



**DOC  
NOMADS**  
JOINT MASTERS

DocNomads-12 - 2023-2025/2nd semester (Budapest)

## DF / DOCUMENTARY FILM DIRECTING II

### *Focus on Storytelling*

#### **Mentors**

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### Editing mentor

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### Sound design and mix mentor

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### Cinematography mentor:

Eduardo Saraiva

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## Course description

The aim of the course is to foster students' abilities to find their own ways to shape the infinite fabric of reality into strong stories. The story in documentaries is built from elements of reality that includes the characters, the dramaturgy, the structure, the compressed storytelling, the focus and the rhythm. In the framework of this course students make individual films that should emphasize storytelling premises and be grounded in the knowledge acquired during the semester about different filmmaking methods and approaches. Throughout the development and production of the practical exercise students enrich their cinematic expressions and filmmaking tools step by step in order to create complex film art pieces drawing from the elements of reality by using their own, individual tone and style.

The course includes several different modules of the program: *Semester Film Research Consultations, Masterclasses, Semester Film Pitch, Directing Consultations, Rough Cut Screening, Editing Consultations, Sound Consultations, Cinematography Consultations, Screening & Feedback.*

## Assignment

### Semester Film Exercise:

**Topic:** Hope

**Length:** 9 minutes (plus or minus 1 min.)

**Individual work**

Each student has to shoot an individual documentary film with the acquired knowledge of the last two exercises of *Documentary Skills 2.* and *Directing in the Field 2.*

The films should also include the following aspects

- there must be minimum two characters.
- to find a real-life situation or circumstances.
- to be able to capture emotional dynamics between the characters.
- the story should develop from the relation between real life condition and the director's approach.
- the film cannot be based on voice over narration.

Professional mentors are involved to guide the different phases of production. Teachers and mentors discuss and evaluate the film proposals and later the films produced together with the students.

## Course Schedule

**Location:** Docnomads room, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, room no.: 2.01-2.02

**May 2<sup>st</sup>- May 9<sup>th</sup>**

- Research and development of the Semester Film Exercise

**May 2<sup>rd</sup>**

**10.00-14.00**

- Discussing and developing research ideas and concept in groups
- Analysing and discussing previous *Semester Film Exercises*
- Discussing the different aspects of directing documentaries (point of view, characters, storytelling, structure, focus, style/form, rhythm, time management)

May 6<sup>th</sup>

10.00-14.00

- Discussing and developing research ideas and concept in groups

May 8<sup>th</sup> until 14.00

- **Delivery deadline of Semester Film Exercise proposals** (log-line, synopsis, character's background, narrative storyline/structure, formal and visual approach, director's concept/universal message, production schedule – max. 2 pages).<sup>1</sup>

May 9-10<sup>th</sup>

10.00-16.00

- **Presenting / pitching the subjects of the *Semester Film Exercise*** (max.: 5 min, including a trailer or a 1,5 min. clip from a reference film)<sup>2</sup>

May 11<sup>th</sup>

- Tamás Almási Masterclass: Catching the Moment

May 11<sup>th</sup> - May 31<sup>st</sup>

- Shooting period of the *Semester Film Exercise*

May 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>

10.00-17.00

- Individual sound and cinematography consultations about the *Semester Film Exercise*

May 21<sup>th</sup>

Aliona Van Der Horst Masterclass: First-person and Observational Film Practices

May 29<sup>th</sup>

10.00-17.00

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<sup>1</sup> See the detailed guidelines at the end of this document.

<sup>2</sup> See the detailed guidelines at the end of this document.

- Individual directing consultations about the *Semester Film Exercise*

June 3rd

10.00-17.00

- Individual directing consultations about the *Semester Film Exercise*

June 1<sup>st</sup>- 16<sup>th</sup>

Post-production period of the *Semester Film Exercise*

June 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>

10.00-17.00

- First Cut Screenings with all the mentors and guest experts
- Feedback and discussion. Students are advised on the revision of their cuts, and possible re-shoots.

June 14<sup>th</sup>

10.00-17.00

- Individual directing consultations about the *Semester Film Exercise*

June 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>

10.00-17.00

- Individual editing consultations about the *Semester Film Exercise*

June 14<sup>th</sup>

10.00-17.00

- Individual directing consultations about the *Semester Film Exercise*

June 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>

**Location:** Screening room of SZFE

- Exam screening & feedback with Attila Kékesi, Dorottya Zurbó, Ásia Dér, Péter Kerekes, and Bálint Bíró. The exam films will be assessed by external experts too.

