

**Editing Your Film or Video:**  
**A Course Outline for a Semester or Two Quarter Class**  
By Gael Chandler

based on her experience teaching editing at  
Loyola Marymount and Long Beach State Universities

and on her book  
*Cut by Cut: Editing your Film or Video*

## **Editing Your Film or Video – A Suggested Course Outline**

### **Introduction**

The course focuses on the practicalities and aesthetics of editing so that students can put their best film forward. Your students may be in the planning stages of their project or have it "in the can." This course is designed to demystify editing and the post production process so they can complete their film or video during or following the course.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Shoot their film or video with editing in mind
- Determine what formats they will shoot, edit, and finish their project on
- Use common editing terms and lingo
- Organize dailies for editing: log, digitize, sync, and code
- Edit their project: make an overlap, cut in a reaction, work with mismatches, finesse the pacing of a scene, and address action, dialog, and montage scenes
- Cut in narration, sound effects, music, and visual (special) effects
- Design sound and prepare for and mix their projects
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of post finishing processes: Digital play out, tape online, film negative cut, DVD authoring, and Digital Intermediate

### **Required Textbook**

*Cut by Cut: Editing your Film or Video* by Gael Chandler

Available at [www.mwp.com](http://www.mwp.com) or from

Michael Wiese Productions

11288 Ventura Blvd., Studio City, CA 91604

818/379-8799 Fax: 818/986-3408

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### **Suggested Supplementary Resources**

Class lectures and labs ("hands on" editing time), dailies (if students don't have their own footage), film scene examples, websites, articles, books on editing software and theory, visits to post facilities, and guest speakers: editors and other post production personnel.

### **Equipment**

An editing system, mix studio, editing supplies.

## Week 1-4: Preparing for Editing

**Objectives: Students will demonstrate familiarity with editing terms and fundamentals and prepare footage for editing their project on a digital editing system or on film.**

### Class Content

**Week 1**

#### Objectives

Students will complete a checklist and a flow chart of the format they plan to use to shoot, edit, and finish their projects. They will also demonstrate knowledge of editing terms and how to shoot a film or video keeping editing in mind.

#### Subjects

- Shooting for post production: POV, eyeline, crossing the line, recording sound, etc.
- Deciding how the audience will view finished film or video: via Web, tube, film festival, video, or DVD
- Establishing a finishing format
- Editing terms: film, video, and digital
- Typical film, tape, DVD, and Web paths from shoot to finish

Assigned reading: Chapter 1

**Week 2**

#### Objectives

Students gain familiarity with videotape fundamentals, the basics of editing on a digital system versus editing on film, and gain the ability to figure out which system they will use to edit.

#### Subjects

- Videotape fundamentals: timecode, linear/non-linear, analog/digital, telecine
- Overview of digital and film cutting room processes
  - Digital and film finishing formats and methods
  - Popular digital systems
  - Pros and cons of editing digitally and on film
  - Moviola and KEM film machines

Assigned reading: Chapter 2

<b><u>Class Content for Week 1-4 (continued)</u></b>	
<b>Week 3</b>	<p><u>Objectives</u> Students will log their dailies and can create a postproduction schedule. The book provides forms for doing both at the end of the chapter.</p> <p><u>Subjects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting up a cutting room: editing equipment and supplies</li> <li>• Logging shots</li> <li>• Deciphering a lined script and marking a transcript</li> <li>• Creating a post production schedule</li> </ul> <p><u>Assigned reading:</u> Chapter 3</p>
<b>Week 4</b>	<p><u>Objective</u> Using a digital editing system or a film machine, students will prepare dailies for editing.</p> <p><u>Subjects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing digitized footage for editing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Components of a digital system</li> <li>- Digitizing and organizing the digitized footage</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Preparing film footage for editing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Film equipment: synchronizer, Moviola, KEM, splicer, squawk box. etc.</li> <li>- Prepping, syncing, coding, and breaking down dailies</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Assigned reading:</u> Chapters 4 and 5 Assign Chapter 4 (Digital Cutting Room) and/or Chapter 5 (Film Cutting Room), depending on what editing system students will be editing on and how much digital system and/or film knowledge they need.</p>

**Suggested Supplemental Reading/Resources for Week 1-4**

1) *High Def 411 The Professional Resource Guide for High Def Production Vol. 3*  
A thick pamphlet that contains an excellent glossy, color flow chart on the current paths to a High Def finish available from Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. at [www.Highdef411.com](http://www.Highdef411.com)

2) A visit to a film lab or a post production facility where students may view telecine, a dub room, etc.

