

## **DC 275 - Cinematography - Fall Quarter 2014 - Brian Mellen**

bmellen@cdm.depaul.edu

**Office hours:** W 3:00pm to 4:30pm - **DePaul Center C106A**

### **Summary of Course:**

This course will be an intensive exploration of the craft, technologies and aesthetic principles of cinematography and lighting techniques for motion picture and digital video production. Lectures and in-class demonstrations will cover film and video formats, film cameras, HD cameras, exposure, lenses and optics, lighting units, lighting placement, lighting control, camera support, and camera movement.

Class sessions will consist of lectures, demonstrations, hands-on with cameras and lighting units, exercises, and screenings of selected film and video clips which demonstrate specific cinematography and lighting techniques. In this class you will learn to operate two different cameras, operate grip and lighting equipment, and develop your individual aesthetic and visual storytelling skills through the use of color, movement, composition, focus and lighting.

Prerequisites: DC 210 and DC 220 (Production and Editing I)

*\* If you haven't taken these courses you will struggle in this class.*

### **Textbooks and printed resources (required):**

Cinematography Theory and Practice by Blain Brown Second Edition ISBN-13: 978-0240812090

### **Required Supplies:**

You must have your own external drive for your project work for this and other DC classes. The University cannot guarantee that media or projects left on lab computers will be safely maintained.

### **Software needed to complete assignments:**

Editing platform - Final Cut Pro 7, Premiere Pro, or Avid  
Word processing program

### **Course Materials-always bring to class:**

Portable hard drive (Firewire 800 or USB 3.0 preferred)  
A pair of leather/suede or vegan alternative gloves for lighting--always bring to class!

**Grading:**

Attendance & Participation	10%
Outline of Final Script	5%
Shot List, Overheads, Final Script	10%
Assignment #1	15%
Assignment #2	25%
Assignment #3	35%

**Grading Scale:**

A = 100-93, A- = 92-90, B+ = 89-87, B = 86-83, B- = 82- 80, C+ = 79-77, C = 76-73, C- = 72-70, D+ = 69-67, D = 66-63, D- = 62-60, F = 59-0.

A indicates excellence, B indicates good work, C indicates satisfactory work, D work is unsatisfactory in some respect, F is substantially unsatisfactory work

**Student responsibilities:**

Each student is responsible for their time management and for meeting the expectations in the syllabus. The instructor is not responsible for reminding students of assignment deadlines in class. In the event of an absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor for an assignment sheet detailing any homework. If an assignment is listed on the syllabus you are still responsible for completing the assignment on time.

**Deadlines:**

Video production requires strict adherence to deadlines, therefore late assignments will not be accepted for grading and written feedback will be given at the instructors discretion. Do not use class time to finalize your projects. All assignments are due at the beginning of class, if you come in late with an assignment it will not be accepted. You will not be eligible for an A in the class unless you turn in all assignments on time.

Failure of computer software and or Hardware will not be accepted as an extenuating circumstance for late projects or incomplete grades so back up your work daily.

**Attendance & Participation:**

This course demands class participation - attendance is mandatory. Students arriving more than 15 minutes late, or leaving before class is dismissed will be considered absent. You are allowed one (2) unexcused absence. After that, a one letter deduction for each absence will be taken from your final course grade. Excessive tardiness will also be penalized.

Along with showing up, you are expected to join in class discussions, critique other people's work, and participate in workshops. Remember, this is your class, you get more out of it if you put more in it. Class participation and attendance are worth 10% of your total grade.

### **Course Lectures/Reading Assignments:**

The assigned readings offer an opportunity for independent learning that supplements the lectures. Lectures will introduce material not available in the readings, and the readings will explore concepts not mentioned in class. It is not my intention to overwhelm you with reading, but rather to use the textbook as a way to support and reinforce the concepts we learn in class. I will not be giving quizzes so it is up to you to keep up on the reading.

### **Assignments and Exercises:**

Let me be clear—this is a production class. That means you must participate in all productions. You must be at the shoot, with the camera in your hands at some point in the project. Failure to do so will lead to a 0 on that assignment. Though some pre and post-production is required, you cannot do that instead of being a part of the production process.

In most cases, the group's grade on a project will also be your individual grade for the assignment- - assuming equal work was done by all. In order to ensure that each group member is contributing equally, you will turn in a group evaluation form for each assignment. This form will be made available on D2L prior to your first project being due. You will evaluate yourself, and each member of your group for each project. How you evaluate yourselves and your group members directly impacts your individual grades.

These forms must be uploaded to D2L when your assignment is due. I do not want them emailed to me. Only I will see them, so be honest. These forms are also a way to identify any group dynamic issues that may be developing. Please note, if this form falsely represents work by one or more members of the group it will be considered an academic integrity violation and must be reported to the university. If an evaluation form does not accompany your assignment your grade will be reduced by at least one letter grade.

