

Course Descriptions & Bios, Florence 2025

Brian Antonson

Santa Rosa Junior College

Brian Antonson manages the Digital Filmmaking at SRJC, which teaches students the production of fiction and nonfiction media content. The program emphasizes technical, aesthetic and creative aspects of storytelling through digital mediums. Our graduates go on to further their studies at film schools such as USC and NYU, or go into the industry in LA and NY.

Brian came to SRJC from New York where he worked as a cameraperson and editor for CBS News, and CBS Sunday Morning. Before working in news, he was the cinematographer for A&E's Paranormal State (some would say the OG of the ghost-hunting genre), Discovery's Ghost Lab, and IFC's Z-Rock. Brian has shot lots of pilots for TV and film, including the pilot that launched MTV's hit series, The Jersey Shore. The script for his feature film, Frat Brothers, was nominated Best Screenplay by the Hollywood Screenplay Competition. Brian has worked around the country and around the world. He continues shooting content for clients, such as Discovery's Yukon Men in Alaska, and TLC's Kindred Spirits.

Brian holds an M.A. in Media Ecology from NYU and a B.A. in Film & Video and English from the University of Notre Dame. You can learn more about Brian by visiting his website: www.BrianAntonson.com or searching his name on IMDB.com. He has two kids, a loving wife and a very smart dog.

MEDIA 4: Intro to Mass Communication

3 units, CSU/UC transferable. Grade or P/NP.

Are you confused when you read news headlines? Do you feel like you might be addicted to your phone? Could TikTok actually be a secret surveillance weapon designed to melt young people's brains!? These and other questions will be explored as we study our infinitely complex media environment. We do indeed live in interesting times. As we examine the history of the computer and a variety of media content (music, films, television and social media), we will always keep an eye on the question: how did we get here?

MEDIA 10: Film Appreciation

4 units, CSU/UC transferable. Grade or P/NP

Florence houses some of the world's finest art. But these masterpieces aren't limited to painting and sculpture. Some of the finest filmmakers come from Italy! Most scholars agree Federico Fellini is one of the best filmmakers of all time. Vittorio De Sica made a film (The Bicycle Thief) that is impossible to watch without crying. The Matrix wouldn't exist without Sergio Leone's The Good, the Bad and the Ugly. We will watch lots of movies and talk about them. You can expect to leave this class with a deep appreciation for film, which you will carry with you for the rest of your life! Did I mention that Florence housed the first movie theater in Italy, The Cinema La Compagnia?!

JOUR 5: Digital Non-fiction Storytelling

4 units, CSU/UC transferable. Grade or P/NP

Don't let the fact that this is a Journalism class scare you! I will be teaching students how to use their phones to create broadcast-quality pictures, video and sound. We will learn the basics of non-fiction production, ie, short documentary. These are broad multimedia based skills. Students use these skills to create travelogues, cooking videos, tributes to people, documenting a process (as can be found on TikTok) or just high quality social media posts in general. Learn to tell stories that exist in the world (including your own) using your smartphone.

Joseph Steever

Los Rios Community College District

Hello, my name is Professor Joseph Steever and I am a Mathematics Professor at Sacramento City College. I've lived almost all my life in Northern California. While I have a broad interest in learning, I have particularly gravitated towards the STEM fields. I graduated from University of Pacific with a B.S. in Mathematics and a minor in Computer Science. I then spent several years in the doctoral program at UC Berkeley. For the past 22 years, I have been working in the community college system. While I spent some of that time as the director of a mathematics tutoring lab, most of it has been spent teaching.

Outside of the classroom, I enjoy history, science, travel, and good food (maybe a little too much). My first overseas experience was about ten years ago. I travelled with a group of high school students to Barcelona and Paris. Since then, I have visited Canada, Mexico, and, most recently, to Italy. I am thrilled to be returning to Italy with a group of students. There is so much to see and to experience! I am sure we will all learn a great deal and have some wonderful adventures.

MATH 300: Introduction to Mathematical Ideas

3 units, CSU/UC transferable.

Mathematics has played an important role in the development and advancement of civilizations around the globe. In this course, we will talk about the history of mathematics and its effects on the civilizations feeding into modern Italy. We will begin by discussing the types of number systems used in different ancient civilizations, particularly those around the Mediterranean. This will include examining how these systems affected the development of their associated cultures. Once we know how to count, we will look at the development and use of geometry in Mesopotamia and early Italy. Moving out of the Roman Empire, we will discuss some of the more famous Italian mathematicians and their contributions to the fields of mathematics (both applied and pure). At the end of the course, we will discuss voting systems and how some of the structures and strategies for voting used in European democracies differ from those of the U.S.

MATH 320: Symbolic Logic

3 units, CSU/UC transferable.

Even before Socrates and Plato, philosophers have used logic to shape well-reasoned and convincing arguments and to delve into the depths of meaning. Logic itself has become a philosophical discipline with modern researchers examining its underpinnings and its limitations. This course will focus on the use of formal symbols, structures, and operations to encode the reasoning behind arguments and to evaluate their validity. This ability can be applied to evaluation of arguments presented to us and to how we reach decisions within ourselves.

STAT 300: Elementary Statistics

4 units, CSU/UC transferable.

Statistics is used to make informed decisions in science, medicine, psychology, and social sciences. Even those outside of these fields interact regularly with statistics. We see it in the news we read. Almost anytime any group wants to convince us of the rightness of their cause, they fall back on statistics. In this course, we will talk about the basic ideas behind how statistics are used, what they mean, and how they are misused. By learning these ideas, we become more conscientious consumers of the information presented to us. This course will include statistical examples drawn from modern Italy and Europe.

