

# MP 481

## GUIDELINES FOR THE SENIOR PRACTICUM (“SENIOR PROJECT”)

The Senior Practicum is the final requirement for the BFA degree in Motion Pictures and gives students their last significant and professional caliber production experience at Wright State. Following the junior “thesis film,” it allows students to take what they have learned and apply it at the highest level.

MP-481 is also an opportunity for students who see themselves as producer/directors to have one more opportunity to make a creative work with all the benefits of the program: free available equipment, crew, talent, and mentoring by faculty. **WE STRONGLY ENCOURAGE STUDENTS WHO SEE CREATIVE PRODUCTION IN THEIR FUTURE TO USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PRODUCE A SECOND THESIS QUALITY WORK.**

However, given that this is an undergraduate program, and that even graduate MFA programs do not demand two thesis caliber works, many approaches to fulfilling this requirement are possible. Each student will consult with Motion Picture faculty to develop an individual plan that meets the requirement.

Some possible ways to fulfill this requirement are:

- writing a feature-length script,
- developing a fully-formed feature documentary treatment,
- producing a film,
- being a director of photography,
- art directing or editing a significant production, usually as Senior Practicum production.

Depending on the complexity and scope of the production, faculty may require work on more than one production to fulfill the MP-481 requirement. *Students should feel free to propose ANY other project which they think appropriate to their interests and career goals.*

Students considering doing significant craft work on a production should consider taking advanced courses in the particular craft. In terms of art direction and design, there are courses available in the design/tech area of the department. In terms of cinematography, there is the advanced course in our program, as well as advanced photography courses available through the university and from other nearby institutions. In terms of editing, there are professional caliber post-production courses available through many institutions in the area. Faculty should be consulted about which avenues of study might be helpful.

What follows are the details needed to sign up, carry out, and complete the Senior Practicum.

1. Students may sign up for MP-481 when it is financially convenient, as long as they have:

- already taken MP 381, 382 and 383,
- completed 8 history/theory classes (excluding MP-131), and
- completed 125 credit hours.

2. Students are not allowed to sign out equipment for their senior film or begin their MP-481 project until they accomplish the following:

- receive a final grade in MP-381, 382 and 383,
- turn in a Senior Practicum proposal, after consultation with their chosen faculty advisor

3. The SENIOR PRACTICUM PROPOSAL, which must be typed and totally professional in its presentation, must include the following, as appropriate:

- Name of student asking for credit
- Option being applied for
- Faculty advisor
- Description of Senior Project
- Name of Junior Project, your role on that project, and its current status
- If your senior project is a second thesis project, you should also include:
  1. Name of project
  2. 250 word treatment
  3. Name of project
  4. Estimated total budget and budget breakdown
  5. Shooting schedule, including number of days and tentative dates
- 6. Equipment to be used during shooting
  7. Estimated finish date for entire project
  8. Tentative listing of key positions and crew members
  9. Contracts of collaboration if you are working with other students

4. No project completed by students can retroactively be designated a senior practicum, without faculty approval, at its discretion. Approval will not be routinely given. Only in exceptional circumstances will faculty make this exception.

5. When students have completed the work needed to fulfill the agreed-upon Senior Practicum experience, they must go to their assigned advisor to receive a final grade.

6. Characteristically, the senior practicum will involve work on an original effort directed by a student. Exceptions to this are possible with faculty approval. And while the Motion Picture Area makes no length restrictions, very short and easily manageable projects can be as viable as longer projects.

7. In the case of students making their own creative works, the area expects Senior Practicum projects to reach completion; however, if the student has taken his or her junior project to completion, the advisor can consider assigning a grade if the student is picture-locked and fully prepared to mix, with tracks broken down and prepped. In these cases, assigning a grade can help the financially strapped student who is temporarily unable to take the project to completion, but needs to graduate to take employment.

8. If any project requires collaboration or dependency upon other students, particularly students also expecting some course credit, the applicant must execute a contract of collaboration with each student, spelling out the division of responsibilities and financial arrangements associated with the project. All collaborators must sign every contract.

9. Finally, here is a list of suggestions and information for students considering certain of the available options:

### PRODUCING OPTION

A student who wishes to PRODUCE needs to be an active participant in the project, finding

locations, crew members, resources, and so forth. Depending upon the contract of collaboration, the producer may be responsible for raising or providing some amount of the finances needed to make the project. The senior producer is urged to take accounting or business courses from the School of Business, as well as the Senior Seminar.

### DIRECTING OPTION

A student who wishes to DIRECT needs to either produce as well, or find a producer to collaborate with. A director is expected to attend to all appropriate preproduction activities, particularly script and casting, as well as direct the production from beginning to completion.

### DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY OPTION

A student who wished to be DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY characteristically should be involved in preproduction, contribute to the script's shot breakdown, be involved in storyboarding, take test footage, and oversee lighting of a significant project. The DP is urged to take MP-436 Cinematography.

### ART DIRECTION OPTION

A student who wishes to be ART DIRECTOR is urged to take courses from the design/tech area, including at least one graphics course. The Art Director should be in charge of the look of the project, including sets, props, costumes, hair and makeup. During production the ART DIRECTOR is urged to plan his or her work with renderings and to document his or her work with still photographs.

### FEATURE SCREENWRITING OPTION

A student who wishes to write a feature is urged to have taken MP-436 Screenwriting. Generally, this option will require a short synopsis, scene outline, and two drafts. For the purposes of this option, a full-length script is defined as 100-120 pages in proper script format, never more. If the script is an adaptation, it cannot be approved unless the student first provides proof that the student has acquired a legal option from the author.

### FEATURE DOCUMENTARY TREATMENT OPTION

A student taking this option must work with faculty to define the research, preproduction and sample shooting needed to create a viable documentary treatment, one that is substantial enough to use as part of a serious fundraising proposal. The student should have taken as many courses in documentary as possible and availed themselves of additional documentary opportunities. This student will be required to turn in a thoroughly researched documentary treatment and prepare at least one completed grant application for appropriate funding agencies, such as the Ohio Humanities Council or the Ohio Arts Council.

### “MISCELLANY” OPTION

This option entails any other effort that does not fall within those options already described. Because this option is more free-form and lacks specific guidelines, it is imperative that the student describe the project very coherently, making sure also to describe how and why this project specifically relates to the future career goals of the student.

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