

DC 210 - Digital Cinema Production I Syllabus - Fall 2015 - Brian Mellen

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Office hours: Th 1:30pm to 5:30pm - DePaul Center C106A - By Appt. Only

Summary of Course:

This course is a beginning workshop in narrative film production. This course will explore the fundamentals of production including: organization and preparation, camera and lens technology, composition, lighting, cinematography, sound recording and directing. Utilizing digital technology, students will work together to produce several films with an emphasis on visual storytelling and personal expression.

Prerequisites: DC 220 Editing I

** Syllabus is subject to change*

Learning Outcomes:

In **DC 210**, students will:

1. Understand the language of cinema and employ basic shooting and editing techniques to express a story visually.
2. Be able to successfully operate video cameras and non-linear editing programs in order to create a total of three required projects.
3. Enter more advanced courses with a solid foundation of technical proficiency as well as the development of an individual style and expression.
4. Students will be able to produce material for their demo reels.

Textbooks and printed resources:

On Directing Film, Mamet, Penguin USA, 1992. ISBN: 978-0140127225

The Filmmaker's Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide for the Digital Age,
Ascher, Steven & Pincus, Ed. Plume/Penguin USA, 2013. ISBN:
978-0452297289

Adobe Premiere Pro CC Classroom in a Book,
Adobe Creative Team, Adobe Press/Pearson, 2013. ISBN: 978-0321919380

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.

Portable hard drive (USB 3.0/Thunderbolt)

1 USB 3.0 for project backups

Software needed to complete assignments:

Editing platform - Premiere Pro or Avid
Word processing program

Drop Dates:

Tuesday, Sept. 15: Last day to add (or swap) classes
Tuesday, Sept. 22: Last day to drop classes with no penalty
Tuesday, Oct. 27: Last day to withdraw from classes

Grading:

Attendance & Participation	10%
In-Class Exercises	15%
Script/Script Breakdown	5%
Storyboards/Shot List	5%
Project 1	15%
Project 2	20%
Rough Cuts	5%
Final Project	25%

LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

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. You will not be eligible for an A in the class unless you turn in all assignments on time.

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 two (2) unexcused absences. After that, a one letter deduction for each absence will be taken from your final course grade. Excessive tardiness will also be penalized.

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.

Project #1 - Chase Sequence - Due 09/30 (Week Four)

In your groups, use the Canon XF100 to create a 2-minute chase sequence. NO DIALOGUE ALLOWED but music must be used to underscore the sequence. The sequence should be suspenseful but can be any genre. Make sure there is a definite BEGINNING, MIDDLE, and END to your short film. NO HANDHELD. TRIPOD MUST BE USED. NO FANCY CAMERA MOVES.

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. Dynamic images are what we are aiming for. Look back to the composition lecture 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.

Failure to follow instructions will result in deductions to your grade.

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 at the end of the Project

Points will be deducted for not following instructions.

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

FINAL PROJECT SCRIPT AND BREAKDOWN - Due 09/30 (Week Four)

Decide on a 2 to 3 page script for a Mockumentary or fake reality TV show that your group will shoot for the final project. You need at least TWO interviewees. Don't over complicate your task here. The best movies are often very simple ideas. Dialogue is acceptable.

DELIVERY FORMAT: Upload to D2L as .PDFs. Make sure everyone's names are on it. Points will be deducted for not following instructions.

Project #2 - Vague Script - Due 10/14 (Week Six)

Use the provided script to create a short film. The scene is written to be as ambiguous as possible as to tone, character, gender, setting, circumstances, etc. Students must select 2 of the 3 pages, combine them in the order of their choosing and shoot a single short film between 2 and 4 minutes in length. Additionally, you must add OR select dialog as prompted. Otherwise, the script must be played verbatim; however, pace - pauses, mumbles, gesticulations - are entirely up to you.

It is entirely up to you to decide how many characters are interacting in the scenes, how many locations are used, how many scenes you break the dialogue into, and whether or not the scenes are related or completely standalone. The only requirement is that at least one character must communicate all of the lines in the script. ONLY the lines listed may be used and ALL lines must be used.

Items underlined and italicized are for you to select (for example: if the script has “he/she goes outside” it’s up to you to decide whether this will read “he goes outside,” or “she goes outside”). You must select and use one of the offered choices.

