

Course: DC 210

Instructor: John Psathas

Office: CDM 462

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DC 210: Production I

Course Description

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.

Course Goals:

- Understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and hierarchy of a working film production
- Understanding of the language of film and video and how to employ basic shooting and editing techniques to express a story visually
- Ability to successfully operate video cameras, lights, sound equipment, and non-linear editing programs in order to create a finished short film

Prerequisites*

DC 220: Editing I

**If you have not fulfilled the prerequisites, you will find this class very challenging. You may not understand what is being asked of you and it will diminish your educational experience. I strongly encourage you to take this class when all prerequisites have been fulfilled.*

Textbooks and Printed Resources

Handouts provided by the Instructor.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

On Directing Film, David Mamet

Supplies

REQUIRED:

1 External Hard drive (500 GB minimum)

1 USB flashdrive for project backups and submissions (8 GB)

Grip Gloves

SUGGESTED:

Audio- Closed Back Headphones (no earbuds)

G&E- Multi-tool, Flashlight, Gaff Tape, Black Wrap, Gels, Diffusion

Camera- Lens Tissue, Lens Fluid, Lens Cloth, Lens Blower Bulb, Allen Wrench tool, Paper Tape, Sharpie, MEMORY CARDS

Additional Costs

Producing digital content is rarely a cheap endeavor. Such costs will potentially include items for art direction (costumes, make-up, set decoration), production (gaff tape, black wrap, camera media), post-production (primary external hard drives and a back-up) and general necessities (transportation costs and craft services). As a general guideline for all films that you make, all project budgets should include a 10% contingency fee that will help account for cost overruns.

Software

This course will require you to use a non-linear editing system to edit several of your assignments. CDM's classrooms and labs have computers that have Adobe Premiere and AVID.

Course Management System

D2L <https://d2l.depaul.edu>

Additional Website Content

ColTube www.coltube.cdm.depaul.edu
Netflix www.netflix.com
Hulu www.hulu.com
Vimeo www.vimeo.com
Short of the Week www.shortoftheweek.com

Grading

Script Adaptation/Script Breakdown	10%
Scene Storyboards and Plot Overheads	10%
Lighting Assignment	10%
48 hr. Midterm	15%
Rough Cut	10%
Final Project	30%
Class attendance and Participation	15%

LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Grading Scale:

93-100: A	90-92: A-		A indicates excellence
87-89: B+	83-86: B	80- 82: B-	B indicates good work
77-79: C +	73-76: C	70-72: C -	C indicates satisfactory work
67-69: D +	60-66: D		D work is unsatisfactory in some respect
65-0: F			F is substantially unsatisfactory work

Assignments

Script Adaptation: Each student will adapt a novel or play *that has not been made into a film already* into at 10-12 page script. They will then export this screenplay into a **single pdf** (no exceptions) and share it with their group members so the group can deliberate on their final project. Songs, news stories and graphic novels are not acceptable adaptation material.

Script Breakdown: Each student will break down their individual script using the Script Breakdown Templates available on D2L. Using a physical copy of the script, each student must go through their screenplay thoroughly, highlighting all elements using the proper color codes. Each student must scan the highlighted script and breakdown sheets and save them as a **single pdf**.

Scene Storyboards and Plot Overheads: Using the Storyboard Template provided on D2L, each group will create storyboards for their film. All group members must collaborate on this- it will be the vision of your film. All storyboards must be scanned into a **single pdf** and emailed to the entire group so everyone will have a copy for their production binders.

Lighting Assignment: In groups, students will light one subject (person) with specific stylistic guidelines provided in class. Every student must work with camera and lights- no exceptions.

48 Hour Midterm: In groups, students will have 48 hours to complete a 2 minute short film using group specific guidelines. The film must be exactly 2 minutes, not including credits. A working, non-private, Vimeo or Youtube link must be uploaded to D2L before class time. The class will screen all films.

