
CHAIR'S OBSERVATION

I observed Professor Brian Fuller's ART 357 Non-Fiction Film class on October 24, 2022. Class began with Professor Fuller welcoming his students with casual banter as students filtered into his Monday 9am class. His jokes, back and forth dialogue helped wake up his audience and primed them to be a responsive group.

Once all the class had found their seats, Professor Fuller moved seamlessly into the instruction. It was clear, without Fuller needing to say what the agenda was, that the students understood that they would be recording a demonstration interview in class. Professor Fuller asked, "What are the two questions your group is most proud of, the questions that will draw the most out of your subject?" One student, whose group was to interview an artist responded, "How do you decide when a painting is finished?" After five or six other responses had been offered, Fuller began to give guidance on what makes a quality interview question. "The best questions tell a specific story." Professor Fuller provided an example interview question: "Tell me about a time you were inspired to do this work." He explained that a "good question elicits an answer that will take the form of a story." The story will "stand on its own AND you won't need to mic the interviewer." Fuller continued, "How questions extract specific stories...Your questions that draw out specific stories will provide you B-roll, which will provide you the specific images you need to shoot to accompany your audio. Questions that result in generic answers require you to hunt for images for your B-roll that don't necessarily relate to your subject." During this explanation his students were highly engaged participants in the discussion. While it was clear much of this content had been previously taught, Professor Fuller's choice to revisit the instruction deepened the students' understanding and solidified it in a manner that would make their implementation of concepts more effective.

Fuller transitioned into discussing equipment and camera set up for the upcoming interview film session. Fuller explained that proper preparation uses multiple cameras at various angles enabling the filmmakers to "cut in continuity" in the editing room. Fuller's back and forth refreshing of this content brought it front of mind in preparation for the upcoming exercise. Fuller implemented multiple strategies that helped his students' retention of his courses highly technical content. When discussing recording settings, he made sure his students understood what each setting meant, ensuring that "48k" was not just an abstract number but a setting that represented a concept accompanied by an array of resulting consequences that affect how a filmmaker edits their work.

After reviewing the interview set-up, the class moved down to the filming studio. Each student had a pre-assigned job. In the studio, Fuller was able to casually talk with several students while the ones who had set-up tasks went about their roles. It is clear that Professor Fuller has done an excellent job instructing his students in a manner that will lead them to be self-sufficient filmmakers. His students went about their set-up with confidence and efficiency. I completed my observation before the recording started.

In conclusion, Professor Brian Fuller is an excellent facilitator of student reflection. He has created a class atmosphere that is both rigorous and comfortable, where students feel they can both give and receive critical feedback and praise. His students are thoughtful and appear to be creating very high-quality work. Professor Brian Fuller's syllabus is relevant to the course under review. We are incredibly fortunate to have Brian Fuller guiding our Film program.

Sincerely,

Dietrich Wegner
Chair, Department of Art