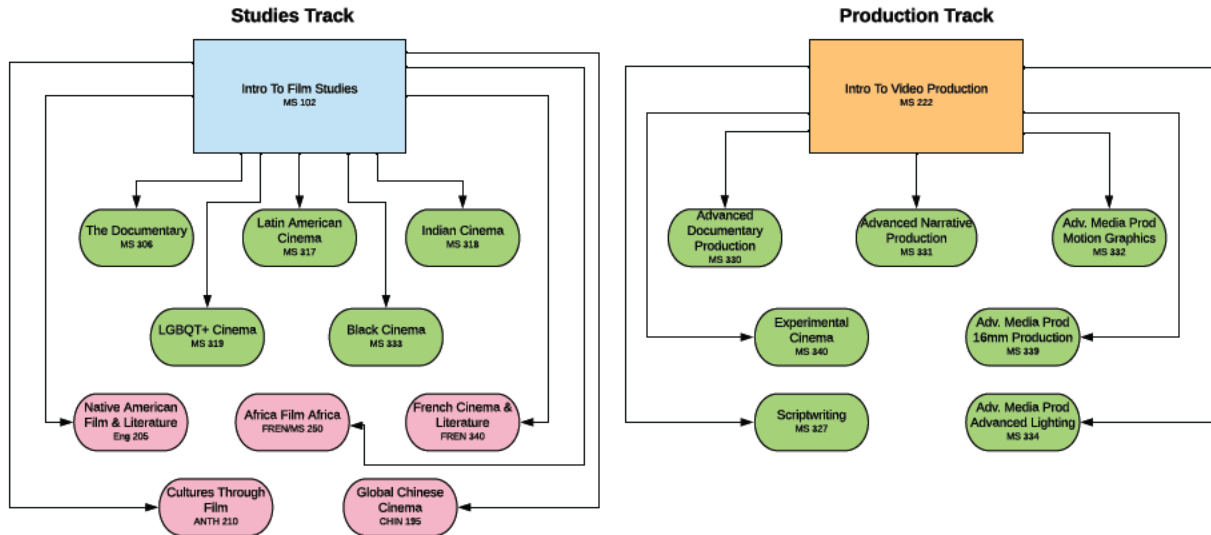
The Film Studies Minor works within, and is infused by, the USF Jesuit mission, which stresses ethical decision-making and promotes social justice goals. Students graduating from the program should not only demonstrate a deep understanding of media in contemporary society, and be able to create short 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



Classes in Green are classes offered by Film Studies and staffed by Film Studies professors.

Classes in Pink are classes offered by other departments, and staffed by professors from other departments.

Other Courses



PLO Being Assessed

Outcome A: "Students should develop an understanding of the language of film"

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?

5. **Effort**. Taken into consideration are the following.

- Did the student work hard on the film?
- Did they re-shoot if necessary?
- Did they work hard in the edit to overcome production problems?
- Did they spend enough time in each stage of production?

- Did they incorporate the feedback received during critique into their final film?

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 2021 and one class from Spring 2022.

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 2021

Professor: Danny Plotnick

Story – Score 3.75

[REDACTED], I love that you tackled something so important and personal for you. This is a tough story tell because of the need to do it justice and with respect. I believe you achieved that. Getting a strong acting performance was important and you did a great job working with your actor. The arc of the story is there. I think the 3rd act could land just a hint more strongly. I want to see her walk into the restaurant and order. In this cut, I don't think I picked up on that she was walking into a restaurant. Do you have a close up of that sign? And then when she's eating, she is talking to her mom, but that conversation isn't coming across as strongly as I remember in previous cuts. So hearing that conversation becomes important in that moment.

Cinematography – Score 4

The film looks great. I love the outdoor scenes shot at dusk. Those have a great look. I also like all of the little camera moves you are making. You are using the camera to show instability. That can be tough to do. You want control but you also want shakiness. You do a good job finding common ground. In the opening scene you have all these quick little zooms on her face. Moments like that work really nicely.

Editing – Score 3.75

Sound – Score 3.75

Overall, the film has a nice flow to it. It felt long in all the cuts, but this iteration with the sound design feels right. I like how you cut the opening – intercutting between the informational text cards and her routine. I like that you lost that little jump cut at the beginning. I like where the music comes in. Right away that better helps establish the mood. In the daytime living room scene, the sound design really sells it. We hear the progression of the day as we move from phone conversation to tv sounds. The mix between voice and tv and diegetic sounds works really nice in there. For the phone conversation with Mom, you should bring her down in the mix. I like the way you eq'd it, but Mom feels louder than [REDACTED] in that moment and it should be the other way around. The sound design of the scratching of the pen during the list making scene and the music is really nice as well. The bus scene cuts really well and the sound design is nice here. I like how the sounds of the street get louder and louder and then the rapid change in sound once the bus leaves. As mentioned above, the end needs to land a little more. Let's hear Mom in that 2nd phone conversation. You established her as a presence, you can bring it back here for narrative clarity.

Effort – Score 4

Great job, [REDACTED], I really appreciate how this film came together. You honed in on the cut and then you brought the sound design and you understood the power that the sound design would bring. Nice work.

Grade A



Story – Score 4

Effort – Score 4

I really like this story, and in this final iteration you do a nice job creating that arc. In the previous cut, her crying jag wasn't quite earned, and that created confusion. In this cut, I feel like the arc of her character is really coming across. She is searching, she reaches for the wrong thing, she comes back to who she is at her core. That progression is landing in this cut of the story. I also appreciate the quality of acting. Your actresses did a great job. They feel believable. And I also appreciate the scope of the film. The dream sequences were tough to pull off and plan, you rented an Air b n B and you got on a Cal Train. It's clear how much passion you have for filmmaking. You are always putting yourself in a place to succeed.

Cinematography – Score 4

The film looks great. You actually cover a lot of ground – with a lot of different locations. So that is commendable. But you have a strong control over the camera, and we always know what we are supposed to be looking at and what info is important within the shots. I like that you got a lot of coverage of reaction shots. That is so important, especially in regards to establishing the roommate. The dream scenes are really nice, and I like the way those look. That sunlight lamp is crazy. I love the slow zoom in on the phone as she is coming undone during the makeup tutorial. That is a really nice move. And the shots out the window for the final scene are great as well.

