

## Camcorder Overview: Panasonic LEICA 500



Use the focus ring-not the Auto focus!!

- **Charge up your Battery!** - nothing sucks more than setting up your perfect video shot then having your camcorder die halfway through recording because the battery is dead. The battery can take a few hours to fully charge up so plan accordingly! The batteries for these cameras are not great, you can plan for them to last for about 1-2hrs of continuous recording. If you close the LCD screen door and have nested the eye piece viewer the camera will go into a low power state preserving precious battery time. If you know that you are going to take more than a few minutes to set up for your next shot go ahead and turn the camcorder off. AC adapters are available (though it can be awkward to film with the camera plugged in) if you want to use one ask about it at the check-out desk.

-**Inserting the miniDV tape:** use the ejector switch to open-up the camcorder body. The miniDV tape housing is motorized and will come up and pop open on its own. place the miniDV tape into the slot and push the housing closed but DO NOT try to press it down into the camcorder, it will recede back into the camcorder on its own.

-**Know your Modes:** There are five modes on the mode selection wheel, but for this class you will only need to know 2 of them:

-the one which looks like a tiny red movie camera is the mode you use when you want to record to the tape

- the one which looks like a green play arrow in a green box - this is the playback mode which allows you to review footage you have already recorded to the tape, and is also the mode you will set the camera in when you want to capture your video into FCP.

- **Menu Settings:** There are a few menu settings (accessed by hitting the menu button) that you're going to want to check before shooting:

-Under basic settings:

- Rec Speed should be: SP

- Aspect can be set to 4:3 (old style TV) or 16:9 (wide screen)

you can use whichever aspect you prefer just keep it consistent!

-under Advanced Settings:

- Audio Rec should be set to: 16bit

- **Manual Controls = GOOD!!** Auto focus will always betray you at the worst possible moment so don't use it!

-You have to set the camera into manual mode to use the camera's focus ring on the side of the camera underneath where the LCD screen closes is where the Auto/manual switch is. To activate the focus ring you must push down on this Auto/manual switch (to below the manual middle position) a tiny MF will appear in the upper left hand corner of the LCD screen.

-In manual mode you can also set the White Balance, Iris, Shutter Speed, Night Shot, and many other functions. Mainly I want you to worry about the white balance.

-To bring up the other manual control options press in on the menu nav joystick and a circle with options will appear on the lower right hand side of the LCD screen

You'll want to press up to select WB (white balance) then in the submenu you'll want to select the square over two triangles to manually set the WB. when you select the manual WB set you'll want the camera LCD screen to be filled with something white in the environment

- usually a white wall or a sheet of white paper works ok (an 18% grey card is ideal)



-I will cover the use of the other Manual control menus during the In-Class Demo

- **Preserve the Timecode:** When you record footage onto a miniDV tape you also record a timecode on the tape (basically the timer counting up as you go through the tape). FCP uses this timecode when it is importing footage so it is important to not break it up. This means not leaving any blank unrecorded tape between the recorded on sections. For example: say you record 1min of footage, and then go back and watch that footage to make sure it came out right, the recorded section ends and the tape plays for a few more seconds before you stop it. If you were to start recording again at this point the camcorder would start a new timecode for this section of the tape (this is bad) and leave the few seconds of blank tape you played over with no timecode information. FCP will have all sorts of problems trying to import your footage when it reaches a blank no-timecode spot like that which will give you headaches - especially if you have done it many times on the same tape. What you want to do is rewind and start recording over the last bit of previously recorded material so that the timecode will be continuous when you get back to the mac lab and start capturing.