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## FILM 487 Directing the Short Motion Picture

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Winter 2023 | Tuesday 5:45-9:00pm | 14 E. Jackson LL107

Instructor: Wendy Roderweiss [wroderwe@depaul.edu](mailto:wroderwe@depaul.edu)

Please allow 24 hours for a response

**Office hours:** 5:00-5:30, 9:00-10:00pm Tuesdays

**Course Management System:** D2L

**Type of Instruction:** Lecture/discussion/workshop

**Drop dates and deadlines:**

<https://academics.depaul.edu/calendar/Pages/default.aspx>

This syllabus is subject to change (Document date 12/29/22)

Changes will be noted in RED

**Zoom Link only when needed:**

<https://depaul.zoom.us/j/92845568945?pwd=UVVLSWVjSIR1ZHloN3RpejhjbHQ1UT09>

Password: Kieslowski

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:**

Through managing the technical, theoretical and creative responsibilities of the director, students produce a narrative fiction short film. Students must enter with a finished, producible short film script with major principal pre-production elements in place. Advanced pre-production skills and topics to be covered include: script breakdown, schedule and budget, pre-visualization, creative collaboration and management, set procedures, and directing post-production and delivery. PREREQUISITE(S): FILM 484

The class will consist of discussions, lectures and demonstrations to strengthen the student's knowledge of the general mechanics of filmmaking and further their understanding of aesthetics. Study and technical workshops will prepare students to take on their projects.

Students will execute one short film as individuals. Details will be provided. Other assignments will include pre-production materials and script and scene analysis.

### **CLASS OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES:**

- Synthesize knowledge of directing process to work with actors and crew in developing, shooting and editing a cohesive narrative;
- Demonstrate how director's preparation leads to a strong character-driven short film;

- Develop a post-production workflow to oversee completion of the visual edit, sound design, credits and VFX after the end of the class.
- Express technical and aesthetic understanding through the constructive critiques of other student's films.
- Complete a short film that demonstrates technical proficiency and creative ambition that is festival ready.

### **PREREQUISITES**

I am operating under the assumption that you have all taken numerous classes in the directing sequence and should have an established relationship with the basics of film production. If you do not, you will have a difficult time in this course and should consider taking it at another time. Though I understand that students are working at various levels and have had different training. I will try to address any deficits with lesson supplementation.

### **GRADING**

(1) Script: 10%

Director's Notebook Materials 55%:

- (2) Pitch Packet/Logline: 5 %
- (3) Locked Script: 5%
- (4) Script Breakdowns: 5%
- (5) Casting Breakdowns: 5%
- (6) Schedule and Budget: 5%
- (7) Casting Presentation/Headshots: 5%
- (8) Aesthetic/Visual Plan (including look book): 10%
- (9) Scene Beat Breakdowns: 10%
- (10) Shot List and Overheads: 5%

(11) Final Project Polished Rough Cut (or fine cut): 20%

(12) Finishing Plan document: 5%

(13) Attendance and Participation: 10%

Excellent work A 93-100 A- 90-92

Above satisfactory work B+ 87-89 B 83-86 B- 80-82

Satisfactory work C+ 77-79 C 73-76 C- 70-72

Unsatisfactory work D+ 67-69 D 63-66 D- 60-62

Substantially unsatisfactory work F 59-61

### **TEXTBOOKS & COURSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Materials provided by the instructor.

D2L

### **SOFTWARE**

Word processing software

Screenwriting software  
PDF software  
Spreadsheet software  
Editing software

## **SCREENS**

The use of screens; phones, laptops, tablets etc, are not allowed in class.

## **LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Late assignments are not accepted. In case of illness, please contact me PRIOR to the due date. It shows that you care, and that goes a long way with us.

## **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:**

**Attendance** – Classes will consist of lecture, screenings, discussion, and creative exercises. Attendance is mandatory. An absence is defined as not showing up for class, or arriving more than 15 minutes late, or missing any 15 minute period during class time. Any absences will result in a reduction of the attendance/participation grade. **Anyone who misses 3 classes will automatically drop a letter grade.**

**Anyone who misses 4 classes will automatically fail.** However, if you are sick, please email me before class and then please stay home.