Editing – Score 3.5

The overall arc is there, and a lot has to do with the editing. You know that I love all the glances the roommate is giving. Your placement of those are great, both in terms of location and in terms of length. They work really well in the edit. The one scene that is still a bit odd to me is the 2nd dream which starts with her on the computer screen making lattes. I think I would eliminate that. She has just hit her low point. I feel we next need to see the epiphany, and that 2nd dream scene gets in the way a bit. I think I would keep it, but bring us back to the door. We understand that language and its purpose. I just have trouble understanding how to read that computer monitor moment. I really don't know what I'm looking at, and this is the time to really drive the story forward, not introduce a new element. That's my two cents on that.

Sound – Score 3.75

I love the amount of music you've added to this final cut. That really works. The first scenes flow so much better now. I was having trouble with the quick scenes one on top of the other, but it works now. The music does a nice job tying them all together. You might bring the music levels down in the first interaction with the roommates. Their dialogue is a bit hard to hear in that moment. I love the music in the "how to live your best life" montage. That is ominous and good. Same for the mascara scene. The music works really well in the scene when she is straightening her bookshelf, and reclaiming her strength and self. Overall the sound design and mix work quite nicely and help elevate the film.

██████████
Story – Score 2.75

██████████, I think this is a fun, odd little story. I like this black comedy, trying to bring humor to a serious topic. I think the comedy is close to landing, but it doesn't always get there. The more you can nail those humorous bits, the better the film will be. A lot of that is establishing that he is a bad stalker, and as a result, not really a threat. There are moments where another story element can help – like when he gets the phone call. That is a bumbling moment that needs heightening. Similarly, when he slips and falls. Those scenes are close to working, but some fine tuning will really help elevate. As I've said, I love the scene with ██████████, and that helps set the tone, and even the first scene when your two leads meet is nice. But once the chase is on, the energy lags a little more than it should.

Cinematography – Score 3.5

The film looks really good. There is some nice camera work at play. I even like the night time scene. I like how you use the natural light as both a hiding place, and a place where the scenes unfold a little bit. If you had one of the on camera lights, maybe that would have helped the final scene, but all told that is pretty good.

Editing – Score 3

Sound – Score 3

The editing of the opening scenes is quite nice and energetic. Things start to fall out a bit when you get to the Palace of Fine Arts. You could lose a couple of the landscape shots, and have more of a focus of your lead character walking around in the space. That will tighten things up. And then the way the sound works with the cutting becomes important. First off, I love that each of your characters have their themes. That is a great idea. But moments when the phone call come in are cut a bit funny. He disappears behind the pillar, but we should hear sound, or we should cut away from where the sound would be. You're caught in between a little bit. So add sound, or cut differently. In that section you mix levels are a bit odd. The phone sound seems to be canned and kind of at the wrong level in the mix. We talked about how to play with levels in relation to the cuts during class yesterday. And then the scene where he tries to reach with her phone – the two themes get a bit confusing. We talked about strategies around that as well. Let his theme really carry that as he tries to commit his crime. And then the music vis-à-vis the timing of the fall needs to be tightened up. I would also adjust the timing of the spraying of the mace as well. And maybe we hear his cries off screen after that happens as well. The end is very sudden and abrupt and could be finessed a bit.

Effort – Score 4

All told this feels like a lot of hard work. I also feel you worked on this alone. So good for you for accomplishing that.

B+

Post Screening notes:

█, I appreciate some of the fine-tuning that you've done. I like that you've taken out some of the landscape shots at the Palace of Fine Arts. I like how you tightened up the phone call moment, changed the levels of the ring, worked on some perspective shifting with the audio, and tightened that edit in that moment as well. That is much more effective. I also like how you've stuck with just his theme in the reaching for the phone and stumbling moment. I also like the stumbling sound effect. The end still feels a bit sudden for me. I also still feel that not all the humor lands. Much of it does and the film is better, but perhaps a different song choice for her would change the tenor just a bit. But overall, very nice job. New grade. A-

█ Story – Score 3.75

This is a great story. Someone who has aspirations in the creative fields, who is at loose ends, and having the creative energies sapped by a dead-end job where she is constantly being put down and harassed. That is a great basis for the story and you deliver for the most part. The end is the only bit that is perhaps narratively confusing. As we talked in class, it is not so evident that the painting is placed on the same stairs where she had her epiphany. I don't know that it fully matters. I am content with her simply returning to the ocean, a place of inspiration. But the inclusion of the painting in that shot does raise some questions.

Cinematography – Score 4

The film looks great. The bar scenes feel like a bar. Yes, it is in a bar, but getting the right kind of lighting can be tough in such a location, and you really delivered. But the other locations are beautiful as well. The beach scenes are great, and the paint on the bodies looks fantastic. I love the opening montage in her house. There is a great control to all the shots. The film has different universes and each one looks really, really nice.

Editing – Score 3.25

Overall, the edit is quite strong. At the end of the day, the emotion of the piece is coming across, and you are tracking that in a nice way over the course of the film. There are stand out moments. The painted bodies and how that intercuts with the painting is great. The superimpositions throughout the drinking scene are great. Moments like that grab our attention. I do feel like the first bar scene is a bit stilted. You need to fix that scene. You could consider losing it altogether. It could work. I'm not 100% certain, but it is a thought that could also shorten the film without negatively impacting the story. I love the drinking scene, but I also feel like you need to fine tune the energy. The music drops away at some point, and that happens for too long and the energy drops. So think about that. And then that final scene with the beach painting. We don't pick up that this is the same locale. Perhaps slightly different shot selection can work. Or as suggested in class, maybe some cutting back and forth between the beach encounter and the new, final beach scene. Very minor note- when she looks at her phone for the reminder to meet the art lady, that happens really quickly. Could probably hold another second on that.

