



School of Cinematic Arts
Winter Quarter
DC 390 – DIRECTING

INSTRUCTOR:	Brian Zahm	SECTION:	801
OFFICE HOURS:	TUE 1:30-4:30pm	CLASS #:	22602
OFFICE LOCATION:	CDM 455	CLASS TIMES:	TUE 05:45-09:00 PM
E-MAIL:	bzahm@cdm.depaul.edu	CLASS LOCATION:	14EAS LL107

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an introductory course about directing actors in motion pictures. Topics include casting, rehearsals, the basic relationship between the director, actor, and script, script breakdown, camera placement, and shooting for continuity editing. This course will be challenging, fun, and somewhat intimidating at times, but the student should come to gain new found skill and confidence in the directing of actors, and ultimately an appreciation for the collaborative process necessary to achieve provocative and powerful performances on screen.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- » Learn how to do a scene analysis and beat breakdown
- » Identify the spine, objective, obstacle and subtext of a scene
- » Understand the importance of casting as “the first direction”
- » Communicate effectively with actors
- » Prepare for and carry out rehearsals

PREREQUISITES

DC 310 – Digital Cinema Production II

REQUIRED TEXT

- » **Directing Actors: Creating Memorable Performances for Film and Television** by Judith Weston. This will be used as the major reference.
- » **DESIRE2LEARN** (D2L): Some additional readings and weblinks will be posted on D2L.

REQUIRED SUPPLIES

- » **EXTERNAL HARD DRIVE:** You will need some form of memory drive to store the work you create for class. *And please note, you are responsible for backing up all of your work!*

PRODUCTION RESOURCES

- » **FreePlayMusic.com** is a great place to obtain ROYALTY FREE MUSIC for student work. Simply put your selected music in the shopping cart and select STUDENT or YOUTUBE project and it's FREE!
- » **SCA's ACTOR DATABASE** is a great casting resource. Simply go here: <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current Students/Pages/Production-Resources.aspx>- under CASTING & CREW.

» **BreakdownExpress.com** is an interactive on-line casting tool that enables you to send out a casting notice to regional Chicagoland actors and set-up/manage audition appointments on-line. See the production office staff for help setting this up.

» **LYNDA.com** is a useful collection of video tutorials specially for learning various software programs. All DePaul students have free access to Lynda.

ASSIGNMENTS / GRADING (Totals 1000pts)

» **ATTENDANCE & ACTIVE PARTICIPATION:** 150pts (INDIVIDUAL)

You are required to attend class and participate in the day's activities. This active engagement will ensure you get the most from the course. Each class is vital to your early artistic development.

» **READING + LECTURE EXAM:** 150pts (INDIVIDUAL)

This test will help reinforce the key elements presented in the lectures and texts.

» **"LIVING" MONOLOGUE:** 100pts (INDIVIDUAL)

Perform a 1 to 2 minute monologue from a contemporary play and film it in a single static shot. Submit the film and filled-out grade sheet.

» **SCENE 1:** 150pts (GROUP)

Direct the assigned scene in a single static camera shot. Submit the film, script analysis and filled-out grade sheet.

» **SCENE 2:** 150pts (GROUP)

Direct the assigned scene in multiple shots. Submit the edited film, script analysis and filled-out grade sheet.

» **FINAL SCENE:** 300pts (GROUP)

This project has two parts – Pre-production and Production. Pre-production consists of character descriptions, sides, casting call, and video of your best 4 auditions. Production consists of shooting and editing a scene that is 2-4 pages long, and includes 2 characters that have dialogue. Submit the pre-production elements, the edited film and filled out grade sheet.

A = 100-93, A- = 92.9-90, B+ = 89.9-87, B = 86.9-83, B- = 82.9-80, C+ = 79.9-77, C = 76.9-73,

C- = 72.9-70, D+ = 69.9-67, D = 66.9-63, D- = 62.9-60, F = 59.9+Below.

"A" indicates Excellence, "B" indicates Very Good, "C" indicates Satisfactory,

"D" indicates Poor, "F" indicates the student has NOT accomplished the objectives of the course.