**Class Participation**—Along with showing up, you are expected to join in class discussions, critique other people's work, and participate in workshops.

## **ZOOM POLICIES**

The DePaul [Code of Student Responsibility](#) applies to online behavior as well as in-person or classroom behavior. The following are policies for our course meetings with Zoom:

- **General** – Sign in with your preferred first name and last name. If you do not have access to a computer or smartphone with internet access, call into class. This is not optimal; try to locate an internet-enabled device to use for this course. Please stay engaged in class activities. Close any apps on your device that are not relevant and turn off notifications.
- **Video** – Turn on your video when possible. It is helpful to be able to see each other, just as in an in-person class. You may elect to turn off your video if you have limited internet bandwidth, no webcam or if you're unable to find an environment without a lot of visual distractions.
- **Audio** – Mute your microphone when you are not talking if you are in a noisy environment. We have a small class, so I'd like to keep our mics open whenever possible. Be in a quiet place and turn off any music, videos, etc. in the background.

## **ADDITIONAL COSTS:**

Producing digital content is rarely a cheap endeavor. Such costs will potentially include items for art direction and costumes, production and post-production (primary external hard drives and a back-up) and general necessities. As a general guideline for all films that you make, your project budgets should always include a 10% contingency fee to help account for cost overruns.

### **SUGGESTED ONLINE RESOURCES:**

- [Short Of The Week](#): Every post is a new award-winning independent film, from all genres.
- [Omeleto](#): A collection of curated short films organized by genre, from around the world.
- [CineFix](#): A useful, entertaining and inspiring YouTube channel for video essays, interviews.
- [Every Frame a Painting](#): Tony Zhou's video essays on a variety of aspects of art of filmmaking.
- [Must See Films](#): A stimulating collection of video essays that helps you see films differently.
- [Fandor](#): An informing source for video essays.
- [The Directors Series from FilmFrontier](#): In-depth multi-part video essays on master directors.
- LinkedIn Learning or [Lynda](#): A useful collection of video tutorials for learning various software programs. All DePaul students have free access to Lynda via LinkedIn Learning. It is available by (free) subscription.

### **WORKSHOP GUIDELINES**

- First and foremost, a workshop is about the work, not the artist. Both the artist and those critiquing the piece need to keep in mind that the goal is to make the work the best it possibly can be.
- Workshops are never destructive. They are constructive. Creative work is never "bad." The work is addressed so that it can get stronger.
- We will always start with something that is working in the piece.
- Then we will go to the aspects that are not yet fully developed or that are not quite working yet.
- The artist must stay quiet during the workshopping of their piece.
- If the majority of the students agree on a particular element of the piece that is working or not working, listen. If the students are completely divided, it simply may just be a matter of opinion.
- The artist should always listen, but ultimately must trust their gut. The artist's name will be on the page when all is said and done.

# WEEKLY SCHEDULE

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## Week 1 – 1/3

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### **DUE BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS: (1) Polished Draft of Script**

LECTURE: Overview of syllabus, class, me and you. Directing, Producing, Production notebooks, Story, Scripts

WORKSHOPS: Creativity Exercises, Script table readings and critiques (PART I)

### **Assignments due 1/10:**

Pitch Packets including Loglines for your projects (see assignment guidelines for my expectations of a proper logline)

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## Week 2 – 1/10

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### **DUE: (2) Pitch Packet (ALL)**

LECTURE: Script Analysis Story & Character Spines, How to choose your crew

WORKSHOP: Creativity Exercises, Script table readings and critiques (PART II)

### **Assignments due 1/17:**

WATCH ASYNC LECTURES on D2L for review (with Steve!):

- Script Breakdowns
- Budgets and Schedules

-Scripts (ALL)-- a locked final version is due next week.