Sound – Score 3.5

Everything sounds good. There is that one weird sound early on in the bar, but the audio recording is really clean. I particularly love the way you use music. When music appears, it is adding energy and gusto to the film. I think you could let it play out through the drinking scene. And the scene where you have some heavy low-end before she quits, I think you could play that out through the scene and let it stay with us as it takes her out of the bar and into a new space. In the latter half of the film, there are some minor mix issues. The line about Frenet seems really clean, and some of the moments around here feel like they need an eq pass or where dialogue sits in the mix starts feeling a little odd. The audio at the beach feels a bit odd as well. I would also consider letting the ocean sounds from the first beach scene play underneath the painting scene. That could be a nice connective through line to the end of the film.

Effort – Score 4

█, this is a really accomplished film. You should be very proud. There still is some work to do to get it over the finish line, but you are very close.

Post-Screening Notes:

█, I like the changes you've made to the film. I like that by eliminating the lines about her regular customers, that you create a sense of urgency as you move from the rejection at the gallery to her drinking heavily at the bar. That creates nice urgency and energy and helps tie her frustrations to her struggles with her artistic pursuits. I also like how the music ties those two scenes together. Overall, the sound design and use of music is fantastic. You really do a nice job moving us from scene to scene and music does such a nice job suturing it all together. I like the mix when she sees the love interest. There is a shift in audio perspective that allows us to see what is happening and helps get us into her mindset. Good sound cutting with the punch cutting to the alarm clock. Nice work. The painting/make out scene is so good. I like what you've done with the end of the film, as you move from that scene to the painting scene with the ocean sounds, and then to the scene at the ocean. I think you did a good job eliminating the stair scene. The film lands more strongly right now.

█
This is a really involved, and accomplished film. It has a great fairy tale, story book quality, which is what you are going for. This is really strong at the story level. And your ability to create the dream within the dream is very seamless. You have a lot of control over the overall structure of the film.

From a narrative perspective, it is mostly there. I would work on that first scene. I find it odd that she is smiling during this fight. I'd suggest opening up with the fight in black. Let us settle into that and then open the visuals with her putting the video tape into the player as her way of coping. Then you can fade in the sound of the video while you fade out the sound of the fight, so we get into her head, and then that smile is earned as she moves from the real world into her fantasy/escape world.

At the sound level, I love that you are having music made for the film. I'm excited to see how the rest of that plays out. It definitely feels like there are gaps at the sound and score level right now. Once those are placed in, we will be able to sink into the film a little more than we

can right now. The levels are also a bit all over the place. But I like how you are sound designing and sound mixing in scenes like the sequence near the conservatory of flowers. There are moments where their voices are front and center, and then there are moments where that falls into the background and you bring up the score. Bring that level of precision to the whole film!

I love the dream sequence, and the black flashes. The other bit to finesse is the worm scene as discussed in class.

Finally, I can't wait to see the animation. This is a great cut. Keep bringing this level of detail as you work on the film this week.

Story – Score 3.75

I love the storybook quality of this film. The film has a great sense of fun with all of the animations and the dream sequences. The overall structure, as we descend into multiple dreamworlds is very nice. You create a mood and a vibe that makes the whole film feel like an otherworldly place. I think you could tighten up the first minute of the film. You need to land the beginning a little more. I think spending a little more time with the parents fighting before she pops in the VHS tape would be good. Let that fight play out over black. Let's hear it and then when she pops in the tape it will feel like her reaction, her escape. And then you can do a perspective shift with the audio as we move from the real world into her escape into the movie world. Right now, those elements come crashing in on top of each other.

Cinematography – Score 4

The film looks great. I love that you have different looks for your different vignettes. The dream world of the rooms at school have a different look from the bubble blowing fantasy which has a different look from the park meet up which has a different look from when they are all in white. Yet, for all the different looks, the film feels unified. You have created a visual palette for the world of the film. And by the way, so many of the looks you've created are great. I love the scene when they are all in white and you are shooting through the grass with the camera on the ground. It's clear you spent a lot of time thinking about how to shoot the film, and then you spent a lot of time color grading. I also appreciate all the art direction, costuming and set design. That really helps elevate the film. And the animation and green screen and titling are great. All these elements make it feel like a fully realized film.

Editing – Score 3.75

I already addressed the opening of the film. Beyond that the film has a great flow. I'm impressed by how easily we fall into and you disguise the dream-within-a-dream structure. We are just along for the ride, which is great. I like how you brought back the black flashes for the worm scene. I still think the worm scene could be shorter. I wonder if you need her lines in that moment. Are they necessary? That could give that scene a bit more harrowing energy. There are many surprising moments that you build in the edit. The hand coming out of the box is great. There is nice anticipation as she opens the box, and then the hands! I also like how

the animation comes in after she says, "She knows my name". That is fun. The film has a sense of fun. You've built in the elements of fun, but you bring them to life in the edit.

Sound – Score 4

I love that you recorded an original score for this. Again, this shows that you are taking yourself seriously as a filmmaker. I love how the score works within the mix. It creates many great moments. I like when the music comes in during the park scene and how it takes over. In that scene, I like the push and pull between the dialogue and the music. Sometimes the dialogue takes over, sometimes it is the music. When she says "You want to know a secret", I love how the piano bits work in that moment. I love when the score gets discordant when the dream in the hallways starts going bad. Every now and again, I kind of wanted one more bit of score. There was a moment or two where it felt repetitive. Maybe one more variation. But that is a small point. The overall sound design and mix are great.

Effort – Score 4

Great work, [REDACTED]. It is clear you took this film quite seriously. The amount of art direction, costuming, scoring, and mixing animation with live action is beyond what most people shoot for in this class. So I really appreciate all that effort.

A

Story – Score 4

This is such a good story both at the content level and at the execution level. The narrative is coming through as are the broader themes. The structure is clear, and your actors are really good. Dramas are tough – you need good acting, and your leads deliver. This was a smart script and I am so glad you were able to execute it in the way that honors that script.

Cinematography – Score 3.5

Overall the film looks really nice. There are so many nice little moments. The camera move when we first see [REDACTED] on the couch, and then it pulls back to see [REDACTED] doing her post. So many nice touches. The picnic scene looks beautiful. The light is so nice in that scene. There are a couple scenes that feel dark and as a result grainy. That last confrontation scene in the apartment feels a bit odd in terms of the lighting. Everything else looks so good, that moments that are a bit off, stick out a little more. But overall, really nice control of the camera.

