

## **Meet the Prof: Troy Perkins**

**by Faculty Advocacy Committee - Monday, January 04, 2010**

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/2432/meet-the-prof-troy-perkins/>

*The following faculty Q&A was submitted by the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Faculty Advocacy Committee, a committee of the Faculty Senate. Richard Kalinoski, associate theatre professor and resident playwright, wrote the introduction.*

I have the distinct pleasure of introducing my good colleague, Troy Perkins, filmmaker, coordinator of the radio-TV-film (RTF) program and associate professor. Troy is an ambitious, industrious and sensitive filmmaker. His short film, "Brothers," demonstrates a careful artistry, especially in framing and composition. The film evinces the texture, feel and atmosphere surrounding the possible loss of a farm and the way of life that the farm represents.

Troy is a respected teacher of film who instills in his students a love for story — the stories inside the great films he teaches. The University and community are fortunate to have Troy on campus, practicing and teaching the creation of film.

### **How did you find your way to UW Oshkosh?**

I attended UW Oshkosh as an undergrad, originally majoring in music. I returned to Wisconsin after graduate school and was working at a film/video production company when a position opened up in radio-TV-film.

### **Why did you choose to go into your field?**

I love storytelling and the moving image. I have always been a big fan of technology and all of the tools of film, digital video and sound that you use to construct a film. When I was an undergrad, I realized that I loved movies and soon discovered that I loved working behind the camera even more.

The radio-TV-film major offered instant access to film and television productions, and my theatre minor gave me valuable insight into the world and process of acting and drama and on how best to direct actors. Filmmaking gives me the ability to create and work with a lot of talented artists and technicians, and it is developing and producing projects with that type of community that thrills me the most.

### **What is your favorite thing about UW Oshkosh?**

I like the size of the University and the fact that I feel that I have and can really help students with their productions and first steps into the industry. I know that our students can compete at a national and international level, and there is a lot of opportunity here to help them achieve their goals and dreams.

### **What is the professional accomplishment of which you are most proud?**

I'm very proud of how we have been able to produce nationally competitive, quality film productions in this part of the country. I believe we have reached this level through creativity, ingenuity and attracting professionals to our collaborative productions. Along with this, the collaboration with students has been an immense success.

Each summer, we have been able to work with 20-30 students, who have quickly learned and adapted to the professional production environment. I have had former students tell me that this experience has had a big impact on their early success in the industry. I have also seen the impact that these productions have had on our program and the students' productions.

I am also proud and honored to be able to bring the rural Wisconsin landscape and characters to film. My themes often deal with the modern, rural experience. For instance, "Brothers" (2008) is about a farm family who must make a hard decision about whether or not to sell their farm of five generations due to increasing housing development. The film follows three brothers as they each try to grapple with the decision of selling off their home and family history. "Brothers" has won multiple national and regional awards and has received a lot of response at screenings and festivals. We have had several farmers approach us to talk about their story and how this film has accurately captured the current climate in farmland Wisconsin.

Our next two films, "Birthday Girl" and "Billfold" (it really is just a coincidence that they all start with b) also deal with modern relationships — connection and disconnection.

### **What leadership or service activities are you involved in?**

This year, I took over as the radio-TV-film coordinator and have just finished serving three years as the scriptwriting chair for the University Film & Video Association. As RTF coordinator, I have begun the process of bringing our program into the 21st century through new alumni connections, new technology usage and acquisition, and curricular redesign.

As the UFVA scriptwriting chair, I formed the organization's first national Faculty Scriptwriting Competition, which has met with great success and is now sponsored by Final Draft, the industry's leading scriptwriting software company.

### **What is the most common misperception about what you do?**

A lot of times, people believe filmmaking is just a lot of partying and hanging out on set. They do not see (and are not supposed to see) all of the hard work that goes on during all stages of production and how many people are required to complete a successful production. Similar to teaching, people do not recognize the many hours it takes behind the scenes just to get to the production stage.

### **What is the most exciting project you are working on right now?**

I am currently in post production on two short films that I wrote and directed this summer — "Birthday Girl" and "Billfold." I am also working on the next draft of a feature film screenplay, "Solomon's Train," intended for future production. Upon completion of this draft, I will begin to shop it around and send it to national competitions to attract financial support for the feature production.

### **How does what you research help you to be an effective teacher?**

I teach film and television production courses, so continuing to produce projects in the field and staying current on new technology is a critical part of my teaching. On all of our film projects, we have had the opportunity to work with cutting-edge production and post production systems. I am able to take my production knowledge and technical experience and directly input it into my course lectures and labs and in my support of student productions.

I have found that the opportunity to do production work has altered and vastly improved what and how I am teaching my students. Each semester, I find ways to add new lectures and lab training to match changes in the industry. My continuing creative productions and teaching go hand in hand.

### **Describe some ways your department serves Northeastern Wisconsin.**

You will find radio-TV-film grads working all over the area in radio and television stations, production companies and generally any type of company that has a media production department. RTF also hosts Titan Television and WRST-FM 90.3. Both organizations continue to provide quality programming and outreach to the community.

Each November, RTF students and staff produce the AT telethon to raise money and awareness for Ataxia-Telangiectasia, a deadly genetic disease affecting children in our area and around the world. This past spring, radio-TV-film hosted a television and film workshop for students from the Oneida Nation High School.

### **Tell us about your family.**

I met my wife, Frances, in graduate school. She currently teaches at UW-Fond du Lac. We have two children, Devlan (5) and Cora (3).

### **What are your hobbies?**

At this point, having two small children takes up most of my free time, but I also love the outdoors — hiking and camping and playing sports with my kids. I love road trips and am a life-long, die-hard Green Bay Packers fan.

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