

THE *Current*

July 31, 2007

[Andrea Estrada](#)

Students in UCSB Film and Media Studies Produce Videos for Harley-Davidson

An innovative pilot course offered through a partnership between the Harley-Davidson Motor Company and the Department of Film and Media Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara has resulted in a collection of 10 short videos and a \$5,000 prize for students Michael Figge and Jess Riegel.

The class was an experimental workshop that allowed students to explore both video production and Internet distribution while addressing the concerns of a project sponsor. Students were tasked with creating short works — two to five minutes in length — that exemplify the Harley-Davidson brand. They received a \$1,200 stipend per project to cover production costs.

Through a viral video marketing effort, the students sent electronic messages to their friends and families inviting them to watch the videos online and vote for their favorites. They also posted the videos on media-sharing Web sites such as YouTube and MySpace. The term "viral video" refers to video content that achieves widespread popularity through the process of Internet sharing, typically through e-mail, instant messages, blogs, and other Web sites.

More than 10,600 people visited the Film and Media Studies Web site, which hosted the videos, and over 2,700 viewers cast their votes. The three videos that received

the most votes were sent to Harley-Davidson, which selected the winner—"Invisible Harleys: A Mario Kart Parody." Produced by Figge and Riegel, the video will be featured online by Harley-Davidson.

"It was an amazing success. The students thoroughly enjoyed the process and learned a lot," said Anna Everett, chair and professor of film and media studies. "And Harley-Davidson not only appreciated the intellectual and academic components of the class, but realized that UCSB's leadership in digital and new media was exactly what they were looking for."

Course content addressed the rise of popular user-generated content online, such as YouTube, MySpace, and FaceBook, which have altered significantly how product manufacturers, corporations, schools, governments, non-profits, creative industries, media organizations, and other groups reach the public. It also focused on the significance of direct Internet sales, such as eBay, and the role of the blogosphere, webcasting, podcasting, and new user nets such as Craig's List, among others, on the way young people both consume and produce media content.

"This was unique and exciting for us," said Matt Schmidt, entertainment marketing project manager for Harley-Davidson. "We were fortunate to have a great partner in UCSB and their talented students. This course gave us the opportunity to see the brand through the lens of a new generation of riders."

Added Loren Mendell, the independent filmmaker who taught the course: "This class was unique because it provided the students with a real-world experience starting with their pitches to the Harley-Davidson executives to managing a crew and budget and finally delivering a finished project on deadline. While most production classes end with an on-campus screening, the students in the viral video class were charged with marketing their films online to the entire world."

Other videos completed by students in the class include "Harleys in tha [sic] Hood," by Emanuel Garcia and Arturo Morales; "The New Breed," by Hank Romero; "Ode to the Money Shot," by Jordan Harris and Matt Freund;

"(MOTOR)CYCLES," by Sara Iyer and San Thach; "Kid's Play," by Fernando de Souza; "Expedition Harley: Tracking the Beast," by Alexios Nicolaos Monopolis and Kirsten Marie Pisto; "Kiss My Harley," by Marta Palley; "How to Direct a Commercial," by Maximilian Schmige; and "Biker Babes," by Laura Jean Bransky.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.