Rough Cut: During an individual meeting, each group will present a rough cut to the instructor for notes. A working, non-private, Vimeo or Youtube link must be uploaded to D2L before the meeting time. All group members are required to be present at the screening.

Final Project: During the course's scheduled final exam time, each group will present their film to the class. A working, non-private, Vimeo or Youtube link must be uploaded to D2L before the exam time. All group members are required to be present at the screening - no exceptions.

Schedule

**All suggested readings are to be completed by the following class.*

Week 1	(3/28) Introductions and Course Expectations. Production Roles and Hierarchy, The Order of Operations for making a Film, First Steps in Pre-Production, Choosing Groups and Assigning Roles ASSIGNMENT: Group Formation Script Adaptation READ: Mamet – 1 & 2
Week 2	(4/4) Storyboards and Overheads, Visualization, Coverage, Composition, Editing in Camera, Locations, Casting Basics, Script Breakdowns ASSIGNMENT: Script Breakdown READ: Mamet – 3 DUE: Group Formation Script Adaptation
Week 3	(4/11) Equipment Overview, Camera functions and set up, basic sound recording, Lighting techniques and demo ASSIGNMENT: Scene Storyboards and Plot Overheads DUE: Script Breakdown - GROUP SCRIPT CHOSEN

- Week 4** (4/18)
Grip/Electric, setting lights, Camera and Lighting tests
- ASSIGNMENT:** *Lighting Assignment*
DUE: *Scene Storyboards and Plot Overheads*
- Week 5** (4/25)
Grip/Electric, setting lights, Camera and Lighting tests cont'd
- DUE:** *Lighting Assignment*
- Week 6** (5/2)
48 HR. MIDTERM - MAY 2nd - MAY 4th - PLAN YOUR TIME ACCORDINGLY!!!
- DUE:** *48 Hour Midterm (Thursday, May 4th @ 1:15 pm)*
- Week 7** (5/9)
Midterm Screening, Scene Construction and Dialogue Revisions, Directing, Working with Actors, Rehearsals, Production Meetings with Groups
- ASSIGNMENT:** *Rough Cut*
READ: *Mamet – 4 & 5*
- Week 8** (5/16)
Set Etiquette, Lingo, Production Management (i.e. Choices and Critical Paths), first gig horror stories and how to avoid them
- Week 9** (5/23)
Producing in Post-production, Film Festivals and The Market, Digital Platforms, What Now?
- DUE:** *Rough Cut*
- Week 10** (5/30)
You've made it to the other side... seeing what it takes.
- SCREENING:** *Living in Oblivion*
American Movie
- Week 11** (6/6) **FINALS WEEK**
Exam date and time: **TUESDAY, JUNE 6th 1:15 p.m - 3:30 p.m.**
- DUE :** *Final Films*
Attendance at the scheduled final is mandatory- no exceptions.

Course Policies

Student responsibilities and the Syllabus:

Each student is responsible for their time management and for meeting the all expectations in the syllabus. The instructor is not responsible for reminding students of assignment deadlines listed on the syllabus. In the event of an absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor regarding the absence and remain up-to-date regarding the topics covered in class. If

an assignment is listed on the syllabus, students are still responsible for completing the assignment on time. I will not accept excuses for ignoring class or project obligations.

Attendance:

Each week's class consists of lectures and screenings; attendance is mandatory. All absences will result in a reduction of the participation grade. Students are allowed one (1) unexcused absence. Each additional absence will result in a full letter grade deduction from your final grade. Excessive tardiness (more than 10 minutes late) will also be penalized. Excused absences are handled through the Dean of Students Office after completing an Absence Notification Form [here](#).

Group Evaluations:

Most of the assignments in this class will require you to work in a team. After the 48 Hour Midterm and 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 in all assignments; if evaluations are negative, the grades of the group member's in question will be docked. These evaluations will be **HEAVILY** factored into your grade for your midterm (worth 15% of your final grade) and final film (worth 30% of your final grade).