GRADING POLICY

Professional filmmakers must adhere to strict deadlines. Students are expected to turn in all assignments by the established deadlines (submit early is my best advice). **LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.** I will not accept the excuse of technological failure or absent-mindedness (you all have phones...set alarms for due dates). ***Back up your work and do not leave your work until the last second!*** This is your warning. All grades will be kept current on D2L.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

You are expected to be on time, and if you plan on missing or being late to a class are expected to e-mail the instructor **BEFORE** that particular class. The instructor reserves the right to determine whether an absence or tardy is "excused." ***Unexcused absences or tardiness will negatively affect your grade.*** Please see ***Course Policies as Suggested by the Dean of Students Office*** at the end of the syllabus to see how your grade will be affected. Attendance will be kept current on D2L. If you want to question a recorded absence or tardiness, it must be done **within a week** of the recorded occurrence.

COMPUTER/CELLPHONE/I-PAD ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY

If you are using any personal or school electronic equipment during class for anything other than class-related work, you will be asked to leave and will be counted as absent for that class.

E-MAIL POLICY

You are expected to read all e-mails from the class instructor because you are responsible to know the information they contain. *So, you should check your e-mail at least once every 24 hours!*

Type **DC 390 DIRECTING** in the subject of all e-mails to the instructor about this class. Please DO NOT JUST REPLY to my all-class e-mails because your response might get lost in the shuffle—*Send me an individual e-mail. I will do my best to get back to you in short order, but please allow up to 24hrs for the instructor to respond.*

PROJECT FILE LABELING + FORMAT POLICY

Label all Files as Such (ex. Student is STEVEN SPIELBERG and he is submitting the "MONOLOGUE" PROJECT): **SPIELBERG_MONOLOGUE**

*All Projects should be submitted in H.264 format (due to file size constraints on D2L)! **Projects NOT labeled properly or submitted in the proper format WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. This is your warning!!!***

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION POLICY

All work submitted for this class should be original work made specifically for this class. If you are found to be submitting work you have made for another class you will receive zero credit for that particular assignment.

I will grade the first project file that is submitted. Check and double-check the work you are submitting. Do not submit the wrong file, an incomplete file, a corrupted file, etc. Submit the correct project file by each deadline. Most work will be submitted through D2L Dropbox. Do not leave this until the last second—upload several hours before the deadline to be safe! Using Mozilla Firefox (Safari and Chrome have trouble many times) to upload work, along with a faster internet connection should make uploading a breeze. *Again, no late work is accepted! AND you should always double-check that your file has been successfully uploaded to D2L!*

SAFETY DURING PRODUCTION

- » Any tape or filmed footage, which reveals an action, or stunt that puts actors and/or crew and bystanders in physical danger will result in the student's automatic failure of the assignment. The instructor will determine those actions that are defined as unsafe.
- » THE USE OF GUNS AND WEAPONS IS FORBIDDEN in this class and results in the student's automatic failure of the assignment. Any realistic depiction of a gun, whether or not the gun is real or a replica, whether the gun fires real bullets, blanks, is disabled, or even if it is a toy, is forbidden for any production related to this course.
- » Using moving vehicles of any kind involving actors or stunt in any shot is not allowed and will result in the student's automatic failure of the assignment.

FILM + VIDEO CONTENT "TRIGGER" WARNING

A full spectrum of award-winning motion-picture content will be shown in class with the hope that it will inform, enlighten and inspire you. If you are highly sensitive to any particular kind of cinematic content, please inform the instructor via email ASAP and you will be excused from watching said content.

