

# HOT DOCS

## Significant Issues-Important Ideas-Cool People

For this film you will be creating a **SHORT "HOT" DOC** about an **IMPORTANT ISSUE** or **SIGNIFICANT IDEA**. Your focus for the film should be on **HOW** that issue/idea is reflected in the lives and/or works of **THREE+ DIFFERENT PEOPLE**. Below are the conceptual and technical guidelines that you should be shooting for with this project.

### Conceptual Guidelines:

- A. SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE** and a **STRONG STORY IDEA**. The issue or idea you choose should be **socially significant**. This doesn't mean that it has to be altogether-nothing-but-serious,... but rather, that it should **MATTER** to a wide demographic of people, and should perhaps even be a new or innovative perspective on a topic which connects the **local** → **global**. **Not all stories are created equal. Focus on finding and developing an interesting story!**
- B. OFF-CAMPUS non-SMC. This IS an OFF-CAMPUS film.** No exceptions. While the initial issue or idea for your film may have stemmed from courses, concepts, or other ideas and people which you've encountered at SMC, the people you interview and the footage that you gather for this film should decidedly **NOT** come from SMC. You will be harnessing the power of ZOOM interviews and other digital tools to interview people from afar.
- C. ENGAGING VISUALS + ILLUSTRATIVE FOOTAGE. This is NOT a "talking heads" film.** It needs to be more interestingly crafted in how it is shot and edited. So while you may obviously have short interview sections, you will also need to provide a fuller visual/audio "portrait" of the three+ people you profile → shadowing, ride-alongs, at work/play, motivated B-roll, etc.
- D. HIGH PRODUCTION VALUE.** This project should be a **high production value** film and approximately **7-10 minutes in length**. Excellent footage and audio throughout.
- E. COLLABORATIVE.** This is a group project. You will need to work in groups of 2 people in which **ALL** members of the group share in each aspect of the production (concept, script, storyboard, shooting, editing, etc.)
- F. COVID-based Film Production Protocols. You must follow Covid health policies to the letter!** In-person interviews are almost always preferred in film production and you will want to preferably film/interview **vaccinated** people w/o masks. HOWEVER, there will be situations in which masks are **mandated** and **necessary**.

### TECHNICAL Guidelines: Your film should include ALL of the following:

1. **You should have a creative and stylized look/aesthetic to the film.** It should be **compelling** to a **Vimeo audience!**
2. Your final doc film should be an **interesting, well-conceived, and PROVOCATIVE STORY STRUCTURE** replete with a strong story DEVELOPMENT/PROGRESSION, chapters, segues, focal points, interesting character details, and a strong intro hook.
3. **VOICE-OVER.** You should include a voice-over for your film produced by you. At minimum, this VO should book-end your film. The VO should be scripted and performed for the ear.
4. **Excellent shot composition, interesting camera angles AND multiple types of shots** (establishing shots, close-ups, over-the shoulder, extreme-close-ups) and shot angles (Close-ups, Over the Shoulder shots, high angle shots, low angle shots, etc.) **ALL** of your shots need to be connected to and/or motivated by the story you are trying to tell.
5. It should have **EXCELLENT camera footage throughout the entire film!** **NO** shaky camera movements. **NO** motorzooming. **NO** fuzzy or out of focus shots, badly lit scenes, etc. If it's not good, either shoot it again (multiple takes) or don't use it. **Period.**
6. **AUDIO** should be **crystal clean** throughout the entire film—natural sound, interviews, sound FX.
7. **Aesthetically Stylized Montage Sequences.** You should develop at least two well-edited montage **sequences** which engage the viewer and propel the story.
8. You should include **personal, historical or issue-based archive footage** as part of your story. This footage should not just be "tossed in" but rather connected in a meaningful way.
9. **Titles/Graphics.** The introductory and ending titles should be professionally stylized. Same goes for any intertitles or lower 3rds.

Obviously, the content and technical issues will vary depending on which type of film you choose. However, weaving together a final film which shows the **best of your capabilities** should be the focus of your attention for this project.

### DEADLINES/DUE DATES:

- ☑ Due THURS, Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>: **TWO THINGS DUE: (A) 1-2-page FILM TREATMENT (single-spaced), replete with ENGAGING OVERVIEW, idea/issue description, names/contacts and rationale for your interviewees, locations, and your cinematic structure and/or approach for telling this story as a short film or TV piece; (B) A COMPREHENSIVE SHOT LIST which DETAILS your visuals/story plan.**
- ☑ Due TUES, Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>: — ONE ROUGH CUT INTERVIEW DUE.
- ☑ Due THURS, DEC 2<sup>ND</sup>: — DOC FILM ROUGH CUT DUE.

**🔥 DUE Tues, DEC 7<sup>TH</sup> FINAL PROJECT DUE (2 Versions - Master + Web/Mobile)**