



Basic Field Production

Fayetteville Public Access Television
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Welcome to the Fayetteville Public Access Television Basic Field Production Class!

This class is designed to teach you how to use the Television Center's basic field production equipment. The training will include field camera and tripod operation, shot composition, recording audio in the field, and basic shooting techniques. You will also be given hands-on experience. To pass this class, you will be required to achieve a score of at least 70% on a proficiency test that will be given at the end of the class. This class consists of one 90-minute session. After completing this class and passing the proficiency test, you will be qualified to use the basic field production equipment at the Television Center. This class is a prerequisite for Advanced Field Production.

In this class, we will be using the Canon Vixia HF-R700. The camera kit you will be using contains the following items:

- The camera
- 2 batteries
- An AC power supply
- An XLR to mini adapter
- A tripod



This camera records on an SD card. You are responsible for providing your own SD cards for use outside of class. The card you purchase should be rated for at least 35 MB / second and have at least 16GB capacity. 16GB should hold approximately 1.5 hours of video footage using this camera. We recommend the SanDisk Extreme HD Video SD Card.

You are responsible for ensuring that you have all the equipment needed for your particular project. You are also responsible for the equipment while it is in your care. When you are checking out equipment, make sure to check the condition and operation of the equipment for yourself. Once in the field, it may be impossible to go back to the studio to get what you need. If you have time, set everything up and check its operation at the Television Center before you take it out.

Remember to always give yourself time to set up before the action begins. When recording, take the time to review your footage in the field if possible. It is very difficult to recreate the same situation on location if you have accidentally made a mistake.

Setting up your equipment:

Raise the tripod so that your mounted camera will be even in height with the central aspect of your subject. If your subject is a person, the central aspect will probably be the person's face. If your subject is a flower, the central aspect will most likely be the petals. Make sure your tripod is level so your footage will be level, then make sure the tripod is secure before mounting the camera. Know how to unlock the pan/tilt locking levers to ensure a smooth pan or tilt. Different tripods are set up differently. If you are unsure of any aspect of setting up the equipment, speak with a staff member for help.

Once the tripod is set up, prepare the camera so you can mount it on the tripod. Before the tripod plate can be attached to this camera, you must first insert the SD card into the bottom of the camera. After that is done, attach the tripod plate and mount the camera to the tripod. Make sure it is securely in place before you let go of the camera.

Use a tripod whenever possible. If you must use the camera handheld, here are some helpful hints:

- Try to steady it by holding the body of the camera or by grasping your elbow.
- Stand with your feet apart, and lean on something for stability.
- Stand closer to your subject to avoid zooming in. The more the camera is zoomed in, the more noticeable all shakes and movements become.

Turn the Power On:

To use the AC adapter:

- Plug it into the camera and wall outlet. This is also how you charge the battery when the camera is not in use.
- Turn the camera on by pressing the power button located on top of the camera body.

To use a battery:

- Slide the battery into the back of the camera. It only fits one way, so be careful not to force it.
- Turn the camera on by pressing the power button located on top of the camera body.
- To remove a battery, open the viewfinder and push the battery release button.

Using the Camera:

Now that you have your camera turned on, you are ready to begin using it. Make sure the viewfinder is open and you can see a video image on the screen. If you are planning to use the shotgun mic or any other external mic, you should connect it to the camera now. It is also recommended that whenever you are recording audio along with video that you wear headphones to monitor your audio.