This project will require you to capture production audio. You may add music and SFX to your project. YOU MUST USE REAL ACTORS. NO STUDENTS. Make sure there is a definite BEGINNING, MIDDLE, and END to your project.

NO HANDHELD. TRIPOD MUST BE USED. NO FANCY CAMERA MOVES.

Failure to follow instructions will result in deductions to your grade.

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 at the end of the Project

Points will be deducted for not following instructions.

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

FINAL PROJECT STORYBOARDS AND SHOT LIST - Due 10/14 (Week Six):

As a group, map out the story to your Final Project as a visual storyboard and shot list. The storyboard can be hand drawn or created in computer software. Take your time on this. Sloppiness will hurt your grade. Upload the storyboard and shot list on D2L as .PDFs

FINAL PROJECT - MOCKUMENTARY - Due 11/16 (Week Ten):

In your groups, use the Canon XF100 to shoot a 2 to 3 minute fake interview that utilizes a combination of at least two people being interviewed and B-roll. It can be a news story, documentary, mockumentary, or even a fake reality TV show. This project will require you to capture production audio. You may add music and SFX to your project. **YOU MUST USE REAL ACTORS. NO STUDENTS.** Make sure there is a definite BEGINNING, MIDDLE, and END to your project.

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. Dynamic images are what we are aiming for. Look back to the composition lecture for details.

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 at the end of the Project

Points will be deducted for not following instructions.

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

Group Evaluations:

Most of the assignments in this class will require you to work in a team. At the end of the quarter, each group member is required to turn in a written evaluation of their team members. If all evaluations are uniformly positive, all group members will share the grades; if evaluations are negative, the grades of the group member in question will be docked.

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. Depending on the day you might 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 of this fantastic 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. There is a high demand for the equipment at this school, and you do not want to be left shooting with an inferior camera.

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.

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.

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 09/09 and 09/14

Production Roles, Groups Assigned, Cage Policy

PROJECT 1 (09/30 DUE): DETAILS ABOVE.

FINAL PROJECT SCRIPT AND BREAKDOWN (09/30 DUE): Decide on a 2 to 3 page script for a Mockumentary or fake reality TV show that your group will shoot for the final project. You need at least TWO interviewees. Don't over complicate your task here. The best movies are often very simple ideas. Dialogue is acceptable.

Readings: The Filmmaker's Handbook Ch. 1-2, On Directing Film, Preface, Ch. 1-2

Week Two 09/16 and 09/21

Script and Script Breakdown, Composition, Exposure, Coverage, 180 Degree Rule

Readings: The Filmmaker's Handbook Ch. 3-4, On Directing Film Ch. 3-4

Week Three 09/23 and 09/28

Storyboards and Visualization, Production Exercise

Readings: The Filmmaker's Handbook Ch. 5 and 9, On Directing Film Ch. 5-6

Week Four 4 09/30 and 10/05

FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

Production Audio, Screen and Critique Project 1

PROJECT 2 (10/14 DUE): DETAILS ABOVE.

FINAL PROJECT STORYBOARDS AND SHOT LIST (10/14 DUE): As a group, map out the story to your Final Project as a visual storyboard and shot list. The storyboard can be hand drawn or created in computer software. Take your time on this. Sloppiness will hurt your grade. Upload the storyboard and shot list on D2L as .PDFs.

Readings: The Filmmaker's Handbook Ch. 10-11

Week Five 10/07 and 10/12

Casting Basics, Directing, Directing Actors,

Readings: The Filmmaker's Handbook Ch. 12

Week Six 10/14 and 10/19

Lighting, Grip and Electric, Screen and Critique Project 2

Week Seven 10/21 and 10/26

Green Screen Lecture and Demo

Readings: The Filmmaker's Handbook Ch. 13-14

Week Eight 10/28 and 11/02

Post-Production, Editing, Sound Design

ROUGH CUTS DUE 11/04

Readings: The Filmmaker's Handbook Ch. 15, 17

Week Nine 11/04 and 11/09

Screen Rough Cuts, Screening TBD

Class 10 11/11 and 11/16

Final Project Screening

FINAL PROJECT DUE 11/16