



**JOHN FELICE
ROME CENTER**

COMM 299 Themes in Film & Digital Media - Filmmaking in Rome

John Felice Rome Center

Fall 2026

Wednesdays | 2:30-5:30pm

Prof. Nicola Moruzzi

Email: nmoruzzi@luc.edu

Office Hours: Wed., 11:00-12:00 pm

Course Description

COMM 299: Themes in Film & Digital Media: Filmmaking in Rome is a hands-on introduction to writing, directing and editing the short film. Students participate in the development, production, direction and post-production of a short subject up to five minutes in length, either fictional or documentary. Filming will take place outside class hours.

By conceiving, planning and executing a short narrative film or documentary, students explore how to choose an appropriate subject, how to develop that idea into the classic three act structure, and how to edit, polish and ultimately bring to market that finished product. Students will work in groups to develop, produce, direct and do post-production of a story up to five minutes in length. This short film subject will be chosen via class participation prior to shooting. We will also engage in analysis and critique. There are no prerequisites for this class, enrollment is for anyone - it's recommended the student be familiar with the basics of shooting and editing a short film, whether reading up on it, or making short films.

Learning Outcomes

The class will provide students with practical experience in television/video production of short films.

- Learn the basic principles of narrative storytelling for film.
- Develop skills while expressing creativity through video production.
- Gain an understanding of general video practices, across various contexts.
- Learn to work collaboratively

Students will work in teams. The number of films will depend on the number of students enrolled. Maximum length: 5 minutes.

Required Text / Materials

Recommended that students bring their own cameras/DSLRs/Mirrorless and laptop editing equipment, also not required. Students of this class will be granted an "at home" license for Adobe Creative Cloud, including Adobe Premiere Pro CC, to install on their laptops. The license will last throughout the semester.

If you have no laptop, then faculty computer time will be provided, when available. Campus computers are all equipped with Adobe Premiere.

Students are required to read a film script for class discussion.

Attendance Policy

In accordance with the Rome Center mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, and in compliance with full-time student visa status, all courses adhere to the following attendance policy.

Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student and synonymous with academic success. Attendance is mandatory at every class meeting for



JOHN FELICE ROME CENTER

each course. Lateness or leaving class early will impact the course grade at the professor's discretion. All absences, including medical absences, will be treated the same, unless they are documented long-term conditions or emergencies. Such situations will be evaluated case-by-case by the Academic Affairs office. Once-a-week classes:

- After 1 absence, a 2% final grade reduction will be applied for each missed class.
- Missing 3 classes or more will result in an automatic failure (F).

Assessment Components

● Journal and discussion entries	5%
● Cooperative participation with others in class	15%
● Final film (Writing and development)	25%
● Final film (Pre-production + filming)	25%
● Final film (post-production and promotion)	25%
● Final Exam	5%

Grading

94-100: A
90-93: A-
87-89: B+
84-86: B
80-83: B-
77-79: C+
74-76: C
70-73: C-
67-69: D+
60-66: D
59 or lower: F

The policy of this course is that grades cannot be upgraded. Any request will be not taken into consideration. Detailed rubrics will be provided to students for each assessment component.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct are unacceptable at the Rome Center and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago's guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola's standards here: <https://catalog.luc.edu/academic-standards-regulations/undergraduate/>. You are responsible to comply with the LUC University Catalog.

Late or Missed Assignments & Exam Policy

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the instructor's authorization. The policy of this course states that if a student is unable to submit an assignment due to serious personal reasons, the instructor must be notified at least 24 hours before the deadline. A 2% penalty will be applied to the final grade for each day the assignment is late. ***As per the JFRC academic policies, students who miss any scheduled exam or quiz, including a final exam at the assigned hours will not be permitted to sit for a make-up examination without approval of the Associate Dean of***



JOHN FELICE ROME CENTER

Academic Affairs. Permission is given rarely and only for grave reasons; travel is not considered a grave reason. Make-up exams will only be given for documented absences.

Accessibility Accommodations

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center (SAC) requiring academic accommodations should contact the Academic Affairs office at the John Felice Rome Center during the first week of classes.

Statement on Title IX

The Rome Center follows Loyola's [Comprehensive Policy and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, Retaliation](#) and will comply with those as indicated and instructed.

Course Schedule

Friday Class Days:

Friday, September 18th

Week 1 – Introduction. Film analysis and introduction to micro short film synopsis.

- Course introduction and description of grading scheme. We will watch and analyse 3-4 micro-shorts below 5', both documentary and fiction, introducing a common dictionary to describe plot, camera techniques, locations, sound, music and style.
- Introduction to what a short film synopsis should contain, what restrictions to follow (max 2 actors, considering feasibility of locations, props, and to the first assignment of this class: writing a synopsis of a short film, documentary or fiction.
- Assignment: for the following week students will be required to write 1-2 short film synopsis.

Week 2-3-4 – Introduction to video photography (in 2 parts) and story development, from the idea to the final script

- General discussion of student projects progress. Viewing previous student pieces for evaluation. We will discuss visual style, using locations and elements that are easily accessible. Students will pair up in teams and will be assigned a camera for filming practice on: shot sizes, camera movements, filming techniques (shot reverse shot, long take, b roll etc).
- Each student will be required to download and activate their free Adobe Premiere license on their laptops.
- Student presentations of their projects/works in progress/Treatments or outlines of individual projects due. Each student will make a presentation, and via review, films will be chosen from those treatments/scripts.
- Assignment of short films to be watched and critiqued, reading a film script and developing each story to the final script

Week 5-6 - Pre-production - getting ready for filming

- All final scripts will be analyzed to deliver a production schedule and a budget. The main roles in a film crew are introduced: director, producer, DoP, sound recordist, 1st Ad, production designer, script supervisor etc.
- Casting: students will be required to film auditions for main roles or pre-interviews for documentary characters. Actors will either be campus students or actors from Rome, depending on availability.
- Review documentation: talent releases, insurance, safety, etc. Introducing the role and importance of the script supervisor.
- Introduction to Editing with Adobe Premiere.
- Filming practice in class, students will experience different roles on set.
- Final teams are created, depending on students' weekly schedules.



JOHN FELICE ROME CENTER

Week 7-8 Shooting period

- Filming will take place outside class time, all teams will have to schedule their filming outside class hours. Dailies are watched and commented on in class.
- Rough cuts in process – Class discussion about rough cuts.
- Every film team is required to show 3-5 minutes of edited footage in class. Each student is required to present some of the work they've done, whether directing, shooting, or editing.

Week 9-12 - Editing

- Individual Rough Cut sessions with students or teams. Sign up for one hour of individual evaluations of your progress. It is important to add music and work on your sound mix during this period, as your sound work will be included in your final grade.
- Marketing and distribution of the short film.
- Fine cuts due – no picture changes without permission from instructor
- Final project with final sound mix due. Minor tweaking allowed until the final day. Final edits will require a finished picture, opening and end credits, subtitles if needed and a mixed soundtrack.

Week 13 - Final screening date TBD.

The final video will be graded on technical achievement, communication, creativity and overall effort per person. Consistency in attendance and assistance on other projects constitutes the second area of evaluation. Note: it is mandatory you turn in all the paperwork, attend classes regularly and turn in a finished film. This will result in an average grade. In order to get an above average grade, students are required to stretch their talents as filmmakers, to present their idea in a fresh, new perspective, putting their hearts and soul into the project, and doing their best to make a compelling film about a subject matter that is equally compelling, comedic or sheds new light on a subject.