-Script Breakdowns for every scene (ALL)

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## Week 3 – 1/17

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### **DUE: (3) Final, locked draft of script (ALL), (4) Script Breakdowns (ALL)**

LECTURE: Equipment, Locations, A bit on Casting, Review of Story and Scene Spines, Actions, Dramatic Blocks, Fulcrums

WORKSHOP: Character outline workshop, Story Spine workshop

CALENDER: Start Casting--must be fully cast by **2/7**- (ALL)

### **Assignments due 1/24:**

-Casting Breakdowns for each character (ALL)

-Watch Notorious

-Read Notorious Blocking Chapter

-Watch VAS Casting Panel, bring in three things you got out of it

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#### Week 4 – 1/24

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**DUE: (5) Casting Breakdowns for each character, VAS panel reflection, Watch Notorious, Notorious Blocking Chapter (ALL)**

CALENDAR: Continue Casting --must be fully cast by **2/7** (ALL)

LECTURE: Blocking and Staging for the Camera, VAS Casting Panel discussion

WORKSHOP: Blocking plan

**Assignments due 1/31:**

- Shooting Schedules & Budgets (ALL)
- Covid Safety Plans, and project forms (ALL)
- Watch Visual Design and Lookbook Async Lectures
- Watch Every Frame's a Painting- The Spielberg Oner

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#### Week 5 – 1/31

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**DUE: (6) Shooting Schedules & Budgets, (6a) COVID Safety Plans and Project forms**

WORKSHOP: TBD

CALENDAR: Continue Casting --must be cast by **2/7** (ALL)

**Assignments due 2/7:**

- Casting presentation (ALL)
- Scene dramatic block breakdowns (ALL)
- Aesthetic/Visual Plan (ALL)
- Watch Visual Design lectures on D2L
- Shot lists and Overheads (GROUP 1)

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#### Week 6 – 2/7

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**DUE: (7) Casting Presentations (ALL), (8) Aesthetic/Visual Plan (ALL), (9) Scene Dramatic Block Breakdowns (ALL), (10) Shot lists and Overheads (GROUP 1)**

WORKSHOP: Present cast to class Pt 1

WORKSHOP: Working with Actors with special guest

LECTURE: Ready to shoot?

CALENDAR: GROUP 1 SHOOT THIS WEEK

**Assignments due 2/14:**

- Shot lists and Overheads (GROUP 2)
- Bring in raw or edited footage from one scene (GROUP 1)

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### Week 7 – 2/14

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**DUE: (10) Shot lists and Overheads (GROUP 2),**

WORKSHOP: Present cast to class Pt 2

LECTURE/DISCUSSION: Working with an Editor with guest

WATCH: Mipso in Japan

WORKSHOP: Screen raw or edited footage from one scene (GROUP 1)

CALENDAR: GROUP 2 SHOOTS THIS WEEK, GROUP 1 EDITING

**Assignments due 2/21:**

-Shot lists and Overheads (GROUP 3)

-Bring in raw or edited footage from one scene (GROUP 2)

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### Week 8 – 2/21

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**DUE: (10) Shot lists and Overheads (GROUP 3), Bring in raw or edited footage from one scene (GROUP 2)**

LECTURE/DISCUSSION: Class Choice

WORKSHOP: Screen raw or edited footage from one scene (GROUP 2)

CALENDAR: GROUP 3 SHOOTS THIS WEEK, GROUPS 1 AND 2 EDITING

**Assignments due 2/28:**

-Bring in raw or edited footage from one scene (GROUP 3)

-Bring in polished rough cut (GROUP 1)

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### Week 9 – 2/28

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**DUE: Bring in raw or edited footage from one scene (GROUP 3), (11) Bring in polished rough cut (GROUP 1)**

WORKSHOP: Screen raw or edited footage from one scene (GROUP 3), Screen Polished Rough Cuts (GROUP 1)

CALENDAR: GROUPS 2 AND 3 EDITING, GROUP 1 FINE CUTS AND SOUND

**Assignments due 3/7:**

-Bring in polished rough cut (GROUP 2)

-Watch VAS on Film Festivals and bring in three things you learned

-Review Marketing materials lecture with links

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### Week 10 – 3/7

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**DUE: (11) Bring in polished rough cut (GROUP 2)**

DISCUSSION: VAS on Film festivals, Class Choice

WORKSHOP: Screen Polished Rough Cuts (GROUP 2)