Edit – Score 3.25

The film is strong as is, but there is a little clean up you can do at the edit level to help elevate the film. There are minor points like cutting to the phone while it is bland and then seeing it get a notification. Cut on the action there. The title scene feels a bit long and stilted. That leads into a scene of them walking for a bit that leads into the conversation about credit cards. That feels a bit stilted, I think you can cut more energetically in that opening. But those are minor points. The biggest areas to address are the final scene with [REDACTED]. The cut is better than the rough cut, but you can still improve. He appears so suddenly. I think somehow overlaying the [REDACTED] and having him take over her presence could be worth exploring. Spend

some time finessing that moment and the film will really land. Also, the end credit shot is a bit confusing, so you can think about reversing that or even choosing something else.

Sound – Score 3.5

The film sounds good. The dialogue is recorded cleanly. I like the overall mix conceptually. I love the moment you bring the conversation down between Magenta and her fans to allow us to get into [REDACTED]'s headspace. But then it comes back to normal at a slightly odd place. So you could finesse that. And at the end, I think you can use music to slowly transition us into the dark place that the film goes. Bring in the drone earlier, during their fight. That might better set us up for the transition that is about to take place. And then, Tim comes in really loud, so I think you can bring him down in the mix a bit.

Effort – Score 4

This is such a strong film. You did such a nice job this semester. You shot early and that gave you the ability to really work this in the edit. A couple touch ups and you'll be there.

A-

Post Screening notes.

[REDACTED], nice job tightening up the film. I like what you do with the title. That tightens up that sequence. And it works to start the Credit Card conversation a hint earlier like you've done. You also did a nice job playing with the audio perspective shift in the meeting with [REDACTED]'s fans. Your timing of the out point of that sequence is much better. The phone conversation with the sister feels a little odd to me. I'd put some of the sister's voice in there. I kind of forget she's on the phone. Perhaps just shortening that scene a little would be in order. I like that you bring in the sound efx and music within the final confrontation scene. That signals the forthcoming shift a little more and is more powerful. I like how you've cut the Professor Redmond scene both visually and at the audio level. That is much stronger now. Great job.

New Grade - A



Story – Score 3.5

I am a fan of this script. That said, I don't think the final cut lives up to the script or the raw footage. I know you don't have a lot of time before Thursday, but you need to do some work to bring this film to where it needs to be. From a narrative perspective it is all there. The narrative makes sense, the story makes sense, and the structure makes sense. But the energy is not there. The energy is not where it needs to be to fully bring out the comedy. You will get laughs, but not as many as you could get.

Sound – Score 2.5

The dialogue is recorded cleanly, so that is nice. But right now, the film seems a bit empty and silent. This is a film that needs a fun, robust sound mix. There is very little sound design here.

When it comes in, it is great, but it never sticks around long enough. You need to build up the sound palette. Every lighting bolt and explosion needs a sound effect. When we go the 70s, we need crowd noise and club noise, and off screen voices. When he is walking to confront the beer wizards, he needs a theme song that builds us towards confrontation. The wizards need a theme. When the beer stein is nabbed, we need an effect. You have these little guitar stabs at transitional moments, which are nice, but they end so abruptly they feel off. But I like the idea of transitional music. You should have fun with the sound. If you left the cut alone, and went bonkers with the sound, the film would jump up a huge amount.

Cinematography – Score 3.5

The film looks good. I know that you were rushed, but the overall look is nice. There are moments where it was clear you were rushing. There is part of me that feels that you could have gotten a little more coverage in some scenes. This would allow for a little more energetic editing. I feel like sometimes you are locked into these long conversations because you don't have cutaways and reaction shots – spaces that would also help you trim moments. I like the effects that you added from Envato. Those work great for you.

Editing – Score 3

You've done a great job cutting for narrative. That is working. I still feel that film could be at least 1 minute shorter. There are some conversations that could be shorter. One example is when he says, "let's kick some beer wizard ass", and then there is a drinking scene and then the approach. That's a moment that calls for energy. I get that he's lazy, but the overall film lacks energy. And that's a moment, where you can break from your script and deliver what the film needs in that moment. "Let's kick some ass", a big riff comes in, maybe a finger snap, a six pack, chug the beer all in jump cut fashion and then jump into the confrontation. I know you tried some things in the edit like that which you didn't love, but right now the cut feels flat, so you need to get some energy in there. Sound will be a huge part of that. But some Edgar Wright style cutting couldn't hurt.

Effort – Score 3

I know that you worked hard on this, but I also feel there were a couple weeks in the semester where it felt like you went AWOL. Right at the moment you were supposed to be shooting, it feels like your attention was distracted and as a result, you started the shoot late. Had you started shooting earlier, you would have started editing earlier and you would have time for the sound design. I hope you do spend some time working on that, because this is a fun script and I want to see the film fully realized.

B+

█, I appreciate the additional work you have put in. I like the sound effects and music cues you have used. The poof sound for all the smoke. The angelic sound for beer stein. The electric sounds for the guitar electricity effects adds a lot of flavor. The fight scene as a result of all the sound is better. I like the backstage sounds for the 70s flashbacks. That said, in moments like that, you could let that music continue and ride under the beer wizard intro and give that a little more juice. The music for "Not this Asshole again" works really nicely. I still want to see

more cutting like that. I still think there could be more music and I still think the editing could be tighter. When you pick up the cassette and say “take care of this”, you could tighten that sequences. For the line, “what the hell” – cut right to the sound effect. Those types of gaps bring the energy down a bit. Cut from “I got this” to the table and them drinking. You still need a bit more energy. Do one more pass for your own benefit. You are moving in the right direction in that manner. New grade A-

██████████
Story – Score 3.5

Sound

This is a lot of fun and will be a crowd pleaser. The film has a lot of energy and a lot of humor. You’ve done a nice job moving from rough cut to final cut in terms of making it believable on the terms you have set up. I like the dynamic between all the characters. They all have their vibe and that stays nice and consistent throughout. I think you can still make the universe of your film more complete. One of the things you’ve done with the music is chosen a horror-themed music and cutting strategy for this absurdist drama, and colorful palette you presented. That music choice is being used in a comic way and establishes the tone and signals that we don’t need to be taking our protagonists too seriously. But right now, the first music choice doesn’t fully work. It lays there and is a little confusing. The moment when you zoom in on the vape in the tub and we get here that bass sound is the moment when the use of music really starts to work. If you can establish that earlier, then we’ll be able to settle into the tone of the piece a little more quickly. That strategy is effective, but the one time it doesn’t work is right at the outset.

