

Riga Summer School 2016 – “Living together with difficult memories”

Concept Paper

The goal of the Riga Summer School is to study how the visual representation contributes to construct urban identity and produce short films, revealing the specific identity aspects of Riga. In 2016 the focus will be the communicative and memory aspects of historic events of the last century in Latvia. The short films that international students will produce will complement the collection filmed in the previous five years since the summer school with this concept was started.

Short documentaries reveals identity aspects of the Latvian capital as seen by people, who do not live in the city on a daily basis that would otherwise remain undocumented. The project has helped to enrich the perceptions of their home city to the people of Riga, as well as it has contributed to telling the realistic story of Riga far beyond the borders of Latvia. In 2016, the Riga Summer School participants will have a chance to go on two short study trips to other Latvian cities (each student to one, as there will be two groups traveling simultaneously) to get a better impression about Latvia in general and also have some comparative angle.

Riga Summer School is organized by the faculty and students of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Latvia. While being an international educational project for foreign students, where they learn about this Baltic capital and contribute to the research with their creative work, it also serves as great opportunity for the students at the University of Latvia to gain knowledge and experience in various aspects of organizing an international academic event – from marketing and public relations to day-to-day work with the participants when they arrive in Latvia and start having questions about their creative documentary film projects. Riga Summer School is also supported by Latvian government’s State Education Development Agency (www.viaa.gov.lv) and Riga city (www.liveriga.com) public funding, as well as by private sector sponsors (see www.rigasummerschool.eu friends section).

Thematic framework of the summer school is city identities that are captured and shown in the format of a short documentary film. It is a research project that is implemented by students that are still in the process of learning various concepts and skills, which also contributes to the freshness and uniqueness of the outcomes. The students work in small creative teams, composed of people with various backgrounds and coming from different countries all over the world. The summer school is made up of seven types of events that all together compose the summer school experience: theoretical lectures, practical workshops, individual studies, fieldwork, study trip, cultural events and social interactions. Throughout the process the participants are supported by lecturers and instructors as well as a team of summer school organizers – University of Latvia students.

Theoretical Lectures: Riga Summer school lectures cover various aspects of city/place identity, portrayals of cities in films and documentaries, social memory, as well as principles of

storytelling, scriptwriting and filmmaking. Special lecture is devoted to Baltic films and the portrayal of Baltic cities on screen. Lectures are given by the faculty members of the University of Latvia, as well as guest lecturers.

Practical Workshops: All workshops of Riga Summer School are organized with a goal to provide knowledge and skills for the participants to make a successful short documentary film by the conclusion of the summer school. Workshops are provided on the subjects of scriptwriting and storyboarding, interviewing, camera work, video editing, producing, and other skills needed for producing a short documentary. Practical workshops are led by in-house and outsourced trainers and film practitioners.

Individual Studies: Time for students to use the library or online tools to research the issues further as well as familiarize themselves with the material that is available in print and online for their final projects – documentaries.

Fieldwork: It is the most important part of the summer school, as during it the participants go out to visit various neighborhoods of Riga to do research, collect material and film their documentaries. The fieldwork is carried out by participants independently under the supervision of Riga Summer School staff and instructors.

Study Trip: Each Riga Summer School 2014 participant will spend two days traveling either Daugavpils or Liepāja to learn more about the Baltic cities and gain some comparative angle about Latvia. Students will have a chance to include materials about the other cities in their research projects.

Cultural Program: Traditionally the Riga Summer School features rich cultural program during the weekends and evenings of the summer school days. It includes Baltic Film Evening, an orienteering experience through Riga, visits to nearby cities and towns and participant film premieres. In 2016, special study visits to two other cities – Daugavpils and Liepāja– are planned over the weekend. Cultural program takes up 10 percent of total time.

Social Interactions: It is well known, that the summer schools are not only about studies, but also about making contacts that could last a lifetime. Riga Summer School offers a number of social events, including the welcome picnic, international cuisine evening and other socializing opportunities. Social interactions take up 10 percent of total time.

Riga Summer School online: www.rigasummerschool.eu