CALENDAR: GROUP 3 EDITING. GROUPS 1 & 2 FINE CUTS AND SOUND

**Assignments due 3/14:**

-Bring in polished rough cut (GROUP 3)

-Submit a document outlining what you plan to do to complete your films, be detailed as this can impact your grade on your final project. (ALL)

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### Week 11 – 3/14 FINAL EXAM PERIOD

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**DUE: (11) Bring in polished rough cut (GROUP 3), (12) Document uploaded outlining what you will do to complete your films (ALL)**

WORKSHOP: Screen Polished Rough Cuts (GROUP 3)

CALENDAR: Prepare drives to hand over to editing students (if using the post workflow)

Attendance to the final exam period is mandatory.



## Course Policies and Additional Information:

### Covid 19 Health and Safety Precautions:

Keeping our DePaul community safe is of utmost importance in the pandemic.

Students, faculty and staff are expected to (1) wear a mask as required at all times while indoors on campus; (2) refrain from eating and drinking in classrooms; (3) keep current with their COVID-19 vaccinations or exemptions; (4) stay home if sick; (5) participate in any required COVID-19 testing; (6) complete the online Health and Safety Guidelines for Returning to Campus training; and (7) abide by the City of Chicago Emergency Travel Advisory. By doing these things, we are Taking Care of DePaul, Together. The recommendations may change as local, state, and federal guidelines evolve. Students who do not abide by the mask requirement may be subject to the student conduct process and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office. Students who have a medical reason for not complying with any requirements should register with DePaul's Center for Student with Disabilities (CSD).

If you have a positive Covid-19 diagnosis or were exposed to the virus, you are required to report it to DePaul University. Learn how to report a case here:

<https://resources.depaul.edu/coronavirus/resources/covid-19-reporting-protocol/Pages/default.aspx>

### 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.

### Preferred Name and Gender Pronouns:

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the quarter so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. Please also note that students may choose to identify within the University community with a preferred first name that differs from their legal name and may also update their gender. The preferred first name will appear in University related systems and documents except where the use of the legal name is necessitated or required by University business or legal need. For more information and instructions on how to do so, please see the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at

<http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332>

### Respect for Diversity and Inclusion

At DePaul, our mission calls us to explore “what must be done” in order to respect the inherent dignity and identity of each human person. We value diversity because it is part of our history, our traditions, and our future. We see diversity as an asset and a strength that adds to the richness of classroom learning. In my course, I strive to include diverse authors, perspectives and teaching pedagogies. I also encourage open dialogue and spaces for students to express their unique identities and perspectives. I am open to having difficult conversations and I will strive to create an inclusive classroom that values all perspectives. If at any time the classroom experience does not live up to this expectation, please feel free to contact me via email or during office hours.

### Changes to Syllabus

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L and sent via email.

### Online Course Evaluations

Instructor and course evaluations provide valuable feedback that can improve teaching and learning. The greater the level of participation, the more useful the results. As students, you are in the unique position to view the instructor over time. Your comments about what works and what doesn't can help faculty build on the elements of the course that are strong and improve those that are weak. Isolated comments from students and instructors' peers may also be helpful, but evaluation results based on high response rates may be statistically reliable. As you experience this course and material, think about how your learning is impacted.

Your honest opinions about your experience in and commitment to the course and your learning may help improve some components of the course for the next group of students. Positive comments also show the department chairs and college deans the commitment of instructors to the university and teaching evaluation results are one component used in annual performance reviews (including salary raises and promotion/tenure). The evaluation of the instructor and course provides you an opportunity to make your voice heard on an important issue – the quality of teaching at DePaul. Don't miss this opportunity to provide feedback!

### Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification

of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit Academic Integrity at DePaul University (<http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu>) for further details.

### 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>

### Withdrawal

Students who withdraw from the course do so by using the Campus Connection system at <http://campusconnect.depaul.edu>. Withdrawals processed via this system are effective the day on which they are made. Simply ceasing to attend, or notifying the instructor, or nonpayment of tuition, does not constitute an official withdrawal from class and will result in academic as well as financial penalty.