### **Assignment #1 - Visual Story-Telling - Due 9/25 (Class 3):**

In your groups, using a digital still camera, shoot a simple STORY utilizing six (6) pictures ONLY. Use only the landscape orientation for your shots (not portrait or vertical). Emphasis should be on the placement of the camera (Composition), and which shot choices best tell your story. Focus and exposure are also important. You will be graded down for out of focus, dark and overexposed images. You only have six pictures so plan out your shoot before you begin. Dynamic images are what we are aiming for. Look back to the composition lecture in week 1 for details.

Remember you are telling a story. This part of the assignment is as important as the camera work. This story should include the elements of traditional narrative story-telling. I want to see a clear introduction to the characters and what they want, an introduction to conflict, rising conflict, climax and resolution. Use at least one close-up and one wide shot. Each shot should progress the story forward so do not be redundant.

**DELIVERY FORMAT:** 6 individual JPEGs, labeled in sequential order (1-6), and with your group's name, uploaded to D2L. Only one group member needs to upload the project, but you all have to do a group evaluation form. Please do not make a QuickTime movie for this assignment. Points will be deducted for not following instructions.

**ALSO:** Group Evaluation form #1, uploaded to D2L, for each member of the group.

### **Outline of Final Script Due - Due 10/02 (Class 4):**

1 page synopsis/treatment/outline of script for the final project. Basically tell me what the story is about. This will help us determine if your scripts are manageable, or have creative challenges that we need to work out. This is part of your class participation grade.

**DELIVERY FORMAT:** Uploaded to D2L as .doc or .PDF. Make sure everyone's names are on it. Points will be deducted for not following instructions.

### **Assignment #2 - Due 10/16 (Class 6):**

In your groups, rotate crew positions (Director, DP, Gaffer). You will shoot and edit a short MOS narrative on the Canon 7D (the 6D is ok too), using all 8 shots listed below. You MUST use a tripod. Do not combine elements, each element is one shot:

1. Woman at a computer
2. Man cleaning something

3. CD/Record/Ipod playing
4. Someone gets something out of a box
5. Light being turned on
6. An article of clothing is put on
7. Pencil gets sharpened
8. Someone takes off a ring. You may add up to three additional shots to the sequence (but only three).

You can assemble the shots in any order. Be creative with this list, you don't have to be literal. You will edit your sequence and you must add music and sound effects. Besides telling an interesting story, your emphasis should be on lighting technique, exposure, and composition.

**DELIVERY FORMAT:** Quicktime Movie as H.264 (16x9 Aspect Ratio, 1920x1080 or 1280x720 resolution).

10 sec of Slate (Project title, length, date, format, frame rate, filmmakers)

5 sec of Black

Points will be deducted for not following instructions.

**ALSO:** Group Evaluation form #2, uploaded to D2L, for each member of the group.

### **Shot List, Overheads, and Final Script - Due 10/23 (Class 7):**

As part of your final project grade you must turn in a 3-5 page script of your final project, a shot list, and overheads for each shot (uploaded to D2L). Storyboards are also a very helpful tool for pre-visualization. They are not required but recommended. I will give feedback on this part of the assignment via email if I have any questions or concerns. Please do not give me your originals, you need these for your shoot. Please scan and upload to D2L.

**DELIVERY FORMAT:** Typed, drawn, scanned and uploaded to D2L-do not hand in any paper. Points will be deducted for not following instructions.

### **Assignment #3 - Final Projects - Due 11/13 (Class 10):**

Shoot a 3-5 minute short narrative film in an assigned genre using the JVC 700. You **MUST** use ACTORS not friends or family in the piece. We will pick the genres randomly during class. This film should be cinematically stunning, using the visual components and lighting concepts that we learn about in class, AND tell a coherent story (imagine

that). This project must be edited, and though DIALOGUE IS NOT ALLOWED, sync sound is. This is not a 3-5 minute music video. Length should be no more than 5 minutes - This limitation is not absolute, but remember, you have to have time to edit it and I don't want you to tackle too big of a project.

**DELIVERY FORMAT:** Quicktime Movie as H.264 (16x9 Aspect Ratio, 1920x1080 or 1280x720 resolution).

10 sec of Slate (Project title, length, date, format, frame rate, filmmakers)

5 sec of Black

Points will be deducted for not following instructions.

**ALSO:** Group Evaluation form #3, uploaded to D2L, for each member of the group.

### **Working in Groups:**

For Production Assignments in this course you will be working in groups. A major component of film production is teamwork. In this course many of you will be working as a creative team for the first time. Most student teams work very well together. But sometimes personality conflicts or creative conflicts can arise. It is your job as a team to work through these conflicts, because if you don't, your project will suffer. If things get really difficult you can come to me and I will help mediate/resolve the situation. I encourage you to come to me early and often. A big part of your success in this class will be your ability to work with your group. If there is an issue we need to address it right away.

### **Class Attire:**

Come dressed for work. Certain clothing is required for production. You will be climbing ladders, picking up hot lamps and lifting heavy equipment, therefore no open toe shoes, NO FLIP FLOPS, and it is recommended that you do not wear dresses or skirts.

