

Balancing ACTs: Work-Play-Health-Happiness → The Tightropes of Modern Life

Front-SIDE-BACK STORIES

Nearly all of us constantly teeter with life's balancing acts. How do we manage our WORK with our ESCAPES/PLAY? And how do we manage to be HEALTHY(?) and achieve some sort of HAPPINESS(?) amidst such balancing acts? **This may be one of the most critical questions that we face at nearly ALL stages of our lives.**

Frequently, our balancing acts **with WORK-ESCAPE-HEALTH-HAPPINESS** are in some ways **unique** to us. They can **define** us as individuals (similar but also slightly different from everyone else). Over time, such a **BALANCING ACTs** might start out as **survival tactics** amidst the pressures of modern society. But they can also take on the form of tradition, ritual, or history. They can often involve **interesting forms of WORK**, but also **CREATIVE OUTLETS, HIDDEN ESCAPES, ATHLETIC ENDEAVORS/GOALS**, or **FUN-FILLED PASSIONS**.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, for you, they can also make for interesting stories and engaging short films.

HENCE, your job for this film project is to capture the **FRONT-BACK-SIDE STORIES** to one person's "**balancing acts**." That means, you'll need to dig in and show the interiors and exteriors of their **WORK-ESCAPE-HEALTH-HAPPINESS DYNAMICS** and reveal it in an **engaging** short film story.

Think BIG! and Creatively. This should **NOT** be your average talking head sequence of some person telling a run-of-the-mill-Friday-night story. **Just the opposite.** Rather you should aim toward producing a **highly stylized** cinematic yarn in which you get **great interviews, excellent audio**, dramatic lighting, and extremely cool close-ups and revealing **CUT-AWAYS**.

FOCUS-GUIDELINES-REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Get off campus! For interesting locations and people!** This is the **TIME** to start telling stories which have nothing to do with SMC or your friends, roommates, or significant others. **Those stories won't be accepted for this project.** Time to step out of the campus safety silos.
2. **Strong STORY, WRITING and CONCEPTUALIZATION (including shot lists).** Nearly all great films begin with a great script (yes, non-fiction documentaries too). Be creative and descriptive with your writing. Your script should then be complemented by an extensive **SHOT LIST** of ideal and necessary shots to make your story visually detailed and interesting. **(20% of the project grade).**
3. **Aesthetic COMPOSITION & LIGHTING.** Creatively stylized look and feel to your story. Solid lighting and visual composition is essential.
4. **CHARACTER + DETAILS → DEVELOPMENT.** Move beyond "dead-level" story-telling and character development. Breathe **LIFE** into your "characters" and story progression.
5. **Strongly composed INTERVIEW footage and AUDIO.**
6. **Excellent close-ups (CUs) and extreme close-ups (ECUs).**
7. **Interesting shot angles** and superb supporting coverage "B-roll:" (**CUT-AWAYS**)
8. **At least one SET PIECE-MONTAGE SEQUENCE** with **SPECIAL EFFECTS** + **creative editing** which helps illustrate and propel the story).
9. **Crystal Clean Audio**—words, music, sounds, etc.
10. **Interesting INTRO, LOWER 3rds and ENDING TITLES** which lead into and conclude your story.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Your first role here is to be both a **PRODUCER** and **DIRECTOR**. **Be choosy** (One of the first rules of film directing) **in who you film and where/how you film them!** Additionally, you will most likely be working with "**REAL PEOPLE**" who don't have lots of experience acting. **So, your job will be to "coach" and/or direct them for your film.**

➡ Due **THURS, Oct 2nd**: **PROVOCATIVELY WRITTEN STORY TREATMENT/CONCEPT (1-2 pages single-spaced)** using the readings, come up with **a minimum of 3 potentials**. Think through **LOGISTICS**, **COOL LOCATIONS**, **ACCESS**, audio, timing, visuals, locations, acting, and legalities **BEFORE** making your final story decision and writing your treatment.

➡ Due **THURS, Oct 9th**: **COMPREHENSIVE PLANNED PLOT DESCRIPTION/PROGRESSION + IDEAL SHOT LISTS** (a minimum of 30 shots/act) for 5 acts/scenes (Intro + 3 acts + Conclusion)

➡ Due **Thurs, Oct. 16th** : **INTRO + ONE act/scene EDITED** and ready for screening at beginning of class!

🌟 Due **THURS. Oct 23rd**: **Complete Film Project!**