Deadlines:

Video production requires strict adherence to deadlines, therefore late assignments will not be accepted for grading without prior consent of the Instructor. To be clear, this prior consent is not only rare, it is only given days in advance of the due date, not hours. You will not be eligible for an A in the class unless you turn in all assignments on time.

Phones, Texting, Facebook, Email, Chatting:

NO. Do not surf the web during class. You will be asked to leave and considered absent. If you must use a cell phone or electronic device for any reason, leave the classroom.

Food Policy:

No food or beverages are allowed on the Stage- please leave it outside.

Email Policy:

Please type **DC 210 PRODUCTION I** in the subject of all e-mails to the instructor about this class to ensure that they are responded to in a timely fashion.

Assignment & Project Labeling/Format Policy:

Please label all assignments as NAME_ASSIGNMENT. For example, I would label the script breakdown as: PSATHAS_SCRIPT_BREAKDOWN.pdf).

Assignment Submission Policy:

All documents must be submitted as a **single pdf file**. All films should be submitted with a **working Vimeo link** that enables the **video to be downloaded**.

Projects not submitted in the proper format or properly labeled WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Do not submit the wrong file, an incomplete file, a corrupted file, etc. Submit the correct project file or document through D2L by each deadline. **Do not leave this until the last second.** You should upload several hours before the deadline to be safe. No late work will be accepted.

SCA Production Handbook:

The School of Cinematic Arts Production Handbook is an invaluable resource to all DePaul student filmmakers. The answers to most questions regarding contacts, resources, contracts, rules, and guidelines can be found inside. It is updated annually and linked to the CDM Production Resources page [here](#).

Cinespace Campus:

Please make sure you arrive on time for the transportation bus from the Loop Campus. The bus leaves 30 minutes before class starts. When on the Cinespace Chicago Film Studios Campus, make sure you have your DePaul ID. When on the Cinespace campus, please respect the production facility as well as those working around and within. Guidelines for travel to and from Cinespace, reserving equipment, shooting on the stage and contact info can be found on the Production Resources Website [here](#).

Equipment Checkout Policies:

Students are expected to follow all equipment policies when checking out gear from the Cage, Stage or Cinespace. All of these policies can be found under "[Equipment](#)" on the Production Resources Website.

REQUIRED Cinespace Orientation and Set Safety Training:

Students who have not shot at Cinespace before MUST complete a Cinespace Orientation and Set Safety Workshop prior to being allowed to do so. At the beginning of each quarter, several workshops are offered. If you have any questions, or need to schedule a workshop, please email Alan Dembek - ADembek@depaul.edu - with any questions

Use of Prop Firearms:

Rules and regulations MUST be followed when using prop firearms. The instructor must approve the appearance of a prop gun in any student film. An approved/signed Prop Firearm Request Form must be submitted to the Production Office prior to filming. It can be found under "[Equipment](#)" on the Production Resources Website.

ABC - Always Be Careful:

Film and video production shoots can be hazardous. Above all, work safely in all situations and always think before you act. Please don't hesitate to ask me if you're unsure about anything regarding your shoot, in or out of class.

Original Work:

All work submitted for this class should be original and 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.

Academic Integrity Violations:

Plagiarism or cheating on assignments or tests are serious offenses and earn the student a failing grade for the class. There are no exceptions to this rule. If you are in doubt about the definitions of plagiarism or cheating, consult your student handbook and the University's Academic Integrity Policy. All students will be held to the Code of Student Responsibility.

Content Changes:

Depending on time factors, the assignments projected for the term may require alteration or rescheduling. You will be notified of all changes. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L, and/or sent via email. As the

quarter progresses, some items may change at the instructors discretion, but the overall workload will not. Make sure you pace yourself accordingly.

Classroom Decorum and the Student Handbook:

All policies as specified in the student handbook will be adhered to in this class. Please be respectful of your fellow students and their work.

University Policies

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.

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