

**DePAUL UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS**  
**SPRING QUARTER - 2015-2016**  
**DC 210 – DIGITAL CINEMA PRODUCTION 1**

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<b>INSTRUCTOR:</b>	Brian Zahm	<b>SECTION:</b>	604
<b>OFFICE HOURS:</b>	W 5:30-7:00 / TH 2:00-5:00	<b>CLASS #:</b>	33298
<b>OFFICE LOCATION:</b>	CDM 455	<b>CLASS TIMES:</b>	TH 9:00am-12:15pm
<b>E-MAIL:</b>	bzahm@cdm.depaul.edu	<b>CLASS LOCATION:</b>	14EAS LL107

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Welcome to DC 210 a.k.a. Digital Cinema Production I. This course is a beginning film workshop focused on the technical and logistical side of production. The course provides an introduction to the fundamentals of cinema, including camera and lens technology, composition, lighting, directing and sound recording. This class is an opportunity to learn the basics of the art, craft, trade and community of film (except we're all digital). It's an intense storm of information and exercises to prepare you for further study in digital cinema. What do you want this experience to be? It's you who ultimately define this for yourself. So take chances. Take it seriously, but don't forget that cinema is a very challenging field of endeavor; if you don't enjoy it, harbor some passion for it somewhere inside that tingles your spine at the thought of all you can possibly do with this thing called "filmmaking," you're probably wasting your time. Unlike a murky pond, the best way to test these waters is to just dive in. You're not alone, but ultimately your success is up to you.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- » UNDERSTAND the language of cinema and employ basic shooting and editing techniques to express a story visually.
- » OPERATE video cameras, basic lighting and sound equipment in order to create the required projects.
- » ASSEMBLE a "Production Bible" consisting of pre-production and production logistical materials.
- » IMPLEMENT a solid foundation of technical proficiency to the development of an individual style and expression to be used in more advanced production courses.
- » CREATE original cinematic material for you demo reels.

### **PREREQUISITES**

DC 110 – Foundations (Should not be taken concurrently!)  
DC 220 – Editing 1

### **REQUIRED TEXT**

- » **THE FILMMAKER'S HANDBOOK** by STEVEN ASCHER & EDWARD PINCUS (ISBN 978-0-452-28678-8). This book is an indispensable reference/learning guide and hopefully rife with inspiration. This book will heavily supplement the class lectures and demos and contains essential knowledge for you to have success in this course, advanced production courses and in your careers. *Make sure you buy the 2013 Edition!*
- » **ON DIRECTING FILM** by DAVID MAMET (ISBN 978-0-452-28678-8). This book is one man's take on the art of film directing.
- » **DESIRE2LEARN (D2L)**: Some additional readings will be posted on D2L under CONTENT in folders that correspond to the class number. These mandatory readings are meant to supplement the textbooks and lectures.

### **REQUIRED SUPPLIES**

- » **EXTERNAL HARD DRIVE**: You will need some form of external drive to store your project files on. You will need at least 500gb of free space. CDM's classroom computers have USB & Thunderbolt ports, so I would suggest your drive is compliant. I would recommend a Thunderbolt connection, a Firewire 800 to Thunderbolt connection via adapter, and/or USB 3.0. A USB 2.0 connection will likely not be fast enough to edit much of what you create in this class. If it is an HDD drive, I would recommend it being 7200 rpms. You will use this drive for this class and beyond. *Also, please note, you are*

responsible for backing up all of your work (on set and off)!

### **SUGGESTED SUPPLIES**

» YOU **WILL NEED GLOVES** TO HANDLE LIGHTING EQUIPMENT. And I would highly recommend (but this is not required) having on set, at the very least, a MULTI-TOOL, FLASHLIGHT, GAFF TAPE, BLACK WRAP, COLOR-CORRECTION GELS and DIFFUSION for general lighting/grip work. On set, for any sort of camera work, I would recommend LENS TISSUE, LENS FLUID, LENS CLOTH, LENS BLOWER BULB, FLASHLIGHT, ALLEN WRENCH, GAFF TAPE, PAPER TAPE, SHARPIE and your own memory devices to record to, especially if you're using an SD or CF CARD! With your SD cards for any sort of camera/audio recording, you should make sure the card has a "Class 10" Rating. SanDisk makes reliable products, Lexar does not.