Let's look at a few of the other buttons on the camera:

- On the right side of the camera is the RECORD/PAUSE button. By pressing this button, you will start and stop recording. Each time you do this you will create a new file on the SD card you inserted earlier.
- On top of the camera is a button that can be moved either to the right or to the left. This is the zoom control for the camera. It allows you to zoom in and out, changing the framing of the shot. On the zoom control, you will see two letters: "T" and "W". The "T" stands for "telephoto". When you push the zoom control in this direction, the camera will zoom in. The "W" stands for "wide". When the zoom control is pushed in this direction, the camera will zoom out.
- This camera's viewfinder is a touch screen. It allows you to access all the menus, make adjustments, monitor audio levels, and playback recorded files with the touch of your finger. For an in depth explanation of all of the menus and features, you can read or download the complete user manual for the Canon Vixia HF-M500 at <http://faypublic.tv/field.html>

Camera Movement:

Camera moves are intended to focus the viewer's attention. Movement should be performed with a purpose, at an appropriate speed for the circumstance, and not confuse the viewer.

Below are standard camera movement definitions:

- Pan - Rotating the camera left or right around a vertical axis.
- Tilt - Rotating the camera up or down around a horizontal axis.
- Truck - Moving the camera left or right on a tripod with wheels.
- Dolly - Moving the camera closer to or further from the subject on a tripod with wheels.
- Arc - Similar to truck except you move in a half circle or 'arc' to left or right.
- Pedestal - Raising or lowering the camera on a tripod with a pedestal or column that adjusts up or down.

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Shot Composition:

Head Room

Head room refers to the space between the top of the screen and the framed object or person. Proper head room consists of a shot without too much or too little room above the subject's head. Too much or too little head room can be distracting to the viewer.

TOO MUCH



NOT ENOUGH



GOOD HEAD ROOM



Nose Room

Nose room refers to the talk space in front of a person. It is also known as 'leading' the subject. Proper nose room is when a figure or head is off center with the majority empty screen space in the direction a person is speaking or moving.



Basic Camera Shots:

Long Shot (LS) or Wide Shot (WS)

Shows the full figure, the entire body or bodies. Shows the greatest field of view. The lens is usually zoomed out all the way. This shot is also called an establishing shot when it is used to show the audience where the scene is taking place.



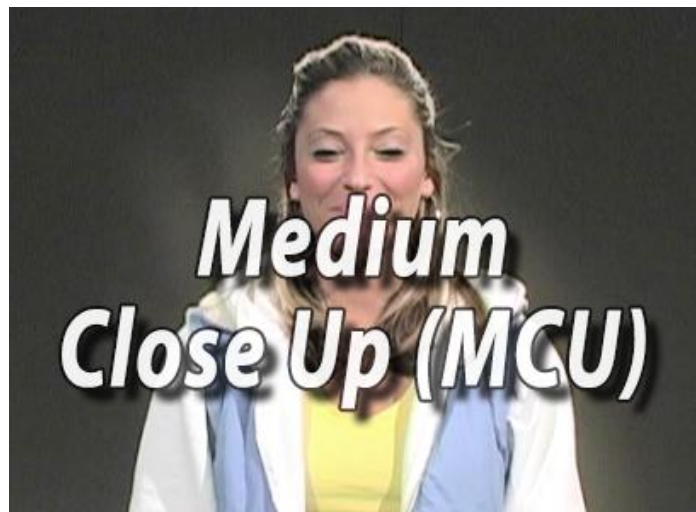
Medium Shot (MS)

This shot is usually from the knees or the waist up to the top of the subject. Usually about 50% of the field of view of the Long Shot.



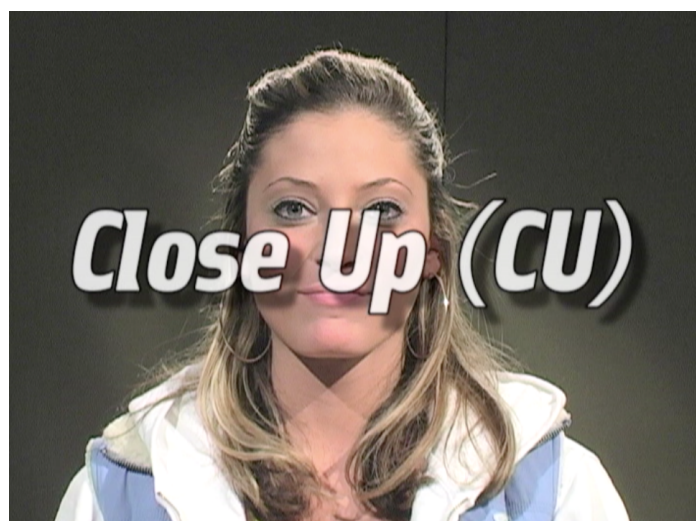
Medium Close Up (MCU)