COURSE SCHEDULE

All assigned readings are to be completed by the following class. All assignments have strict **DUE** deadlines noted in the schedule. **Late work is NOT accepted!**

CLASS 01_January 3rd

REVIEW: Syllabus / Assignments / Class Approach
SCREENING: Feature Film
READ (before next class): Directing Actors: 1-76 (Intro, Chpt 1,2)

CLASS 02_January 10th

LECTURE: *Carving Out Character: To Be or To Do*
SCREENING / WORKSHOP: Assorted Scenes
ASSIGN: Living Monologue
READ (before next class): Directing Actors: 77-162 (Chpt 3, 4, 5, 6)

DUE: January 15th by 6pm via D2L > DROPBOX > MONOLOGUE FILM + GRADESHEET

CLASS 03_January 17th

SCREENING + CRITIQUE: Monologue Performance
LECTURE: *Serve the Writing: Script Analysis*
SCREENING: Assorted Scenes
READ (before next class): Directing Actors: 163-234 (Chpt 7)

CLASS 04_January 24th

LECTURE: *Directing Techniques I*
SCREENING / WORKSHOP: Assorted Scenes
ASSIGN: Scene 1
READ (before next class): Directing Actors: 235-302 (Chpt 8, 9, 10)

DUE: January 30th by 1pm via D2L > DROPBOX > SCENE 1

CLASS 05_January 31st

SCREENING + CRITIQUE: Scene 1
LECTURE: *Directing Techniques II*
SCREENING: Assorted Scenes
ASSIGN: Scene 2

CLASS 06_February 7th

EXAM: Reading + Lecture Exam

DUE: February 13th by 1pm via D2L > DROPBOX > SCENE 2

CLASS 07_February 14th

SCREENING + CRITIQUE: Scene 2
LECTURE: *Casting: The First Direction*
SCREENING: Assorted Scenes
ASSIGN: Final Scene

CLASS 08_February 21st

LECTURE: *Rehearsal, Collaboration and Performance*
SCREENING / WORKSHOP: Assorted Scenes

CLASS 09_February 28th

GUEST SPEAKER: Professional Actor
SCREENING: Actor's Work
DUE: Final Scene Pre-Production

DUE: MARCH 6th by 1pm via D2L > DROPBOX > FINAL SCENE / GRADESHEET

CLASS 10_March 7th

SCREENING + CRITIQUE: Final Scene

FINALS EXAM PERIOD

T.B.A.

Note On Requirements (and the Syllabus in General)

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, and posted on D2L. AS A MEMBER OF THIS CLASS, YOU ARE REQUIRED TO KNOW AND FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES SET FORTH ON THE TOTALITY OF THIS SYLLABUS. These guidelines are established to ensure all students know what is expected of them, and so all students are treated equally by being held to the same standards.

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: <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/PoliciesandProcedures.aspx>

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

Course Policies as Suggested by the Dean of Students Office

Attendance: Students are expected to attend each class and to remain for the duration.

Coming 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes early constitutes an absence for the student.

The overall grade for Attendance & Participation drops one-third after any absence (50pts). Three absences for any reason, whether excused or not, may constitute failure for the course.

Class Discussion: Student participation in class discussions will be measured in two ways. First, students are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the day's topic. Participation allows the instructor to "hear" the student's voice when grading papers. Secondly, students will be called upon by the instructor to offer comments related to the reading assignments. Students must keep up with the reading to participate in class discussion. **Attitude:** A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Measurable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitude include but are not limited to: talking to others when the instructor is speaking, mocking another's opinion, cell phones ringing, emailing, texting or using the internet whether on a phone or computer. If any issues arise a student may be asked to leave the classroom. The professor will work with the Dean of Students Office to navigate such student issues.

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Civil Discourse: DePaul University is a community that thrives on open discourse that challenges students, both intellectually and personally, to be **Socially Responsible Leaders**. It is the expectation that all dialogue in this course is civil and respectful of the dignity of each student. Any instances of disrespect or hostility can jeopardize a student's ability to be successful in the course. The professor will partner with the Dean of Students Office to assist in managing such issues.

Cell Phones/On Call: If you bring a cell phone to class, it must be off or set to a silent mode. Should you need to answer a call during class, students must leave the room in an undistruptive manner. Out of respect to fellow students and the professor, texting is never allowable in class. If you are required to be on call as part of your job, please advise me at the start of the course.