Cinematography – Score 3.5

The film looks really good. I particularly like the look of the party scene. Good use of the lights. Party scenes are tough. They can get too dark and grainy pretty quickly, but you did a nice job there. I also like that you shot with a ton of coverage. The film cuts quickly, and it is your wealth of shots that allow you to employ that cutting strategy. I’m sure that also made your life tough in the edit room. There are a handful of shots where the focus is a bit soft – particularly with ██████████. She just won’t stay in focus! Depth of field can be a challenge when you have wide shots with a lot of people. It really pays to have a monitor in those situations, just allowing you to see the image a bit more clearly.

Editing – Score 4

I like the edit. The film is energetic and you really work it in the edit. The film feels like a whirlwind and your editing style really sells that. I like your transitions into the party scene. I like the freeze frames and the rewinds. I like the way you jump around in time and I like the way the audio is cutting with those sections. There are a lot of nicely edited moments. I like the cutting on the recognition of the vape. I like how you handle the cutting when ██████████ shows up and they are paranoid and talking about her. I like how you cut between them and ██████████ and the dead guy. All of these touches were added between the rough and the final cut. So the film really took a nice leap forward between cuts. There was some tonal and narrative

confusion in the earlier cut, and that is all resolved at this point. Also, nice job with the overall sound mix and sound editing. That is all really effective as well.

Effort – Score 4

██████, you were one of the first to shoot, and given how much coverage you had, I'm certain that helped you in the edit process. You had a lot to work through and it has paid off
A (make some sound changes and the grade can come up)

Post Screening Notes: By the way, I just wanted to mention that this film is funny. There are a lot of laugh-out-loud bits. I love the last look of MJs. The line, "Oh shit, we've got to clean up" really made me laugh last night. I appreciate all the ways you've tightened this up. I noticed that the opening montage was shorter. I noticed that you tightened up the shot of them coming around the corner when the bong hit happens. And good job finding a better opening bit of music. That lands and situates the film a little more strongly at the start, which is important. Nice work making these little adjustments. They pay off.

██████ Story – Score 4

This was an excellent script and you've done it justice at the execution level. The narrative and story are there. The arc is really nice. You do a great job establishing the dynamic between characters and the inner-conflict your lead character is facing. The acting is really good as well. Dramas and horror can be hard to do. Every element needs to be in place and there needs to be a consistency throughout, and you've achieved that. Great work. The film has a consistent mood and tone, and your actors deliver at all times.

Cinematography – Score 4

The film looks great. The party scenes look fantastic and those can be tough. They can get too dark and too grainy quickly, but that isn't the case here. The fish store scene looks excellent. Their picnic is really beautifully shot. The conversation in the bedroom. The film has a great look and each scene feels very controlled. Also the look of your static person is great. I know you spent a lot of time worrying about that, but it feels legit. That is so nicely implemented. I am glad you decided to work with a cinematographer, which allowed you to focus on directing. But it is also clear you had a vision in terms of what you wanted the film to look like.

Editing – Score 3.75

Great job on the edit. I particularly love the way you move between the flashbacks and the present day. There is a real seamless quality to that. Much of that success has to do with how you storyboarded and set that up in production. So really nice job there. The flow is nice in those moments in regards to how long you stay in the flashback before heading to the present day. A little goes a long way, and also helps convey her disorientation. I also like how you handled the coming together of her past and future selves. That wasn't fully working in the rough cut, but completely works here. So good on you for finessing that. Some minor fixes – the nose bleed seems a bit too red, so you could desaturate. The stuff pouring out of mouth

could be a little shorter. Less is more in a moment like that. And I still am not sold on the geography of that opening scene. I think losing the one shot of the empty bus stop will help.

Sound – Score 4

I really like the overall mix and design. You know when to use music and efx. They really help with the mood and tone, and help with the transitions between present day and flashback. I love the music creep into the scene with the Dior. So many nice little transitional moments that are sutured together by the audio. Very nice. There are one or two minor moments. I think the friend is a little low in the mix in the bedroom conversation, and she also feels a bit too heavily eq'd in the picnic scene (though maybe not – but I'd give it a listen).

Effort – Score 4

Great work. This was a really ambitious undertaking. It's clear you put a ton of effort into making the film. It is really strong, and it feels heartfelt and personal as well. Nice work. It's already an A, but you can make a couple minor fixes to elevate it even a little more.

Notes post screening:

■, nice job on tightening the film up. I really noticed the complexity and the smoothness of the sound design this time through. The sound design is really fantastic both conceptually and technically. I love the sound design for the static figure and then how that bleeds and melds into the next scene. There is a great flow to the edit and a mood established, and the sound is playing a critical role in that regard. That really stood out to me during the screening. I also appreciate you shortening the things dripping out of the mouth scene. That whole sequence is cut really well. I also think you brought down the saturation of the nose bleed moment. And finally, the overall eq of voices seems stronger. Great work.

■ Story – Score 3

I like the overall concept of the story. A young person trying to figure out their path. That said, the script was more fully realized. At the end of the day, it feels like you ran out of time. What is here, works well as a story, but it feels to end suddenly. I really anticipated more. Your character seems a bit inconsistently drawn. On the one hand he does feel like a mess (not really prepared for the interview), but then somewhat entitled about his situation. That seems to be your point, but not sure his personality and motivations fully land. During the last scene, it feels like we should sympathize with him, but I'm not sure how to read the interview and Joe Rogan scene in this regard. How we think about him and his situation needs to have been better established. The acting is quite good by the way. I know you had trouble with your actors, but that doesn't come across on the screen.