## **Class 5-9: Editing**

### **Objectives: Students edit, screen, and lock their project**

The lab portion of these classes will focus on how to use the equipment supported by the lecture portion of the class which will cover the aesthetics and thought process of editing.

### **Class Content**

**Week 5**

#### Objective

Students begin editing their project, aiming for a finished "First Cut."

#### Subjects

- Facing the footage – Making your first edits
- To cut or not to cut: Where to cut and why
- Key editing techniques of the digital cutting room
  - Timeline, one-, two-, and three-point editing, trimming
- Key editing techniques of the film cutting room
  - Pulling, editing, overlapping, trimming, and filing film footage

Assigned reading: Portions of Chapter 6 and Chapters 8 and/or Chapter 9  
Assign Chapter 8 (Editing on a Digital System) and/or Chapter 9 (Editing on Film), depending on what editing system students will be editing on and how much digital system and/or film knowledge they need.

**Week 6**

#### Objective

Students complete their First Cut.

#### Subjects

- The power of the overlap and the reaction shot
- Everyday editing challenges: mismatches, cheating shots, invisible editing
- Cutting montage, action, dialog scenes and narration

Assigned reading: Portions of Chapter 6 and Chapter 8 and/or Chapter 9

<b><u>Class Content for Week 5-9 (continued)</u></b>	
<b>Week 7</b>	<p><u>Objectives</u> Students screen their First Cut, begin re-cutting their project, and add special effects, aiming for a final, locked cut.</p> <p><u>Subjects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Editing different types of projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Cutting documentary, animation, news, music video, comedy, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Key editing techniques of the digital and film cutting rooms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Special effects: creating them and cutting them in</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Assigned reading</u>: Portions of Chapter 6, Chapter 7, and Chapter 8 and/or Chapter 9</p>
<b>Week 8</b>	<p><u>Objectives</u> Students continue re-cutting and add sound effects, music, and narration to their cuts.</p> <p><u>Subjects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cutting in sounds effects, music, and narration</li> <li>• Laying tracks</li> </ul> <p><u>Assigned reading</u>: Portions of Chapter 7, Chapter 8 and/or Chapter 9</p>
<b>Week 9</b>	<p><u>Objectives</u> Students finish and screen their final cut and lock their project.</p> <p><u>Subjects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locking and measuring the final cut</li> <li>• Key editing techniques of the digital and film cutting rooms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Screening and locking a cut on a digital system and on film</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Assigned reading</u>: Portions of Chapter 7, Chapter 8 and/or Chapter 9</p>

**Suggested Supplemental Reading/Resources for Week 5-9**

1. A visit to a Special Effects and Titling house.
2. *The Cutting Edge: The Story of Cinema Editing*  
2004 documentary by UCLA professor Wendy Apple which superbly tells the history of editing and editors. With interviews by Spielberg, Tarantino, Scorsese, and other directors and editors.
3. *In the Blink of an Eye* Walter Murch
4. *On Film Editing* Edward Dmytryk
5. *Transitions: Voices on the Craft of Digital Editing* Editors on editing Dvision Press 2003
6. [www.filmmakingbooks.com/editing.htm](http://www.filmmakingbooks.com/editing.htm)  
Web site with popular books on editing.
7. [www.creativecow.net](http://www.creativecow.net)  
A good place to go for product and book reviews on software and editing systems as well as for articles and getting technical questions answered.