### **The Stage:**

Our workshop/Lab time will be held on the production stage. Let's take good care the space. There is no eating or drinking allowed on the stage. Wrap all equipment when finished and return to the designated area. The entire class will be held responsible to return the stage to the order it was in when found. NO STUDENT LEAVES CLASS until the stage is in the proper condition, even if your group has finished first.

### **Guns and Stunts:**

DePaul has a very strict policy concerning guns and/or stunts in student productions. No guns of any kind are allowed in a student production unless a proper permit has been obtained by the City of Chicago, and a police officer is present on your set. This includes toy guns! If you have a gun that fires blanks, you must also have a trained firearm handler on your set. No live ammunition is ever allowed. No stunts will be performed without a licensed stunt coordinator. If I see a gun of any kind, or a stunt performed in your film and I have not seen and signed off on your permits, you will automatically receive a failing grade for this class. No exceptions.

### **Certificates:**

If the location you are shooting at requires that you get a certificate of insurance, or you plan to rent equipment that requires an insurance cert, please plan WAY ahead. The school can provide you with proof of insurance but it takes 2-4 weeks. I recommend you choose locations that are not going to call too much attention to your shoot and avoid having to show the formal paperwork. Places to avoid: The CTA, parks and streets.

### **Equipment:**

Reserve your equipment really far in advance-especially the canon 7Ds. There is a high demand for the equipment at this school, and you do not want to be left shooting with a camera you're unhappy with. Also, this is a Cinematography and LIGHTING class. Your 2nd assignment should exhibit beginning lighting technique and your final projects must have well planned lighting, appropriate for your piece. If a light kit is not available, you must check out individual lights. "The cage was out of kits" is not a valid excuse for not lighting your projects. Using only "available light" for these two assignments will result in a lower grade.

### **Final Exam:**

More information on the Final Exam will be given as the quarter progresses.

### **Online Course Evaluations:**

Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses.

A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the student's identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online in [CampusConnect](#).

### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:**

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>. If you have any questions be sure to consult with your professor.

### **Academic Policies:**

All students are required to manage their class schedules each term in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the [University Academic Calendar](#). Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at: [cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment](http://cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment).

### **Students with Disabilities:**

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at: [csd@depaul.edu](mailto:csd@depaul.edu).

Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.

Phone number: (312)362-8002

Fax: (312)362-6544

TTY: (773)325.7296

### **Content Changes:**

Depending on time factors, the assignments projected for the term may require slight alteration or rescheduling.



## CLASS SCHEDULE

\* Syllabus schedule is subject to change

### **Week One 09/11**

Introductions, Syllabus, Composition, Coverage, Pick Groups

**WORKSHOP:** Composition

*Readings: Brown pp. 1-52 (Writing with Motion, Shooting Methods, Visual Language)*

### **Week Two 09/18**

Exposure Triangle, Cinematographic Shutter Angle, Exposure Workshop, Picking Final Film Genres

**WORKSHOP:** Light Meters, Photographic vs. Cinematographic Exposure, ND

*Readings: Brown pp. 53-102 (Language of the Lens, Visual Storytelling, Cinematic Continuity), pp. 181-208 (Exposure)*

### **Week Three 09/25**

#### **Assignment #1 DUE**

Rolling Shutter, Color Temperature and Color Theory, Storyboards, Overheads and Shots List

**WORKSHOP:** Color Temperature, Handheld Rig for 7D

*Readings: pp. 227-244 (Color)*

### **Week Four 10/02**

#### **Script Outlines Due (Uploaded to D2L)**

Optics, Focus and Depth of Field

**WORKSHOP:** Depth of Field, Lenses

*Readings: Brown pp. 269-285 (Optics & Focus)*

### **Week Five 10/09**

JVC-700, Set Operations, Visual Transitions, Set Safety, Electricity, Gripology, Lights and Lighting

**WORKSHOP:** Setting the Back Focus on the JVC-700, Three-Point Lighting

*Readings: pp. 103-126 (Lighting Basics), pp. 287-305 (Set Operations)*

### **Week Six 10/16**

#### **Assignment #2 DUE**

Genre Lighting

**WORKSHOP:** Three-Point Lighting Continued, Lighting with Ratios

*Readings: pp. 129-146 (Lighting Sources)*

### **Week Seven 10/23**

#### **Final Project Scripts, Overheads, and Shot Lists Due**

Timecode, The Video Camera, CCD vs. CMOS Chips, Progressive Scan vs. Interlaced, Aspect Ratios

*Readings: pp. 147-180 (HD Cinematography), pp. 335-340 (Film Formats)*

### **Week Eight 10/30**

Waveform Monitors, Shooting for Green Screen, Green Screen Lighting

**WORKSHOP:** Green Screen Demonstration

*Readings: pp. 307-334 (Technical Issues)*

### **Week Nine 11/06**

#### **RAW FOOTAGE FOR ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE**

Screening TBD

**Week Ten 11/13**

**Assignment #3 DUE**

Final Project Screening and Critique