**BFA Seminars – Friday, April 5**

* Freshmen - RTV 245 from 10-11am
* Sophomores - RTV 180 from 1-2pm

Quick introductions – Who am I? Who are you?

Agenda:

* Goals
* Describe my role in the Media School and BFA/BA/MS programs.
* Course map for BFA in Cinematic Arts
* Help prepare you for projects you’ll create and produce.
* My inspirations, creative path and approach
* Answer questions

Goals – The BFA program exists to help you craft and develop your skills as filmmakers. Learning, developing skills and gaining experience is essential. Through the process you’ll be on the journey of defining yourselves as filmmakers, writers, gaffers, sound designers, editors, or producers.

I’ll share my own circuitous journey. When I was your age, I thought I’d be a rock star…. But here I am.

Seriously, I came to IU for the School of Music. I played violin and viola and was a composer. I played in rock and roll bands and in orchestras. (Loved Bach, Led Zeppelin, Frank Zappa). Music and performance were my life. I’d no idea that I’d end up producing TV shows and documentaries, or teaching production.

On my own journey new doors opened- doors I never knew existed. The same will happen to you.

Just a few highlights of my circuitous journey

* Started as a young Performer/Musician/Composer – Came to IU. Changed majors a few times.
* Began working as an audio engineer, while working on my undergrad in video production. Found out the pay was better for video.
* Graduated with degrees in recording arts and video production.
* Worked producing corporate and commercial work. (With power companies, ad agencies, tourism bureaus, economic development, and medical….)
* Became bored- started freelancing, went to grad school.
* Began freelancing for tv shows. Started to really learn things and the business.
* Became an adjunct instructor for IU.
* Almost moved to Seattle area- had a job offer. I wanted to get into sound design and composition for film and TV.
* IU offered me a full-time teaching gig. With a kid on the way, staying made sense.
* Stayed in Bloomington where I continued to freelance, write music, and teach.

**My role in the Media School and BFA/BA/MS programs**

Unit Director of Media Arts and Production – [About Jim](https://jk.media.indiana.edu/about/index.shtml)

Teach production courses:

C229 Intro to Single Camera Production

P354/J560 Program Graphics and Animation

T576 Graduate Production Workshops

T584 Documentary Production

(Used to teach C228 and P356 multi-camera TV studio production)

The Media School [BFA in Cinematic Arts](https://mediaschool.indiana.edu/academics/undergraduate/bfa-cinema/index.html) – [COAS Requirements](https://bulletin.college.indiana.edu/programs/4235/CINEARTBFA/?_gl=1*15ibh81*_ga*MTk0ODA2NDM0MS4xNzEyMTkxNjQ1*_ga_61CH0D2DQW*MTcxMjI4Mjk3OC4yLjEuMTcxMjI4Mjk4My41NS4wLjA.)

BFA in Cinematic Arts - [Degree Map](https://sisjee.iu.edu/sisigps-prd/web/igps/dm/public/maps/view?mapId=4312f326-d9a1-4666-be44-48c836ee3f98)

What draws me in and what cinematic arts means to me:

I’m drawn into adventure, beautiful, amazing locations and landscapes, and a compelling story.

For narrative, fantastical escapism is more appealing than reality.

* The Wizard of Oz
* Lord of the Rings
* Harry Potter
* Wes Anderson
* Coen Brothers

Films can transport viewers through time and space- and provide immersive experiences through cinematography and sound design.

* Master and Commander
* Gravity
* Gladiator
* Star Wars

Documentaries fascinate me as they can offer all the above (beautiful cinematography and sound design) while taking me to places I can only imagine.

* Planet Earth
* Free Solo
* 180° South
* The Cove

Now I only produce projects for a few reasons:

* For good art
* For a good cause
* For good money
* For a learning experience

**Practical Advice**

* Learn about everything (lighting, audio, camera, editing, writing, directing, etc.)
  + As Dan Mirvish shared a few weeks ago, being an editor and thinking like one made him a better director. Knowing how long it takes to light a location will make you a better producer.
* Work with professionals. Working alone, one learns incrementally. Working with a talented mentor, you can learn exponentially.
* Encourage and develop other skills- and a 2nd passion and pursuit. This can give you superpowers!
  + Writers who know science or medicine can write science fiction or medical thrillers (Isaac Asimov, Michael Crichton). Musicians and musical composers can become great sound designers. Rock climbers who are photographers can shoot in places no mere mortal can go (Jimmy Chen – Free Solo). If you skateboard, surf, ski, snorkel, rock climb, just add camera skills and you will have work.
* Build your network (Use your Contacts app).
* Go to Career Day in fall. Build your network and make connections.
* Always be on time!
* Always be communicative and proactive. Answer emails right away, return texts and phone calls. If you know the answer and can help- great- and if you don’t know the answer or can’t help- let them know regardless. Professionals only work with people who are communicative and answer phone calls.
* Producers must look far in advance to secure sites, talent, and crew, get clearances, and arrange for numerous logistical matters. None of the steps are complicated, but they must be done far in advance. Be proactive or
* Volunteer and work on projects where you can learn, build your portfolio, and make new connections.
* Work on projects gratis for a good cause (E.g., a not-for-profit). This can lead to good things.
* Do an internship as your last academic activity in the place where you want to live and work. (E.g., in the summer after your senior year, do an internship in Seattle, NY, LA- wherever it is you want to live and work.)
* Set time aside for YOU. An hour before bed, don’t check your emails or go on social media. Set time aside so you can exercise, meditate, read a book, play music, etc.

