

Introduction to Film Directing

Section: 3589

Days: Wednesdays

Time: 5:50pm-10:00pm

Location: AT A128

Instructor: Eric Nelson

Email: ericnelson290@gmail.com

Course Objective:

To introduce the responsibilities of the film Director and the choices at his/her disposal in order to effectively translate moving pictures into audience emotions. We will be analyzing the role of the Director in all aspects of the filmmaking process including, but not limited to: Preproduction (breaking down the shooting script, storyboarding, casting, rehearsal, location scouting), Production (blocking the camera and the actors, lens choice, production management), and Post-Production (editing and montage, sound mixing, working with the film lab).

Recommended Text:

"The Visual Story" by Bruce Block (second edition)

Attendance:

Since this class only meets once a week, unexcused absences will affect your grade. If you must miss class, let me know before hand. Please see the WLAC Catalogue for attendance regulations.

Grading: attendance 15%, participation 15%, analysis paper 20%, midterm exam 25%, final exam 25%

At the completion of the course a student will be able to:

- Identify and differentiate among different camera techniques and their effect on the viewer.
- Recognize and analyze major filmic elements.
- Interpret the effects of editing and sound on narrative story telling.
- Articulate the use of color and lighting and their abilities to shape the mood and tone of a film.
- Understand and Communicate with acting talent and other production departments on a film set.

Schedule:

Week 1

Wed. 8/28 **Topics:**
Course overview and objectives
Narrative Storytelling - what is it?
Principles of narrative construction and film form
Introduction to three act structure
The script - interpreting visuals
Story/film genres
Directing: Communicating through pictures

Week 2

Wed. 9/4 **Topics:**
Principles of Photography
Cinematography - moving pictures
"Painting with light"
The Human Eye
Film stock and processing

Week 3

Wed. 9/11 **Topics:**
Image acquisition: the camera
Basic structure
Film transport
Film exposure
Filters

Guest: Writer TBD

Week 4

Wed. 9/18 **Topics:**
Film lenses
Perspective and lens length
Visual structure
Depth of field
Field of view
"Fast lenses" and "slow lenses"

Week 5

Wed. 9/25 **Topics:**
Lighting
3-point lighting
Incident and reflected light
Foot candles
"Pegging the key"
High key and low key lighting

Guest: Cinematographer TBD

Week 6

Wed. 10/2 **Topics:**
Lighting con't.
Studio lighting
Key and fill ratios
Shooting exteriors
Shooting Day for Night
Color temperature
Brightness and contrast ratios

Week 7

Wed. 10/9 **Topics:**
The Moving Camera
Panning and tracking
Tilting and craning
Dolly shots
Steadicam
Aspect ratios

***MIDTERM EXAM**

Week 8

Wed. 10/16 **Topics:**
The shot: Mise-en-scene
4 steps of a scene: "Rehearse it, block it, light it, shoot it"
The Axis of Action (180 degree rule and "crossing the line")
Film Grammar - COVERAGE
Frame composition
Shooting like an editor

Week 9

Wed. 10/23 **Topics:**
Preproduction
Storyboarding the script
Pre-visualization - digital story boarding
Casting
Locations - scouting and securing
Rehearsing actors
Directing the actor

Guest: Previz Artist TBD

Week 10

- Wed. 10/30** **Topics:**
Preproduction - Directing the actor con't
Actor processes
Motivation
Blocking the actor
Scheduling
Creating shot lists
- Guest:** Director TBD

Week 11

- Wed. 11/6** **Topics:**
Production
The Departments:
Camera Department
Art Department and Production Design
Sound Department
Electrical Department
The Production Manager
The Assistant Director
- Guest:** Production Designer TBD

Week 12

- Wed. 11/13** **Topics:**
Production con't.
Story as a visual guide
Interpreting the script
Theme as director
Genre as story type
Auteur theory

Week 13

Wed. 11/20 **Topics:**
Post-Production
Principles of film editing
Relationship of shot to shot
Dimensions of film editing
Stages: Assembly, Rough Cut, Fine Cut
Continuity editing
Discontinuity editing
The role of Director in Post Prod.

****ANALYSIS PAPER DUE***

Week 14

Wed. 11/27 **Topics:**
Post-Production con't
The Laboratory
Optical effects
Internegatives - digital editing
CGI effects - the computer as camera

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15

Wed. 12/4 **Topics:**
Post-Production con't
Sound as a story telling device
Fundamentals of film sound
Foley sound recording
Music as an emotional contributor
The Sound Mix

Week 16

Wed. 12/11 **Topics:**

The Director as artist and auteur

The role of the contemporary director

Director relationships - writer, cinematographer, actor, editor

Elements of style

****FINAL EXAM***