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*