### Retroactive Withdrawal

This policy exists to assist students for whom extenuating circumstances prevented them from meeting the withdrawal deadline. During their college career students may be allowed one medical/personal administrative withdrawal and one college office administrative withdrawal, each for one or more courses in a single term. Repeated requests will not be considered. Submitting an appeal for retroactive withdrawal does not guarantee approval. College office appeals for CDM students must be submitted online via MyCDM. The deadlines for submitting appeals are as follows:

- Autumn Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent winter quarter
- Winter Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent spring quarter
- Spring Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter
- Summer Terms: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter

### Excused Absence

In order to petition for an excused absence, students who miss class due to illness or significant personal circumstances should complete the Absence Notification process through the Dean of Students office. The form can be accessed at <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/dos/forms.html>. Students must submit supporting documentation alongside the form. The professor reserves the sole right whether to offer an excused absence and/or academic accommodations for an excused absence.

### Incomplete Grades

An incomplete grade is a special, temporary grade that may be assigned by an instructor when unforeseeable circumstances prevent a student from completing

course requirements by the end of the term and when otherwise the student had a record of satisfactory progress in the course. All incomplete requests must be approved by the instructor of the course and a CDM Associate Dean. Only exceptions cases will receive such approval. Information about the Incomplete Grades policy can be found at

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

### Online Office Hours

Faculty should be accessible to students in person or using Zoom, Skype or other similar platforms for the duration of the office hours. Faculty must be accessible on the designated platform for the duration of the office hours.

### Students with Disabilities

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist your success. There are two office locations:

Loop Campus - Lewis Center #1420 - (312) 362-8002

Lincoln Park Campus - Student Center #370 - (773) 325-1677

Students can also email the office at [csd@depaul.edu](mailto:csd@depaul.edu)

Students who are registered with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact me privately to discuss how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will use in this course. This is best done early in the term. Our conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible.

### Writing Center

I strongly recommend you make use of the Writing Center throughout your time at DePaul. The Writing Center provides free peer writing tutoring for DePaul students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Writing Center tutors work with writers at all stages of the writing process, from invention to revision, and they are trained to identify recurring issues in your writing as well as address any specific questions or areas that you want to talk about. Visit [www.depaul.edu/writing](http://www.depaul.edu/writing) for more information.

### Dean of Students Office

The Dean of Students Office (DOS) promotes student learning and ethical decision making in an inclusive and validating environment. Utilizing a comprehensive approach to student advocacy that is informed by DePaul's Catholic, Vincentian, and urban mission, the office collaborates with students, staff, faculty, parents and community partners to support students in reaching their academic and personal success.

The Dean of Students Office is primarily responsible for administering and adjudicating violations of the Code of Student Responsibility at DePaul University. Additionally, the office provides the administrative withdrawal and absence notification process, and can help students identify campus and community resources in times of personal and/or family crises and medical emergencies.

### University Counseling Services

DePaul University Counseling Services (UCS) is committed to providing a range of culturally aware and sensitive clinical services to help currently enrolled DePaul students remove barriers to academic and personal success by addressing emotional, psychological, and interpersonal concerns through multiple treatment modalities. Services offered include: group counseling, individual counseling, couples counseling, crisis management, consultation, referrals, and telereach/outreach workshops. All services are currently being offered on a virtual, remote basis with no fees due to COVID-19. To connect with the counseling center, contact our main number at (773) 325-7779 during regular business hours (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm) to schedule an initial consultation, which is typically scheduled within 1-2 business days of your call.

If you need more immediate assistance or are in acute distress, you can call the main number during regular business hours and ask to speak with a counselor. If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room. The Counseling Services staff has extensive experience with providing support services to individuals of varying social identities and backgrounds. Further, our counselors know that commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and anti-racism is an ongoing and open-ended journey and, as such, our counselors frequently and regularly engage in self-reflection and training opportunities to increase cultural awareness and to challenge one's own privileges and biases.

### The Help Desk

The Help Desk provides technical assistance via phone, email and web for current DePaul students, faculty and staff. The Help Desk supports computers, network access, telephones, email accounts, and university instructional and administrative software. They can troubleshoot and resolve hardware and software related issues with both the Mac and Windows operating systems. Visit <https://depaul.service-now.com/sp> to get help.