

DC 275 Cinematography – Section 503

Winter 15/16 | Wed 9:00-12:15 | Cinespace

Instructor: Marc Menet

Office: Classroom

Email: mmenet@cdm.depaul.edu (best way to reach me)

Office hours : Before and after class and by appointment

Summary of the 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, DV and HDV 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.

Textbooks and printed resources

Required Text: Cinematography Theory and Practice by Blain Brown 2nd Edition

Course Materials

A pair of leather/suede gloves for lighting--always bring to class!

Software needed to complete assignments:

Editing platform-Final Cut Pro, Premiere Pro, or Avid

Word processing program/Screen Writing Software

Grading

Class Attendance and Participation 10%

Production Assignment # 1 10%

Production Assignment # 2 20%

Production Assignment # 3 30%

Final Exam 30%

A = 100-93 A- = 92-90

B+ = 89-88 B = 87-83 B- = 82-80

C+ = 79-78 C = 77-73 C- = 72-70

D+ = 69-68 D = 67-63 D- = 62-60

F = 59-0

Standards for Achievement:

Grade A:

Student performs in an outstanding way. Student exhibits achievement and craftsmanship in all work. Design criteria is exceeded and student challenges him/herself in project design. Student exhibits commitment to expanding ideas, vocabulary and performance.

Grade B:

Student performs beyond the requirement of the project. Student exhibits above average progress and craftsmanship. A design criterion is exceeded. Student exhibits above average interest in expanding idea, vocabulary, and performance.

Grade C:

Criteria of assignment is met, and all requirements are fulfilled. Student shows average quality work and minimum time and effort on projects. Student shows moderate interest.

Grade D:

Student performance is uneven and below average. Requirements for projects are only partially fulfilled. Minimal interest is shown and attendance, participation and involvement are inadequate.

Grade F

Student fails to meet minimum course requirements and shows no interest. Levels of participation and craftsmanship are extremely poor. Student's attendance is inadequate.

Requesting an incomplete grade:

An incomplete grade may only be assigned to a student if the student has experienced an extenuating circumstance near the end of the term, the student is in good standing in the class, and the request is made in advance. This being said it is solely up to the discretion of the instructor to grant an incomplete.

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. I take attendance every class. If you arrive less than 15 minutes late, and do not hear your name called, make sure you let me know you are present so I do not mark you absent. 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 legitimately sick, please stay home. Please email me at mmenet@cdm.depaul.edu if you are going to miss class.

Class Participation—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 will get out of it what you put in it.

Assignments and Exercises – Class Work Assignments must be handed in on time. Late assignments will be accepted on teacher discretion only. If an assignment is turned in late, it will be reduced by one letter grade per day for the first two days. After that it will receive a failing grade. Do not use class time to finalize your projects. All assignments are due at the beginning of class. If you do not arrive on time with your completed project it will be considered late.

Written Assignments: Must be typed.

Digital Assignments: All assignments handed in digitally must have a slate with your name and title of assignment.

Special Accommodations: If you have any special considerations please see the instructor.

BACK UP YOUR WORK: 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.

Critiques: Due to the large size of our class, and the limited class time, not everyone's work will get a full review during class. If you'd like more feedback, arrange to discuss your work with me during my office hours. We will view and discuss everyone's final project during the last class.

Examinations – Students who do not take exams during the regularly scheduled time will receive a failing grade for the exam unless they have contacted the instructor in advance to arrange for a make-up exam. Make-up exams will be administered by the College according to its make-up exam schedule.

Plagiarism – Plagiarism on assignments or cheating on exams are serious offenses and earn the student a failing grade for the class. Please read the Academic Integrity Policy (AIP) at: <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/>

Cell Phones—Use of cell phones in the class is prohibited. Please turn your phone off before entering class. Mistakes will happen (to me too), but repeated failure to turn your phone off will result in a lowered grade for the class. This includes texting!

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.

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

Working in Groups – For Production Assignments in this course you will be working in groups of three. 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 as a team and I will help mediate/resolve the situation.

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 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 proper condition.

Safety Training—In order to use the stage for productions, safety training is required. This is an industry standardized training course that will be something you can add to your resumes. Details will be provided on d2l. Many of the advanced classes also require it, and you will have completed it here!

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 of Insurance—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. 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.

Class Exercises-- Most weeks we will split up into larger groups to shoot class exercises. At the end of each workshop, choose one member of your group to cut together your work so it can be presented to the rest of the class the following week. Please bring them as Quicktime files on a flash drive or hard drive. In some cases, you can "edit in camera" meaning that you will only roll film when you have the shot ready to go. In these cases you may bring in the mini dv tape instead of having to cut it, as long as there is no extraneous filming between shots.

Assignments--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 must turn in a group evaluation form for each assignment. This form is available for download on COLWEB. You must 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 PRINTED and turned in with your assignments. I do not want them emailed to me. They are confidential, only I will see them, so be honest. These forms are also a way to identify any group dynamic issues that may be developing. **If an evaluation form does not accompany your assignment your grade will be reduced by one letter grade.**

For your final projects, your group will develop and shoot a short script. YOU SHOULD BEGIN WORKING ON THIS SCRIPT IMMEDIATELY so it is ready for the prep assignments that are due weeks 4 and 8.