This shot is usually framed from mid torso to the top of the head. Usually about 40% of the field of view of the Long Shot.



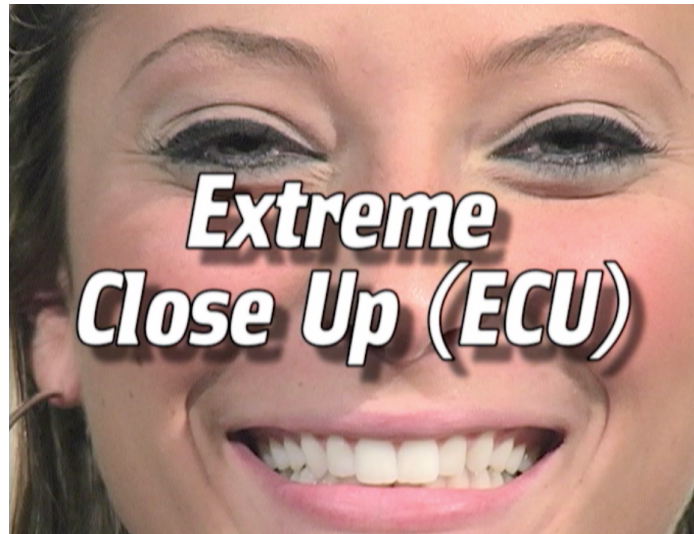
Close Up (CU)

This shot includes the top of the shoulders to the top of the head. Usually about 30% of the field of view of the Long Shot.



Extreme Close Up (ECU)

Extremely tight shot of a person or object. Usually about 10% of the field of view of the Long Shot.



Shooting in the Field:

- Use a tripod whenever possible. You want your camerawork to be steady and smooth. The mark of good camera work is not noticing it. Make sure your tripod head is adjusted to be loose enough to move but firm enough to stay put when not held.
- Select angles that minimize bright backgrounds. If your background is still too bright, try zooming in closer to your subject to cut down on the surrounding brightness. Try to have your subject be the brightest object in the frame.
- Be aware of different angles and positions. Try to avoid shooting your subject straight on. Shooting from different angles can create different emotions or scenes. For example, shooting up at someone from below creates an impression of dominance, importance, and power. Choose an effective, simple composition.
- Be aware of any movement, and try to keep your subject in the shot. Make sure any movement is motivated or has a reason for being done. Also, try to show long periods of motion by showing short scenes of different parts of the movement to emphasize lengthy movement.
- Avoid trying to show too much. Keep important details to a minimum. Avoid excess clutter.

- Shoot with the light behind you. Don't shoot into the light or a bright background. If this isn't possible, draw curtains, block out the light, or zoom in to avoid the light.
- When shooting, look for good transitional shots. Is there a shot that would look great with credits over it? Take several different shots of similar scenes to avoid being forced to include footage that may be jumpy, out of focus, or poorly lit.
- Avoid overuse of zooms. A zoom should be used to either focus attention or to reveal information. Also, zoom with purpose. Before you begin to zoom in or out, you should know what you want your shot to look like when the zoom is finished.
- When using the auto-focus feature, be aware that the camera will automatically try to focus on the highest contrast area in the frame. Bright areas or motion in the background of the shot can trick the camera into focusing on something besides your intended subject.
- Be innovative. The best and most creative shots can sometimes come from experimentation; however, be careful to not let your technique overwhelm your content.
- Have fun.

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