<b><u>Class 10-12: Sound, Music, and the Mix</u></b>	
<b><u>Objectives: Students edit sound and music and mix their projects</u></b>	
<b><u>Class Content</u></b>	
<b>Week 10</b>	<p><u>Objectives</u> Students diagnose sound for a completed show and design sound for their project. With the forms provided, students can diagnose a scene from a familiar movie, beat by beat for its sound and music elements. Then they can spot and diagnose their own projects, scene by and design their show's sound. They can also fill out flow charts for the process they will use to complete sound and music on their projects.</p> <p><u>Subjects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spotting and designing sound</li> <li>• Sound and music personnel: sound designer, editors, composer, supervisors</li> <li>• Sound terms and practices: ADR, splitting dialogue, and foley</li> <li>• Music terms and practices: composing, acquiring, cueing, and scoring</li> <li>• The sound process               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Acquiring sound and music</li> <li>- Flow charts for the sound and music editing process from start to finish</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Assigned reading:</u> Chapter 10</p>

<b><u>Class Content for Week 10-12 (continued)</u></b>	
<b>Week 11</b>	<p><u>Objectives</u> Students acquire sound and music and edit it into their projects</p> <p><u>Subjects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Editing dialogue and sound effects</li> <li>• Editing music</li> </ul> <p><u>Assigned reading:</u> Chapter 10</p>
<b>Week 12</b>	<p><u>Objectives</u> Students prepare their tracks for the mix and mix their projects.</p> <p><u>Subjects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing tracks for the mix</li> <li>• The Mix</li> </ul> <p><u>Assigned reading:</u> Chapter 11</p>

### **Supplemental Reading/Resources for Class 10-12**

1. A visit to a Post Production Sound facility where students may view an ADR stage, a MIDI set up, a mix stage, a sound library, etc.
2. [www.filmmusicmag.com](http://www.filmmusicmag.com)  
This website is chock full of articles on the current issues, players, and events in the world of film music.
3. [www.filmsound.org](http://www.filmsound.org)  
Top notch site about how to design, edit, and mix sound by the lions of the industry. Includes topical articles on sound clichés, history, and just plain sound advice. Also has links to an extensive list of sound libraries for downloading and obtaining on CD and offers free SFX.
4. <http://filmsound.studienet.org/>  
Has current, authoritative articles about sound and the history of sound as well as a bibliography, glossary, and links to sound effects libraries.
5. [www.alcljudprod.se](http://www.alcljudprod.se), [www.stonewashed.net/sfx.html](http://www.stonewashed.net/sfx.html), [www.partnersinrhyme.com](http://www.partnersinrhyme.com), [www.wavplace.com](http://www.wavplace.com)  
Several sites that offer free sound effects.

**Class 13-15: Finishing and Screening**

**Objectives: Students complete their projects and screen them**

**Class Content**

**Week 13**

Objectives

Students add titles and credits to their project and finish their project by getting it to its final tape, disc, or web format.

Subjects

- Adding titles and credits
- Finishing on tape
  - via play out from the digital system
  - via online
  - color correction, layback, and sweetening
- Finishing on DVD (disc) and the Web
  - DVD authoring: Prep and process
  - Creating a file for a Web finish

Assigned reading: Chapter 12

**Week 14**

Objectives

Students prepare their project for a film finish and review the film print.

Subjects

- Finishing on film
  - Creating a cutlist and changelist
  - Negative Cutting: Preparing for it and how it is done
  - Digital Intermediary: New process on the rise
- The future of film and digital technology
- Entering a film festival

Assigned reading: Chapter 13, portion of Chapter 8

**Class Content for Week 13-15 (continued)**

<b>Week 15</b>	<p><u>Objectives</u> Students complete their projects and screen them.</p> <p>FADE OUT</p>
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**Supplemental Reading/Resources for Class 13-15**

1. A visit to an online room and/or a film lab where students may the online process, color correction or timing, titling, negative cutting, and the Digital Intermediary process.
2. [www.dvdhelp.us](http://www.dvdhelp.us)  
Provides free tutorials, a glossary, FAQs, and a multi topic forum for getting your questions answered regarding DVD authoring and VCD conversion as well as several other technical topics.
3. [www.filmfestival.com](http://www.filmfestival.com)  
This site and other sites for specific festivals provide essential information about entering festivals.

Learn more about the book at [www.gaelchandler.com](http://www.gaelchandler.com)  
Contact the author at [info@gaelchandler.com](mailto:info@gaelchandler.com)  
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