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| Project SP-12 Make an Observational Film (6 minutes)  |
| **Project** Cover a central character in a spontaneously unfolding event, shooting unobtrusively and on the run. Make a “transparent” film that condenses a long process into something short and that says something about the quality and purpose of a human life. |
| **Goals**1. Work closely with one, or better, two other crew-members.
2. Cover all relevant sides of spontaneous exchanges with a single, mobile camera.
3. Show all relevant stages of the event and reveal the characters’ agendas.
4. Say something about the human condition through the resulting edited final version.
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| **Steps** *Preproduction*1. Research what to expect (events, locations, available light) so you aren’t unprepared.
2. Find out all you can at a distance about the personalities likely to participate.
3. Define the film’s likely crescendo so you know what you are shooting for.
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| *Production*1. Shoot under available light only, and use a single mike on a short pole.
2. Practice as a unit so you can adapt quickly no matter what happens.
3. To help ellipsis, shoot material that can serve as parallel action.
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| *Postproduction*1. Edit out whatever shows your participants are aware of the camera.
2. Classify your material into bins—there’s going to be a lot of it.
3. Edit to make all the film’s exposition and “plot” emerge spontaneously.
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| **Creative Limitations** 1. You can’t impinge on your subject at all—you are the fly on the wall.
2. No preparing, manipulating, or even contact after you’ve got the relevant permissions.
3. Your filming, when you’ve finished, must look as though no film unit was present.
4. No interviews, voice-over, or narration. The events must explain themselves.
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| **Notes** Much of the success of this type of filmmaking lies in finding an appropriate subject. People busily in action are better than those immobile and aware of the camera. Someone going through an ordeal, a test or competition, say, will be too occupied to care about your presence. Make an open-ended film whose subjects’ failure may be the heart of a good film. |
| Sample Topics1. Local boy enters dance battle competition.
2. High school friends go out for the evening in pursuit of their crushes.
3. Amateur theater group’s dress rehearsal.
4. Learner-driver practices, then takes the dreaded driving exam.
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## ASSESSMENT, PROJECT SP-12: MAKE AN OBSERVATIONAL FILM

| **Criteria** | **Rating** |
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| 1. **Directing.** “Corner of nature” is seen shown well “through a temperament”.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. Successfully exploits visually interesting situations.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. Demonstrates ease at handling uncontrollable filming situations.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. Participants are focused and at ease.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. **Camera** work is controlled, unobtrusive, and feels secure.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. Uses tripod camerawork effectively and as necessary.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. Demonstrates mastery of handheld camerawork.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. Strong visual moods in different parts of the film.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. **Editing**. Juxtaposes words and images in a masterly way.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. Sound composition is aurally rich and makes one imagine.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. Sound mix is well judged.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. Pacing varies but always feels right.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. Overall length (6 minutes) feels right for the content.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. **Dramatic Form.** Effective structure imposed on material.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. Thematic development is evident and well-paced
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. Film finds conflicting forces.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. The conflicting forces come into confrontation.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. Something or someone changes appreciably during the film.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. Film delivers a memorable resolution.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. **Authorship**. Distinct, individual storytelling ‘voice’ emerges.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. Film transmits participants’ point(s) of view effectively.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. Authorship shows authority and evidence of passion.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. Film transcends limitations of project to say something original.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1. Film has a high overall impact.
 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| TOTAL | \_\_\_\_/120 |