Cinematography – Score 3

I love the outdoor scenes at night in the Mission. They have a really nice mood and vibe. The Dolores Park scene is shot nicely as well. The office scene is so-so. It feels like it was shot at night (not when most interviews take place, and the shadows on the wall make it feel like there

are big movie lights just off camera. I know you had trouble getting a crew, and that scene definitely feels that way.

Editing – Score 3

I'm not sure about the cutting strategy of the opening scene. The 3 cuts to the bathroom feel a bit odd. The first shot is a little hard to read. Is he peeing? Is he washing his hands? That lack of clarity cuts in an odd way against the interview we are hearing. When you cut back to the bathroom the second time, it cuts away from the interview for a long time, so when we return to the interview I was surprised. It felt like we had moved on. I like how the 3rd cut to the bathroom worked and wish you had just used that moment as a transitional element. That is the first point in the film where we start to feel for him. The other scenes are cut nicely.

Sound – Score 2.75

The sound recording itself is pretty good. But lots of weird mixing things are going on in that night time scene. The background noise is all over the map. Sometimes it is there and present and sometimes it disappears altogether. That becomes a little distracting and makes it tough to totally sink into that moment.

Effort – Score 3.5

■, I know you ran into troubles with this film. It feels like you were always falling behind, and the end result feels a bit rushed. I wish you had been better able to surround yourself with a crew. I think that would have helped elevate the quality of the film.

B

Story – Score 3

■
At its core, I like the script of your film and the story. And the overall arc is there. I know what is going on. That said, the film feels a little flat right now. I'll get into more specifics shortly, but one thing that is going on is that we are constantly being told that she looks exhausted and stressed, but I'd like to feel that a bit more. It's like you don't have the confidence in your filmmaking to trust that these emotions are coming across. One scene that feels a bit odd story wise is the scene with the roommate. They indicate that it is 1, and because of the lighting it feels like the middle of the night. It feels like a continuation of the previous night time scene. So that throws me for a moment. I do like the inclusion of the conversation with Mom. That is new to me and I really like it. It gives her some backstory which is nice.

Cinematograph – Score 3

The film looks pretty good. The monster turned out all right, but right now it doesn't fully feel integrated into the scenes. I think you can feather it a bit. It does feel cut out and placed in. Play around with feathering and see if that helps, or if when you cut your mattes it can feel a bit more organic in it's shape . There are also a couple moments, where I can see static at the top or side edge of frame (at :22 is one such spot). Also, it feels like you don't have a lot of coverage of the bedroom scene. It feels like you keep re-using the same footage. That brings the energy down a little bit for me.

Edit – Score 2.75

You can do one more pass to tighten things up. You mentioned problems with the matte in the bathroom scene. Cut it shorter. Just give us quick glances of the monster. That might make it more believable. The less we see, the more effective it is going to be. Think of the discussion around Jaws. Less shark is better. I also think you can lose one “Am I gay” section. You have indicated this and this becomes one more moment of you telling us the conflict instead of letting the filmmaking showing the conflict. I think you can cut this out of the scene in the bathroom for example. The transformation of the monster at the end feels odd to me. It happens too quickly. I like the reveal of the eyes, but then the straight cut is too quick and I don’t know that I track that. It needs to happen more slowly. Dissolves? Cuts where more and more is revealed. Try some things. Sound design would also help energize that scene. This is the big reveal and it kind of lays there. The beach scene cuts oddly to me. There isn’t great rhythm and flow. There are cutaways (5:39 of Ocean & 5:48 of birds) that cut oddly. I think they are there to allow you to cut around the scene, but the pacing is off. Also, the wind noise is odd. I think you can bring that down, maybe deemphasize with another type of sound design and music. The film really slows down here. Change the mood and tone with music and see what happens.

Sound – Score 3

I like the music that you use. That is a nice element. It helps build tension a bit, but there could be more tension to make it feel like she is out of sorts based on all that she is going through. The music is good, but not enough. The monster needs a sound – buzzy, staticky effects. Maybe a whisper or a beckoning. Maybe in those moments we hear voices in her head, in its head. Maybe those sounds come back in the bathroom scene, at the beach scene, while her friend is boring her with her talk of the guys she likes. You can create a lot of tension with a more elaborate sound design.

Effort – Score 3.5

■■■■■, I think the film is pretty good, but it needs another round of work to elevate it. You are getting close and I appreciate that. I wish you had gotten a little earlier start and had been able to enlist some help from other students in class. That could have helped elevate some of the technical aspects of the film. But it’s looking good. Make some changes by the date we talked about and I’ll change the grade.

■■■■■, I like the sound efx for the monster. That helps a tremendous amount and really helps sink us into the film. That was much improved. I also like how the dissolve from the monster to the woman at the end of the bed works. That lands much better. All told, the mood and tenor of the film feel much much better. I still feel that there are moments that could be tightened up. The lunch scene still feels long and close ups of things like the salad feel odd. The beach scene still has a weird rhythm and the sound is a bit of a mess there. I can hear the clicking of audio at all the sound cuts. The ADR, while nice for legibility still doesn’t sit all that well in the mix. If I were you, I’d spend time trying to clean up and trim those scenes a bit. That would help elevate the film. But there is improvement there and I’ve brought your grade up a bit.

Assessment of Final Projects from:

Intro to Video Production (MS 222-01)

Spring 2022

Professor: Danny Plotnick

██████████

Story – Score 3.5

This is a really fun piece. You give us a nice glimpse into the world of record collectors. The interview with Tim is the strongest. He is the most passionate and he really lets us into the world. The other two interviews are not as exciting. They work to add some voices to the piece, and these multiple perspectives are nice. I like how ██████'s voice comes in to also help flesh out the piece. I feel the film ends kind of quickly. I think you need ██████'s voice to come back in to help tie things up. Again, she is in there several times throughout the film, and she kicks things off, so you've set it up for her to close the deal as well.