Evan Kaiser

San Mateo County Community College District

Fifteen years ago, I took the best risk of my life. While working on my B.A. in Linguistics, I spent a year at the University of Bologna and traveled in Italy and throughout Europe when classes were out of session. Through the successes and challenges of that year, I developed a maturity, humility, perspective, and confidence that I needed to take the next steps along the career and life path that was right for me. That is why I'm so excited to return to Italy as faculty to accompany you on your own journey!

After a year of working to repay some of that travel debt (which I do not regret accruing at all), I completed an M.A. in English with certificates in teaching reading and composition. I have taught college English and ESL in the Bay Area for about 10 years now.

In Florence, we'll have the unique opportunity to read and write about Italian literature and culture, incorporating our own experiences along the way, while also meeting General Education requirements. I am offering a variety of levels and areas – a first-semester writing course, a second-semester writing course, and an elective – in an attempt to accommodate different academic trajectories. I hope you will join us on this once-in-a-lifetime excursion!

ENGL 100: Composition and Reading

3 units, CSU/UC transferable

This course kicks off with your own experience living abroad. To learn writing processes and skills, audience and genre awareness, and habits of mind for composition, you'll reflect on your observations, senses of identity, and other relational opportunities and challenges that living in Florence presents you. Nonfiction texts like *Beyond Guilt Trips: Mindful Travel in an Unequal World* will contextualize and extend this discussion. We'll then broaden our lens, learning more about Italian emigrants living around the world and the experiences of migration more broadly. We will pay a visit to the Paolo Cresci Museum of Italian Emigration in Lucca and take a walking intercultural tour of Florence as we do this.

ENGL 110: Composition, Literature, and Critical Thinking

3 units, CSU/UC transferable; prerequisite: First-Year Composition

In this writing about literature course, we'll analyze and explore the context of neorealist and other contemporary Italian literature and poetry. For example, Alberto Moravia's *The Conformist* and Natalia Ginzburg's *Family Lexicon* illustrate the tensions of pursuing normalcy – or is it conformity? - during and after the period of Italian Fascism. We'll visit local sites in Florence that are relevant to this period. Additionally, Italo Calvino, one of my favorite writers, takes us on a surreal journey into the psyche in *Mr. Palomar* and a humorous romp through time, led by Marco Polo and Kublai Khan, in *Invisible Cities*. You'll also read translations of Italian poetry from writers like Cesare Pavese and Umberto Saba, and you'll even try your hand at translating a poem yourself (don't worry - I can help!)

LIT 154: Introduction to LGBT Literature

3 units, CSU/UC transferable

This course will pair "classic" works of LGBT+ American literature with contemporary Italian ones to explore themes relevant to people of all sexualities. James Baldwin's *Another Country* and selections from the queer transnational Italian anthology *Here and Now* help us explore what it means to belong. We can trace the evolution of public discourses around the AIDS crisis from Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* to contemporary works like *Fever* by Jonathan Bazzi. And *Stone Butch Blues* by Leslie Feinberg, in conversation with selections from Porpora Marasciano's *AntoloGaia*, show us the power of thinking beyond binaries as well as the relationships between gender and class. We'll also read and discuss poetry by authors such as Ocean Vuong, Pier Paolo Pasolini, and Sandro Penna.

Hopi Breton

Contra Costa Community College District

Hopi Breton is a professor of Art at Diablo Valley College and has taught sculpture and 3D Design for 20 years. Hopi is also a professional sculptor who works in steel fabrication, metal casting, mold-making, and all sorts of mixed media such as beeswax, gold leaf, salt, latex, and paper. For more information on her artwork, please visit her [website](#). Hopi has an MFA in Sculpture from Montana State University and a BA in History from Loyola University, New Orleans. Hopi is from Oakland, Ca, and Mendocino, Ca, and lived in New Orleans, LA for 10 years. She loves all forms of art and art history. As an occasional prop and puppet builder, she also enjoys parades and theater. Hopi's dream day involves hiking, museums, and historical sites.

ART 005 – The Visual Arts

3 units, CSU/UC transferable.

This lecture course explores the creative processes, cultures, and themes of Italian art. We will explore historical examples of art in Etruscan, Roman, Renaissance, and Baroque art, as well as the 20th and 21st century Italian art movements called Futurism and Arte Povera. Contemporary Italian art and designers are covered, along with the history of the Venice Biennale. Museum structures and contemporary issues in the roles of museums are explored, including the repatriation of over 200 ancient Italian artworks from museums around the United States. Students in this course will respond to the course content in reading/writing assignments, short quizzes, and guided hands-on artistic interpretations.

ART 151: Visual Theory and Practice – Ceramic Art

3 units, CSU/UC transferable. Note: Mandatory lab fee.

In this lecture/studio course we will study Italian ceramic art and architecture, and create artworks based on our research and site visits. We will study the artistic styles of different historical Italian periods (Villanovan, Etruscan, Roman, Renaissance) and how the ceramic art reflects social, religious, and economic life, as well as the technological advances. But it's not only about studying the past – it's about bringing it to life by recreating the themes and styles in our own vision. Italy's ceramic legacy is profound, from Etruscan structures to Brunelleschi's iconic Duomo, and ancient to contemporary uses of Terra Cotta clay and bright Majolica glazing. We will see ceramic vessel and statuary art, plus visit sites such as the Duomo, the Church of Santi Apostoli, and the façade of the Hospital of the Innocents where ceramics plays an important architectural role. These visits help us appreciate Italy's tradition of innovation, craftsmanship, and styles, informing our own creative projects. Studio projects use materials such as quality Plasticina clay, terra cotta clay, and paints.