

Welcome to the Course

Who are you and why did we create this course for you?

We created this course for video beginners. This means you are someone who has never made a video before, or someone who has already started making videos but is looking for more help.

Maybe you're a YouTuber, a vlogger, a blogger. Maybe you own a business or work at a company and need to make your own videos. Maybe you have a camera, and just want to use it. Or maybe you're an aspiring filmmaker.

We are video professionals with work seen everywhere from the big screen to viral hits on YouTube. We've come together to teach you the essentials of making a great video.

What can you expect?

You'll learn how to make great videos no matter what your budget. Here are the key topics that you'll learn in this course.

1. Choose what type of video to make and understand what makes an amazing video.
2. Learn about our recommended equipment. This course tries to be 'equipment agnostic.' We believe you can make great videos with any kind of camera, audio, or lighting gear. But throughout the course, we'll mention equipment that we use and recommend.
3. Learn how to shoot with any camera. Understand the basics of composition, setting exposure, and choosing a background. Also learn our best tips for specific camera types like DSLR cameras, smartphones, and webcams.
4. Record better audio and understand how to use different microphones.
5. Light your videos, and see why lighting is so important. Learn down-and-dirty cheap lighting techniques that won't break the bank.
6. Edit your videos. We'll teach you how to make your videos more engaging... no matter what video editor you use.
7. Someone needs to see your video, right? Learn where and how to grow your audience with distribution.

Who are your teachers?

Phil Ebiner is a professional editor and motion graphics artist. He's shot and edited thousands of videos that have appeared everywhere from YouTube to the big screen. Will Carnahan is a professional cinematographer, photographer, and director, working on anything from YouTube series to low budget indie features. Sam Shimizu-Jones is a professional cinematographer and lead videographer for the band Major Lazer. Sam has traveled the world making documentaries, music videos, and corporate videos.

What Makes a Great Video?

Here are the key elements to making a great video:

Camera

You need anything to capture video. We've used everything from smartphones to \$50k+ cameras. Of course some cameras have more capabilities than others (resolutions/slow motion/etc), but for everyone starting out a smartphone or cheap DSLR is fine. It's all about knowing what your camera is capable and how to make it look its best.

Subject

A great video needs a subject. You need something or someone captivating with a story. Even if you're making commercial projects, the more interesting your story (or how you present it) is, the better response your video will have. A story that has heart, that someone can relate too will be better than one without.

Light

You need light to expose your video, 'to make it bright enough'. Light comes both naturally and artificially. Natural light comes from the sun, while artificial light is man-made. Not only is light essential to expose your video, but it also helps tell your story by creating a mood.

Audio

Audio is another essential piece of video. While a video doesn't need audio to technically make it a video, audio can make or break your video. Knowing how to record great audio in any environment is essential. Luckily, there are different microphones that help you in different situations.

Edit

Some say that editing is where the story is build. You use editing to not only put together the best camera takes, but also to create emotion, add comedy, and increase engagement with things like music, graphics, and color grading.

Distribution

Great videos should be seen, and we live in an amazing world where we can freely share our videos around the world to anyone with a computer. You need to know how to make it easy for people to find your videos, and expand your reach with tools like social media.

Create the Right Type of Video

Much of what makes a video successful happens before the production. These next three tips will help you come up with the right video for your purpose.

What's your end goal?

To create the right video, you need to know what your end goal is. Are you trying to entertain with a music video or comedy sketch? Are you trying to teach with a tutorial or educational documentary? Are you trying to sell with a commercial or promotional video? What's the best way to visually show this genre of video? You can achieve your goal with any type of video, but generally there is one type that will accomplish your goal best.

Who is your target audience?

While it would be great if every person in the world was interested in watching your video, that's probably not the case. You need to find out who your target audience is. These are people searching for stories like yours who are more likely to like and share your video and help it reach even more people. Before making your next video, really think about who you want to reach with it. Keep them in mind as you write a script, come up with shots, and design a style through editing.

Where do you want to share?

Different platforms call for different types of videos. Youtube is great for creators putting out consistent work looking for an audience already searching for video content. Vimeo is for higher quality creative video makers aspiring to be paid for their video work, not just use video as a tool for their business. Twitter and Instagram are great for shorter videos. Facebook is another place you can upload directly to. It's also a place you can share links to your videos from YouTube or Vimeo.

We recommend YouTube as the ultimate place to grow a video brand and audience. But if you're a business that already has an audience on multiple platforms, it's a good idea to make specific content for each platform. At the same time, it's easier to grow if you focus on one platform.