Cinematography – Score 4

The interviews look really nice. And the animation is fantastic. That clearly took a lot of time, but it pays off. The film has a great energy to it, and the combination of elements – original footage you shot, archival, animation, are all working in concert to bring the energy. Nice work finding the archival as well. This film is a real visual treat. I would make the opening credits move in some way. The rest of your animation moves, so should this element. It will give you a nice pop of energy right at the top of the film.

Editing – Score 3.5

Again, the film has quite energy. There are certain sections where the editing is doing some heavy lifting. I love the opening. I love the way you bring the Who into the mix. I love the explanation of what a 45 is. You need more of that! There are a couple areas to tighten up. I think ██████'s voice is too fast at the open. Don't race through that section. Let us settle in. I think the timing of the beep and the Peter Pan section can be finessed. I think ██████'s audio gets a bit clipped when he comes in. The timing of the Pause of Tim could be finessed. Little elements like that could be tightened up just a bit. But the overall authority of the editing is really great.

Sound – Score 3.25

The interview sounds of the two guys in North Beach is really solid. I like the quality of ██████'s voice. I like the interweaving of all different sources of audio you have. The interviews, music, the records, the archival footage. Lots of great sound elements. The overall sound mix and design is really nice. I do wish ██████'s audio was a bit better. I think the lav didn't work. We are hearing a lot of background noise. It is fine, but not as clean as your other interviews, and since that is the main interview it does detract just a little bit.

Effort – Score 4

Wow. It is clear that a ton of work went into this film. I appreciate how hard you worked to pull this together. Grade A – You should tighten things up and the grade will come up to a higher A.

Story – Score 3.75

This is a great story. I know the two of you debated between a couple of strong ideas, but this was a great choice for this class. It gives us insight into the life of a student, and a student who is having a different type of student experience. I like the way you weave together the story of your life as a student, and that of a student who is in the army. I do think you can bring back a bit of the day-in-the-life aspect of being in the army. I think that is the part of the film that will be most intriguing to many USF students, so I'd just bring that back into the mix a little bit.

Cinematography – Score 3.75

The interviews look really nice. I like the backdrop you used and the compositions were nice. I also like the handheld, talking to the phone interviews. Those have a modern touch and help personalize the film. I appreciate that you also went back out and shot a new end to the film. That willingness to keep pushing, take in the critique, and work to improve the film is really appreciated. The b-roll is great as well, from the military bits, to the bits in the barber chair, to the shots of you in the Church. Lots of nice touches. There are a couple of shots that are a bit purple-ish. I'd fix the White Balance on those.

Editing – Score 3.75

I love how you weave the stories together. I like how you move around in time. I like how this moved from rough cut to final cut. I appreciate, that you moved the section about the challenges of being in school while being in the army to earlier in the film. That was a great choice, and helps the piece be more personal. In so doing, you pushed the emphasis to student life. As I already mentioned, I think you could bring back some of the army stuff. It might lengthen the film, but that will be fine. The film is really interesting. And I love the final scene you shot in the regalia, and the addition of the family photos at the end. That was a nice way to wrap up the 3rd act. That was missing in the original cuts and lands so well here in your final cut.

Sound – Score 3.75

I really like how you mix sound from your b-roll under your film. That is some savvy sound design. It makes the film feel real and not student. The quality of the audio on the interviews is really nice as well. There is one section when you are talking about grandparents where the audio gets weird. I think the audio from the camera got turned on when it shouldn't have. That stuck out. So go explore what happened there. Also, that moment, when talking about KUSF where you say "It's awesome" gets clipped. Either make that clean or lose it. It stands out as well.

Effort – Score 4

Great work, guys. I appreciate all the effort and the reshoots and the time in the edit. It's an A, but make some minor changes and the grade can go up.

██████████
Story – Score 3.5

I really like that you made a doc about some of your friends who are doing creative things on campus. You do a great job establishing what the studio is, what goes on in there, and who is using the studio. As mentioned in class, I love the section that leans into the friendship between ██████████. You are also talking about creativity at that point. That is the heart of your film, and I think the overall story would benefit by bringing that section into the film earlier on.

Cinematography – Score 3.5

The interview with ██████ look fantastic. I like the rough and ready look of the interview with ██████. That works with the vibe of the piece. I like the other interviews as well. The b-roll is really nice. You could even afford to have more, but what is here is very nice.

Editing – Score 3.5

The overall rhythm and flow of the piece is very strong. Again, I would bring that one section forward. You have gone for a jump cut style in the interviews. That works for the piece. That said, every now and again, you get some weird lighting discontinuities when cutting within the same interview. I would find those couple spots and cover with b-roll. I accept the jump cuts, but tacking on discontinuity takes me out of things a bit. Also, that opening shot with people leaving the dorm is odd to me, since what the film is doing is entering the dorm. So another shot selection there would be worthwhile.

Sound – Score 3.25

The ██████ interview sounds great. There is some slight distortion on the ██████ interview. That isn't as strong, but not bad. There are moments in the sound mix that you can bring the music down. Paint It Black sounds a bit loud. There are moments ear the end, where the music drowns out a bit of ██████'s interview as well. Small little fixes on the sound mix will go a long way. But all told, I like the way you weave the music in and out. Though, I wouldn't mind a little more music, since this is a music doc.

Effort – Score 4

Great work. It's clear you put a lot of effort into the film. Nice work!

██████████
Story – Score 3

You do a nice job getting people's thoughts on LME. The story itself is clear. But the energy is kind of low and very flat in tone, and as a result, I don't know that I'm sitting on the edge of my seat waiting to learn more about LME. The film, all told, needs more energy, which I'll address more in a moment.

Cinematography – Score 3

The film is visually a little flat. You shot a lot of your exteriors on a gray day, and as a result the feeling is kind of gray. You should spend some time color grading to bring life to the images. And a lot of the exteriors are very austere. There doesn't seem to be a lot of life on campus

there. Granted, maybe people don't use the space, but if that's the case, then make sure the composition and framing is killer. Some of the handheld stuff undercuts the authority of the shots. I also feel you need more b-roll. You've added some for the interiors and those are better, but more shots with people would be great. And grade the interiors as well. The cooking shots aren't appetizing. Better lighting was needed. But you can breathe some life into that in post.