ASSIGNMENT #1--VISUAL STORY TELLING--DUE WEEK 4, 1/27

In groups of three, using a digital still camera, shoot a SIMPLE story utilizing six (6) pictures ONLY. Emphasis should be on the placement of the camera (Composition). 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. Remember you are telling a story, which 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.

DELIVERY FORMAT: 6 individual JPEGs, labeled in sequential order (1-6), brought to class on either a flash drive, hard drive, or cd.

ALSO: Group Evaluation form #1, printed out, for each member of the group.

OUTLINE OF FINAL SCRIPT DUE—WEEK 5, 2/3

½-1 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: Typed, on paper

ASSIGNMENT #2- SHOT SEQUENCE--DUE WEEK 6, 2/10

In your groups of three, rotate crew positions (Director, DP, Gaffer). You will shoot and edit a short MOS narrative using all 8 elements listed below: 1. Woman at a computer 2. Man cleaning something 3. CD/Record/Ipod playing 4. Someone gets something out of refrigerator 5. Light being turned on 6. Socks being put on 7. Pencil gets sharpened 8. Someone takes off a ring. You may add one additional shot to the sequence. You can assemble the shots in any order. 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, composition, and camera movement.

DELIVERY FORMAT: Quicktime Clip Ready to play at the start of class (no rendering in class)

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

ALSO: Group Evaluation form #2, printed out, for each member of the group.

SHOT LIST AND FINAL SCRIPT DUE—WEEK 8, 2/24

As part of your final project grade you must turn in a 3-5 page script of your final project and a shot list. I will give feedback on these via email if I have any questions or concerns.

DELIVERY FORMAT: Typed, on paper

ASSIGNMENT #3-FINAL PROJECTS—DUE WEEK 11, 3/16

Shoot a 3-5 minute short narrative film. 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 required, sync sound is. I do not want 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 Clip Ready to play at the start of class (no rendering in class)

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

5 sec of Black

ALSO: Group Evaluation form #3, printed out, for each member of the group.

Week 1 – 1/6

LECTURE:

Getting to know you, me and the syllabus

Film is an illusion

What the course will cover

Cinematographers rule!

Speaking of rules...

Composition rules

Building blocks of scenes

Character Shots

Coverage and how to shoot a scene

Picking groups

WORKSHOP: Cinespace Tour

READING: Film Space Pages 2-28, Visual Language Pages 30-44

Week 2 – 1/13

WATCH: Plan Scene example: Touch of Evil

LECTURE:

Continuity

Camera movement

WORKSHOP: Setting up cameras and lights

READING: Camera Dynamics Pages 62-78, Cinematic Continuity 80-96

Week 3 – 1/20

LECTURE:

Set Operations

Set safety

Electricity

Gripology

Lights and lighting

WORKSHOP: 3 point lighting demo and exercise

READING: The Tools of Lighting Pages 142-156

Review and critique assignments

Week 4 – 1/27

ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE – Watch in Class

WATCH: 3 pt. lighting exercises

LECTURE:

Optics-Depth of Field, Lenses, F-stop etc

Exposure

WORKSHOP: Canon tech, Focus and DOF exercise

READING: Lens Language Pages 46-60, Exposure Pages 118-123, Optics Pages 178-192

Optional reading: 104-117

Week 5 – 2/3

SCRIPT OUTLINES DUE

WATCH: Focus and DOF Exercises

LECTURE:

Color Theory

Color Temperature

Story boards and shot lists

WORKSHOP: Complimentary and analogous color exercise

READING: Color Theory Pages 128-140 & Controlling color Pages 168-176

Week 6 – 2/10

ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE

WATCH: Review and critique assignments

WORKSHOP: Lights and lighting- How to use a analog light meter, soft vs. hard light, direction and altitude

READING: Lighting as Story Telling Pages 158-166

Week 7 – 2/17

WATCH: lighting exercises

LECTURE:

The video signal

Compression

Timecode

The Video camera, ccd chips

Progressive scan and interlace

Aspect ratios

WORKSHOP: JVC camera tech, Continue lighting exercise from last week, in the same groups
READING: OPTIONAL READING ONLY: Pages 194-218

Week 8 – 2/24

FINAL PROJECT SCRIPTS AND SHOT LISTS DUE

WATCH: lighting exercises

WORKSHOP: Lights and lighting-“I can do that”, matching cinematic lighting, basic booming technique

READING: Set Operations Pages 242-256 (for review)

Week 9 – 3/2

Watch: “I can do that” exercises

Review for the final

READING: Catch up on any reading you are behind on

Week 10 – 3/9

Final Exam in Class

Week 11 – 3/16

FINAL PROJECTS DUE!!!!

Review of final projects

Class Meeting Time TBA

The final exam will cover both the reading material and draw heavily from in-class lectures. If you have missed any classes, you should get notes from another student.