How to create an essay with the latest version of iMovie
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The current version of the Mac OS (10.10.2) includes a new version of iMovie. This free program creates HD movies of 1920x1080 pixels (aspect ratio 16:9). iMovie is intended for movies but it is entirely possible to make an essay with still images and music.

The manual that is available on line seems to be for an earlier version of iMovie but it still provides some help for the current version. (https://manuals.info.apple.com/MANUALS/0/MA99/en_US/iMovieHD_Getting_Started.pdf). The Manual assumes that you use iPhoto, which I do not do, and there is no need to use it. (Apple is facing out iPhoto in any case). I first prepare my images in Lightroom and then export them to a folder on the desktop. To take full advantage of iMovie and the capacity of the NBCC projector, it is best to scale your images at 1920x1080 as a minimum. If for some of your images you want to zoom in or pan, we recommend that your images have more than the minimum amount of pixels to maintain good quality while you zoom or pan.

When you open iMovie there are 4 panels: (1) on the left you have a list of projects, (2) to the right of that is a panel where you can inspect Transitions, Titles and music, (3) to the right of that is the Preview panel and (4) below is a panel, call it your work bench if you wish, where you can arrange the images, music, transitions and captions.

These are the steps for creating an essay in iMovie.

1. Select New (a + sign at the top), then choose Movie, choose No Theme, and hit Create.

2. Highlight your images and drag them to the last panel. Select View/Play from Beginning to see what you have. Note that the images by default will display for 4 seconds (panoramas my display longer), that they all have a Ken Burns effect and that there are no transitions. If you do not like these defaults, (like me) go to number 3.

3. Choose Edit/Select All, then click on Add Cross Dissolve--now you have the most basic transition. While all images are still selected, click on the crop tool (top right) and select Fit-this removes the Ken Burns effect. Next, click on the information icon, the letter i in a circle, top right. The duration in seconds of each slide will show and you can type in a new duration, then hit Enter.

4. You can work on individual images by highlighting the image and then you create a Ken Burns effect by selecting the crop tool, change the duration by selecting the information icon, move the image to a different location by dragging it, or delete the image by hitting the Delete button.

5. You can also work on individual transitions: highlight the transition, hit Delete to delete it, then click on Transitions (in the left panel) and all the transitions available appear in the second panel. Drag your preferred transition in place.

6. To add music to an essay, click iTunes and drag your preferred music to the last panel. If the clip is too long, drag the mouse over the end of the clip. You will see a single arrow, drag it to the left until it fits the length of the essay. There are two small round icons on the left and on the right of the audio clip and when you hover over it for a few seconds a message will say, "Fade audio in" or "Fade audio out". Drag the appropriate icon to fade the music in or out. You can change the volume of the sound clip by dragging the centerline up or down.

7. To add a voice-over to the essay, click on the voice-over icon (looks like a microphone in the Preview panel) and then on the red recording button. The volume of the background music will automatically be reduced. The quality of the voice-over depends on a number of factors, including the computer's microphone and any background noise.

8. When your essay is in its final form, you create a movie by clicking on Share. From the options available select File and then for the Quality select Best (ProRes). This will be a high quality movie with file extension .mov. The file could be rather large but it should be no problem for the essay program.

If you have an earlier version of iMovie, the manual referenced above might be of help. I also saved the instruction for an older version of iMovie. Please call if you need help.