June 21<sup>st</sup>

10.00-16.00

- Re-take exam

## Evaluation

Students receive practical marks on their general work and participation of the different modules of the unit: *Semester Film Research Consultations, Masterclasses, Semester Film Pitch, Directing Consultations, Rough Cut Screening, Editing Consultations, Sound Consultations, Cinematography Consultations, Screening & Feedback*. During the evaluation of the students, we consider the process of realizing their films and the quality of the Semester Film Exercise produced.

**Students are expected to:**

- Define a clear and meaningful point of view
- Find a strong film concept to express cinematically your point of view
- Develop a “script outline” aiming to attain a clear narrative structure and a justified dramaturgic purpose for each planned scene described in the script
- Shoot the film scenes with justified cinematic and dramaturgical choices
- Show awareness of ethical questions and of its impact in the dramaturgic thread of the film
- Build an edited structure displaying narrative progression with dramaturgic value
- Develop coherent ideas for the sound design in the film
- A skilled accomplishment of image and sound in technical terms
- Perform the shooting, editing, the sound mix, the color correction and subtitling (English) of their films

**The films are assessed on the following criteria:**

- To be able to synthesize the acquired knowledge from previous exercises in the semester
- To develop a strong concept and an artistic point of view
- Express the student’s own voice using all cinematic elements
- To challenge conventional approaches of filmmaking

**Semester Film Exercise delivery deadline: June 19<sup>th</sup>**

Export an MP4 or MOV file no bigger than 2 GB in HD 1920x1080 using H.264 codec

Name the file in the following format:

DN12-2\_SF\_Name\_Title\_Date

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## Two-page proposal guidelines

Proposal delivery deadline: May 8<sup>th</sup> until 14.00

### Basic elements:

They seem granted, but don't forget to state clearly:

- title of the project (also on each page of the project)
- format – length
- your name and contact details
- an appealing layout

### Logline (1-2 sentences)

The hook of your project. What is your film about? In concise 1-2 sentences provide a seducing description of your film. (Best would be ONE sentence) Keep in mind that the logline is the “selling line” of your film. It should make the reader curious and willing to know more about your project.

### Synopsis (1-2 pages)

The main point of the synopsis is to **clearly communicate the story your film will tell**. Briefly provide contextual information to acquaint the reader to the subject, advising why the topic is critical and why such a film is needed now. But remember that the synopsis should be the synopsis of the film, not of the content.

In the synopsis consider the following questions:

- who/what is the main character of the film? (The “main character” can be one protagonist, a group of people, a place, a theme...)
- what is its conflict / challenge / problem?
- what is the journey / the process / the evolvment the main character is going through?
- what is the central question your film is asking?
- how is it trying to answer it?
- the style of the film / your cinematographic approach

Consider narrative arc, point-of-view, and use of artistic elements. Try to convey the content in a “visual way”. Don't forget that you are making a film!

### Some suggestions:

Give a short description of your film! Not about the topic or the context. The background information about the relevance of your topic, you can deliver in a chapter “*Background*” for example. Each project needs its own form. But for each of them it is important to seduce your readers. Make them want to read. Give them in the beginning the most important information. Make them curious to know more. Always remind that this is a “selling text”. You should have a longer description of your project ready to send it out if your readers want to know more.

***One possible way to structure the short proposal:***

- start with the Logline;
- a short Synopsis
- main protagonists and his/her background
- a short Treatment, narrative storyline/structure
- the cinematographic and audio approach (how!? the form/style of your film is very important!)
- director’s concept & universal message
- production schedule

**Show photos of the character and shooting locations and the mood of the film!**

Name the file in the following format:

DN12\_Semester\_ Film\_Exercise\_Proposal\_(Name)\_Date

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## Pitching guidelines (max. 5 min.)

Pitching date: May 9<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> 10.00-17.00

- **Introduction** (I’m D.Z. a filmmaker from Budapest, Hungary)
- **I’m here to introduce a 9-minute documentary called ...** (say the title)
- **My film is about** (log-line, subject, character) or **Imagine** a remote valley (try to create images in the head of the audience)... **Personal connection to the theme/character** (how did you get to know each other) .... Say something personal that immediately grabs the attention (first impression on the theme, when I saw that situation or place, I felt this and that, it reminded me to this and that)
- **Background information**
- **Narrative structure:** what is the current situation, what is it at stake, conflict, what kind of situations/scenes we are going to see in the film, dramatic development, how the character will change (important to be visual, to create a film in the head of the listener)



- **form/style, approach**
- how long u follow the character, **possible ending**
- **philosophy/message**, why is it important, why you are the best person to tell this story, how it will change the attitude of the audience...etc (say something universal) unique selling point (no films were made on this subject before)
- access, production stage and schedule
- ending you need to leave it open for the imagination, the audience should be still interested to watch the film
- **Show a max 1,5 min. trailer or a sequence from a reference film (edit the sequence for the pitch), explain the reason why you chose this excerpt in relation with your film plan.**