Editing – Score 3.25

The rhythm and pace of the film is nice. I like how you weave the interviews together. I appreciate you losing the chapter titles. You didn't need those. That said, some interstitial breaks that pull us out of the talking and let us see, live-in, and experience the dorms would be great. Cut together a snappy section on the landscaping and put some music underneath it and that will pop some more energy into the film. The cutting is nice, but some fast-paced sections would help out.

Sound – Score 3.25

The interview sound is good. Nice work there. The 10 second loop of music gets monotonous after a while, and that is one thing bringing the energy down. We are trapped listening to the same piece of music 50 times! Use music to bring life to certain sections, or signal changes in mood, like when they are talking about all the broken stuff. You could push things more at the music level.

Effort – Score 3.75

Nice work guys. I really wish you had spent one more day going out and getting great b-roll of the location. It feels like you did those type of pick ups in dribs and drabs, getting a specific shot or two, rather than taking the time to find really intriguing shots.



Story – Score 3.25

Nice job at the story level. You do a nice job talking about women's sports at the collegiate level. You talk about the good and the bad. I really like the inclusion of the coach. Her interview was really strong. The only issue is the film is a little dry and flat in tone. In class we talked about ways to address that, and I'll do so in a moment. But on balance, the story is there. I just want to emotionally be invested in it a bit more.

Cinematography – Score 3.25

The b-roll you got from Woo is great. And good on you for going out and getting that. The material you shot was so-so. 2 of the interviews were a bit soft in terms of focus. You got to make sure that the focus is on point.

Editing – Score 3.25

The overall structure of the piece is good. I like how you shuffled the order of the interviews since the rough cut. You tend to be starting with the more energetic of the interviews. The opening could be more impactful. I love the "We belong" line to kick things off, but it can be

more impactful. We talked about starting with a montage of sports with music, where we see and witness the greatness of the women's athletic program, the have one of those great hero shots, with the "we belong" line over that. Then we are seeing the line in action, as opposed to just being told the line. The other thing you should do is have more sport montages with music. Sports docs use music to pump us up. Your film should do the same. Tactics like that will help the film feel not so dry.

Sound – Score 3.25

The quality of the interviews is really nice. As discussed in class, and above, music, music, music. That will help give the film a boost of energy.

Effort – Score 4

Really nice work. I love that you engaged with the athletic department. This is very nice.



Story – Score 4

This is a fascinating story. [REDACTED], I love that you shared some of your history, and I learned quite a lot. The film is definitely one to pique the viewers curiosity. You are also talking about some complex issues, and you do a good job explaining these issues for those that may not be familiar. So good work on that front.

Cinematography – Score 4

The film looks really good. The interview is shot and lit so nicely. I also like some of the dramatic moments/reenactments you shot. Those look good. The b-roll also works really well. It clearly took you a lot of time to find all that material. I love all the personal archival material that you worked with.

Editing - Score 3.5

The film has a nice rhythm and flow. I like how the b-roll is cut into the interview. You do give us some moments of pause within the info flow that does allow us to absorb the info. That said, I do start to feel a bit tired by the end of the doc. This is a big download of information. All the information is good, but I do think you could trim a little bit here or there, retain the info, and help decrease the info dump fatigue. The second half of the film has a couple of spots (COVID, [REDACTED]'s new ventures), that could be pruned just little bit, and still retain the key information that you are imparting in those moments.

Sound – Score 3.75

The film sounds really good. The audio is crystal clear. I like the placement of the music in the middle of the film, and the mix as well. At the head and tail of the film, you can finesse the volume. Each time music comes in, it is significantly louder than the surrounding dialogue. So just spend a minute tweaking that.

Effort – Score 4

Fantastic work. This film is really, really good. You should be proud.

Table Summarizing Findings:

Film Studies Assessment November 2021					
Narrative Production Fall 2021					
	Story	Cinematography	Edit	Sound	Effort
	3.75	4	3.75	3.75	4
	4	4	3.5	3.75	4
	2.75	3.5	3	3	4
	3.75	4	3.25	3.5	4
	3.75	4	3.75	4	4
	4.0	3.5	3.25	3.5	4
	3.5	3.5	3	2.5	3
	3.5	3.5	4	3.5	4
	4	4	3.75	4	4
	3	3	3	2.75	3.5
	3	3	2.75	3	3.5
Average F 2021					
	3.55	3.64	3.36	3.39	3.82
Intro to Video Production Spring 2022					
	Story	Cinematography	Edit	Sound	Effort
	3.5	4	3.5	3.25	4
	3.5	4	3.5	3.25	4
	3.5	4	3.5	3.25	4
	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	4
	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	4
	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.25	4
	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.25	4
	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.25	4
	3.0	3	3.25	3.25	3.75
	3.0	3	3.25	3.25	3.75
	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	4
	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	4
	4	4	3.5	3.75	4
	4	4	3.5	3.75	4
Average S 2022					
	3.50	3.61	3.46	3.39	4.63
Average Both classes					
	3.52	3.62	3.41	3.39	4.22
Scale of 1-4 4 - Excellent 3 - Above Average 2 - Average 1 - Below Average					

Summary of Findings

Based on these findings, I am confident that our Program Learning Outcomes are being met. Please note that 2021/2022 was an interesting transitional year for our teachers. Though we were back on campus, we were still producing films in a pandemic. Some students were less comfortable collaborating and being in contact with others. So we had to make some adjustments to the curriculum to account for different responses to the pandemic vis-à-vis COVID safety on film sets.

Finally, students did miss more classes than often due to COVID. These absences, at times, affected their classwork and their group work. Teachers adjusted, and took these health factors into consideration while grading and working with students.

Additionally, we were not teaching in our regular film lab. That lab is too small and not properly ventilated for COVID times. As a result, we created a makeshift lab in a larger, more properly ventilated space. This space is great, but also doesn't have all the bells and whistles of our regular lab. So, teachers, had to do a lot of thinking on their feet to make subtle adjustments based on the rooming.