

# Equipment Toolkit for Video

*Middlebury College Office of Communications*

## Essentials

- **DSLR camera** – We use the Canon 5D Mark III, but cheaper DSLRs can also get great results.
- **Tripod** – Be sure it's sturdy enough to tilt and pan smoothly while holding your camera and lens
- **Wide angle zoom lens** – This will cover most of your basic needs from interview to b-roll. If your camera came as a kit, you may have a starter lens with it.
- **LED light and stand** – Battery powered LED lights are one of the best developments in mobile video. Powerful, adjustable, and no heat!
- **External wireless lavalier mic.** – Often called a lapel mic, this is important for getting clean sounding audio during an interview.

## Nice, but not required

- **External recorder** – This could almost be considered essential. It allows you to monitor levels as your interviewee is speaking, which can save you a lot of headaches later. Cameras vary widely in their audio monitoring capabilities.
- **More LED lights** – The more you have, the better you can accommodate tricky lighting situations.
- **Fixed focus lenses** – A good prime lens can give you beautiful, cinematic quality for an interview. We frequently use a 35mm and a 50mm. These can be pricey, but they're worth it.
- **Shotgun mic.** – If a little bit of background sound is okay, the shotgun mic can do a great job of isolating your interview audio while allowing some of the ambient noise in.
- **Video monitors** – We use small monitors that attach to our DSLR cameras. They give us better monitoring control over the picture than the small monitors built in to the camera.
- **Other gadgets** – Video is a gearhead's paradise. There are limitless gadgets you can buy to enhance your shooting process. Remember, a good story is not dependent on fancy gadgets or cinematic techniques. A great story is simply, thoughtfully told and can most often be done with very basic gear.

## Mobile video

- **External mic.** – Like any other camera, the built-in mic. on your phone is not up to the task.
- **Tripod** – Stabilization is essential for a watchable video, even on a phone.
- **Selfie stick** – This can help with stabilization and also to find vantage points you might not otherwise reach.
- **LED light** – You've probably figured out this just needs to be part of your kit, period.