**I asked my C229 students what they would be interested in knowing from a seminar. Here’s what they wrote:**

What’s it like travelling to other places for a shoot?

Do the small in between things one has to do while filming get boring/ tedious?

How did I get to where I am today?

What put you on the path to production?

What’s the most surprising thing you have experienced in your work?

What was the most rewarding experience?

How do you differentiate yourself from others?

What aspect of film are you most passionate about?

Why do what you do? (Why choose this career?)

Was there a certain moment, movie, person, class or so on, that truly inspired you to go down the path of film production?

What inspires (my) storytelling and directorial choices?

How did you know when you felt satisfied with a project?

How to make a sustainable living while expressing your creative passion?

What jobs or experience did you have in order to get to the position you’re in now?

Was there ever a time you were doubting yourself while working in this industry? If so, was there a project that you worked on that helped remind you of why you love doing what you're doing?

How much of your expertise have your learned from pure experience, and how much from academic learning?

When was the last time you were paid a fair wage for a production?

**On Learning/starting out:**

Is it necessary for an aspiring film student to watch a lot of niche films for inspiration?

How do I prioritize my time as a college student to prepare myself for finding work in film?

What kind of internship opportunities led you to a career in the field? How did you go about obtaining them?

How do you get people to care about and be involved in your short films when you're first starting?

What were you doing at my age?

What is one thing you wish you knew before coming into the industry?

What is the best way to try to crack into the film industry?

Was the first job/project worth all the effort you put into it?

Where did you think I would be?

What are the most likely opportunities to get right after college for those wanting to direct?

How do you effectively learn how to use all the equipment without the risk of messing up someone else’s project?

What’s one mistake to avoid?

What should you expect that's often unexpected?

What advice do you have for someone my age (freshman in college) looking to work in the film industry in the future?

What is your best resource for learning new camera, editing, or lighting techniques?

What got you to start pursuing your career?

How do you decide what position you want to be in when film making?

What is the number one piece of advice you would ask from someone in the business? What is the biggest obstacle in getting to the job you have today, that you didn't think you'd be able to overcome?

What decision in your filmmaking career made things better and started your success?

What was the most difficult part of the industry when you started out?

Did you see yourself in the position you are in today when you were in my place?

**Getting work:**

What would you recommend a fledgling filmmaker do to build a portfolio?

What to do right after college?

How hard is it to break into the industry?

How do I get my foot in the door?

Would it be smart to include projects that are terrible in your portfolio but also your best projects to show your growth?

What would make me standout in a crowd of people in the field?

What do employers look for in a demo reel? How many projects should be in there?

How many people do you need to send them to before getting started

How many projects would you have to have in your portfolio to be taken seriously by a major studio?

How do I find an internship?

How hard is the competition?

What's the best way to make a lot of connections? And make connections with the right people?

What is the best way to network with people in the film industry? Do you recommend cold emails, LinkedIn, film festivals... where are the most efficient opportunities to expand your reach?

What questions can I ask a professional who has been in the industry for a long time and how should I go about contacting them?

What should I put in my resume that’s an automatic green flag?

What are the biggest mistakes by a newbie?

How do you get a job on a serious project?

How do you know you’re good at something?

How to get more work?

Is there any commercial work?

How many projects do you have to work on?

How many projects do you have to do to be taken seriously and how often do you get hired in the same position?

What did you do to get to where you are now?

Did working below/for other people ever make you unmotivated and want to give up?

How do you know when you’ve settled down in a film career?

How is your personal life affected by being in this industry?

How stable and reliable are freelance jobs in the state of the industry right now?

Production:

How to achieve a long take, handheld shot full of motion?

1st thing to do when making a shot?

How to gorilla film?

What is the best camera to shoot and film for nature?

How do you get out of creative block?

What do you turn to for inspiration?

What is your favorite thing to do on a film set?

Is there a good shooting to editing ratio? What is it? (Hours shooting to hours editing)

How to consistently organize large groups of people?

What do you do to motivate your team members when shooting?

What’s the best way to manage time on set?

How much time should you spend on a shot idea that doesn’t pan out?

What’s the hardest part of the job?

What’s the hardest part of producing movies?

Writing:

How do writers know when something is funny?

How to write jokes that actually land?

Is writing for movies a stable career?

How do you write the visual narrative in the screenplay?

Editing:

How to create pop-up text messages that appear on screen?

What is the most creative use of CGI animation you’ve seen in the industry, and how was it done?

How does one practice editing if you do not have any projects yourself.