



**VANGUARD**  
**UNIVERSITY**

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Cinema / Digital Media  
SENIOR PROJECT

## **A. SENIOR PROJECT FILM GUIDELINES |**

The student writes, directs, or serves in a production role (cinematographer, editor, production sound, sound designer), on a faculty approved/mentored film, video, documentary, animation, or commercial project into final form for festival distribution.

In order to be approved for Senior Project A, you must have requested project approval the semester prior to enrolling. For approval for fall semester, a student must have the proposal and crew contracts to the desired faculty mentor no later than **April 30**. For approval for Spring semester, a student must have the proposal and crew contracts to the desired faculty mentor no later than **December 1**. The proposal, crew contracts, and legal releases can be found on the [vanguardstudios.org](http://vanguardstudios.org) website.

Download the forms needed at

[http://www.vanguardstudios.org/downloads/seniorproject\\_a.zip](http://www.vanguardstudios.org/downloads/seniorproject_a.zip)

You must meet with your faculty mentor during the production and post-production process.

The film must be completed with the following in order to receive a grade for the course. A film is never really complete. You can always keep working on it. However, just like the real world, deadlines are strict.

You must turn in the following by **Dec 10<sup>th</sup>** (fall semester) or **May 10<sup>th</sup>** (spring semester):

- 1) one DVD of the completed film with printed DVD, DVD wrap artwork
- 2) one CD of production stills
- 3) one production notebook with the following
  - 1) title
  - 2) Project proposal
  - 3) contact information
  - 4) schedule
  - 5) budget
  - 6) emergency medical information for cast and crew
  - 7) Legal releases
  - 8) research
  - 9) receipts
  - 10) no more than one page, no less than a paragraph - final thoughts – what I learned, how I grew, what I would do better next time

## **B. SENIOR PROJECT DEMO REEL |**

A reel is a portfolio of your work to show potential employers. Throughout your school career you have taken part in projects that show your talents. The best way for a future employer to see these talents is through the submission of a DVD portfolio – in the film world called “a reel.” Back before video or DVDs, you had to splice together the pieces of film you worked on and put that film together on a reel (one of those round metal thingies with a hole in the middle), and that is where the name comes from.

A reel submission for your senior project has 4 parts:

- a) the reel
- b) a cover letter
- c) a resume
- d) a written table of contents of what is on the DVD or “reel”

### TECHNIQUES:

1) Your reel should be no more than 3-4 minutes. If you have a lot of great material...do a 3 minute version, and then refer to longer pieces on the DVD afterwards. Keep it simple.

2) Keep the music basic, some people get annoyed by disco or heavy electronica or banjos. Keep it simple.

3) Put your best work first. People in the film world don't have a lot of time. And they work 20 hours a day. They might watch the first minute, see if anything intrigues them. If so, they'll watch the other 2 minutes. If nothing intrigues them right away they will move on. Show your best, most impressive work first -- presumably the work you are specifically applying for. Make it clear on your reel, cover sheet, and resume what type of position you're applying for.

4) You will create title cards and a table of contents. Employers want to know exactly what you did on your reel. The TOC should tell your audience what they are looking at, what YOU did on it, and what tools you used. For example:

“Believe” (June 2003) 8mm film; writer, director, editor.

“AFX project” (January 2005) After Effects Motion Graphics Group Project; I designed the images in Photoshop used for the project.

You should put this on a title card before the sequence and again in a separate printed TOC that goes inside the DVD. What is a TOC or Table of Contents? Look at the DVDs of films you like, it explains what is inside them. There is no set standard, but the TOC should be readable, understandable and help you on your journey to your perfect job!

5) Include a title card at the beginning and end with your name, address, phone, and email. Including the position you're looking for is not a bad idea, either. And give it some time in the end. Don't make people desperately pause to get your email address. Put your

name on the actual DVD case too. Reels can get separated from their cases and without a name on the reel or title cards on the actual DVD and it becomes a mystery that goes in the trash can.

6) Take the time to polish the work you have already created. It seems silly, but people get in such a rush to do the DVD, that they lose sight of the big picture. **THIS IS HOW YOU WILL GET A JOB.** And since it's a job in a visual industry -- it should **LOOK** really, really good. Don't use clashing colors. Make it clear to the audience what they are looking at. Don't use confusing fonts. Keep it clean and simple!

7) Show it to other people. Have other people critique it. Not necessarily the work on it, but the way you're presenting your work. (Though getting critiques of the work on it is a great idea, too.)

8) Check the DVD reel on a computer and several different DVD players to make sure it works everywhere. If it doesn't play, you don't get the job.

9) You will take the final completed artwork and DVD to Avant Production studio, to get duplications made. Through this process you will learn how to work with a vendor and get the right specifications needed to complete a work.

For DVD templates for your project, download them online at <http://www.vanguardstudios.org/downloads/seniorprojectb.zip>

**To complete the senior project reel you must meet these deadlines:**

- 1) Gather projects to include on DVD – Sept 28<sup>th</sup>
- 2) Create DVD architecture map (how it will work) – Oct 2
- 3) Create artwork for DVD, table of contents and case – Oct 21
- 4) Finesse projects to be included on DVD – Nov 11
- 5) Author DVD and check for problems – Nov 24
- 6) Turn in final DVD with appropriate artwork to Avant Studio by **final deadline date Dec 1, 4pm - NO EXCEPTIONS**
- 7) Pick up final DVDs, **turn in one reel to Kyo Edmondson by Dec 12, 4pm**

**You will meet these deadlines on your own, no one will check up on you.**

## **D. SENIOR PROJECT SCREENPLAY GUIDELINES |**

Those who desire to write a screenplay for the senior project must complete a **feature screenplay**. The instructor must approve other kinds of screenplays, such as sitcoms and short form scripts or publications.

To complete the screenplay senior project, students must provide (in addition to the actual screenplay):

- **a logline approved and supported by the instructor**
- **one page synopsis of the screenplay**
- **letter of inquiry to potential agents**
- **preparation of a professional pitch (verbal)**

The screenplay must be written in proper format, with title page and bound by brass brads, just as professional screenwriters do.

### **SCHEDULE/DUE DATES**

#### **Sept 28th**

Logline and one page synopsis due

#### **Oct 18th**

First Act due

#### **Nov 5th**

Second Act due

#### **Dec 3rd**

Third Act/Completed Screenplay due

#### **Dec 8th**

Letter of Inquiry due (to be sent out to agents)

Verbal Pitch due

Students will be required to meet with the instructor at least every other week for individual consultation on the progression of the screenplay. This one-on-one time is for feedback and constructive criticism of the work. It can also be used to learn about the business and practice of being a screenwriter.

Students who wish to write other forms of material (magazine/newspaper articles) should consult the instructor for guidelines and schedule.

The written work done as senior project must be the best work one can possibly do. It is the final piece of work that you will produce at Vanguard and it is imperative that you put forth your best effort to create something that you can both be proud of and “shop around” to the industry.