### **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 on-set food/drinks). All project budgets should include a 10% contingency fee that will help account for cost overruns. With group projects, it is suggested that all costs should be shared equally among group members.

### **ASSIGNMENTS/GRADING\*\*\***

#### » **ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:** 15% (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 class. You will be working in groups most of the time, and cooperation is key. *Your Group Evaluations will factor into this grade.*

#### » **"THE SPRING" FILM:** 15% (Individual)

This is your chance to shake off the rust, and show your filmmaking voice with a short film that revolves around a "spring-time" theme. This film can be a doc, narrative, experimental, commercial, music video, etc. *Have fun, make something you're proud of!*

#### » **INTERVIEW CHALLENGE:** 10% (Group)

Using 3-pt Lighting and Double-System Location Sound Recording, students must successfully record a series of interviews.

#### » **"THE TALK" FILM:** 20% (Group)

This short narrative film is about two people sitting at a table and having an important conversation. It should feature standard shot-reverse-shot, must use double-system sound recording techniques, 3-pt lighting and your cinematography should feature shallow depth of field. This will further hone your production and storytelling skills and push you toward creating clean, professional product.

#### » **THE ROOM "PITCH" PRE-VISUALIZATION PACKET:** 15% (Individual)

Pitch a pre-visualization of "The Room" project to be produced by your group. This will consist of a synopsis, a script, character breakdowns, a look book, and a photographic storyboard.

#### » **"THE ROOM" FILM:** 25% (Group)

The crescendo of this class will be a short narrative film that takes place entirely in one room. You must use double-system sound recording along with 3-pt lighting to successfully complete this scene. You will also be required to hold/document a casting session for this film and create a "production bible" (includes: Script Breakdown Sheets, Calls Sheets, Lined Script, etc). Do not underestimate the power and potential of this assignment! Some great directors' (Christopher Nolan and Martin Scorsese) most famous short films evolved from this same assignment.

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.

## PRODUCTION RESOURCES

A great place to obtain ROYALTY FREE MUSIC for student work is at **FreePlayMusic.com**. Simply put your selected music in the shopping cart and select STUDENT or YOUTUBE project and it's FREE!

A great actor resource is through DePAUL's ACTOR DATABASE. Working with friends is one thing, but working with trained actors can take your work and your experience to the next level. Simply go here: <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Production-Resources.aspx> - under CASTING & CREW

DePaul has negotiated a great rate with ADOBE CREATIVE CLOUD, a tremendous production resource. Find out more information here: Students can purchase Creative Cloud for about \$10 here: <http://offices.depaul.edu/is/services/Software/Pages/Software-for-Personal-Computers.aspx> <<http://offices.depaul.edu/is/services/Software/Pages/Purchasing-Software-for-Personal-Computers-Kivuto-Students.aspx>

## GRADING POLICY

Professional filmmakers must adhere to strict deadlines. Students are expected to turn in all assignments by the established deadlines. 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 starts. 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!*

Please type **PRODUCTION 1** 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 movie files as such (ex. Student is STEVEN SPIELBERG and he is turning in the "THE SPRING" FILM): **SPIELBERG\_THE SPRING**

All project movies should be submitted in **H.264** format! All Pre-Visualization Packets should be submitted in **.PDF** format as ONE SINGLE FILE! ***Projects NOT submitted in the proper format or properly labeled WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.***

## 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! *Again, no late work is accepted! AND you should always double-check that your file has been successfully uploaded to D2L!*

## EXCUSES (i.e. LACK OF PROFESSIONALISM)

My courses are designed to teach professional conduct and particular skill-sets. Time management skills are essential for all endeavors. Modern technology makes it easy to stay organized, on time and on task—set alarms/use calendars & organizers. Please remember, an excuse is just that—an *excuse*. Here are just a few examples of excuses for not meeting class obligations that I won't accept:

- a. I have a life...
- b. I forgot...
- c. I didn't realize...
- d. I mixed up the dates...
- e. I don't "do" books...
- f. My alarm didn't go off...
- g. I live out of town so I can't...
- h. I was busy working on other projects so I didn't...
- i. My job called me in so I had to work and couldn't do my assignment...
- j. I would have made the deadline if the deadline wasn't when it was...
- k. It's just easier to do it my way, so I did it my way...
- l. Other classes don't have me do it this way, so I did it their way...
- m. I was not aware of class policy...
- n. I didn't read the e-mail you sent out, so I didn't know...
- o. The cage checked out bad equipment to me, so I couldn't...
- p. My hard-drive crashed and I didn't back up my work...
- q. The internet was slow when I tried to turn in my project...
- r. I accidentally submitted the wrong project file, but it was on time...
- s. I didn't do the assignment as you asked, but don't worry, I got it all worked on in my head...
- t. I have to pick my friend up at the airport so I can't...
- u. I have to go on vacation so I can't...
- v. I was at a bar and...
- w. I scheduled an appointment during class time so I can't...
- x. I don't want to do this for my career, so I don't need to know how to do this so I didn't...
- y. I know I haven't been meeting class expectations, but I'm on scholarship and need an "A" so...
- z. I thought I turned in my project, but I didn't...
- aa. I had my project finished long before the deadline, I just didn't turn it in...
- bb. It's not being done the way I want it to be done, so I did not do it...
- cc. I didn't look on the syllabus...

## FILM + VIDEO CONTENT "TRIGGER" WARNING:

A full spectrum of award-winning film and video 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.

## WORK WITH CAUTION & RESPECT THE SCHOOL'S EQUIPMENT & POLICIES

Film/video production areas in general can be hazardous. First and foremost, make sure you work safely. Have spotters holding ladders, always making sure you have someone to help you out in rigging situations. And remember, the lights get extremely hot so wear gloves when working with them. And all lighting runs off of electricity (AMPS=Watts/Volts), so you must always

look out for potentially hazardous situations. On set, make sure all cables are kept orderly and run along walls, under furniture, and are properly secured to ensure no harm comes to yourselves or the school's equipment. And never leave the equipment in a car. One it can get stolen, but two temperature extremes are very hard on equipment. *Remember, if you lose or damage the school's equipment, you will need to pay for its replacement (See-Check Out Policy). And don't forget to turn in all equipment on time or you will be subject to fines!* And please respect the school's property and your shooting locations. Mounting, rigging, taping etc. can all cause damage to property, so work with the utmost caution and care. And finally, there is a lot of heavy lifting in production, so lift with your knees and get some help—there's no need to be a hero. The bottom line is THINK BEFORE YOU ACT. Don't hesitate to ask me if you aren't sure about something, in or out of class. AND please treat all the equipment room employees with respect! They are busy folks trying to help ensure your shoot is a success. *FINALLY, you must re-read all equipment/school policies/procedures that you must follow that are posted on D2L (they include: 3 PDFs titled Firearms/Filming Policy/Check Out Policy).*\*\*\*

\*\*\*You should avoid dangerous film activities such as using real weapons of any kind, and/or filming in or from moving cars unless you have clearance and professional supervision.

## DC 210: COURSE SCHEDULE

All assigned readings are to be completed by the following class. All assignments have strict **DUE** deadlines noted in the schedule.

### CLASS 01\_March 31<sup>st</sup>

IN CLASS >

QUESTIONNAIRE: Fill Out

LECTURE: Syllabus Review + Production Planning

SCREENING: Short Films

ASSIGN: "The Spring" Film

BEFORE NEXT CLASS >

- » Upload: Your Picture (You Must Be Recognizable!) to D2L for Extra Credit
- » Read: FILMMAKERS HANDBOOK Pg 1-38, 53-101
- » Read: D2L>CONTENT>FILMING POLICIES
- » Bring: HEADPHONES for Next Week

### CLASS 02\_April 7<sup>th</sup>

IN CLASS >

LECTURE + DEMO: Double System Sound Recording

PRACTICAL EXERCISE: Location Sound Recording

ASSIGN: Groups

BEFORE NEXT CLASS >

- » Read: FILMMAKERS HANDBOOK Pg. 402-470

**DUE:** April 13<sup>th</sup> by 5pm via D2L > DROPBOX > THE SPRING\_FILM

### CLASS 03\_April 14<sup>th</sup>

IN CLASS >

**DUE:** Filled Out "The Spring" Grade Sheet

SCREENING + CRITIQUE: "The Spring" Films

BEFORE NEXT CLASS >

- » Read: FILMMAKERS HANDBOOK Pg 102-121, 125-140, 141-184, 185-252,
- » Bring: Gloves / Multi-Tools For Lighting Exercise

### CLASS 04\_April 21<sup>st</sup>

IN CLASS >

LECTURE+ DEMO: 3-Pt Lighting + Advanced Camera

PRACTICAL EXERCISE: 3-Pt Lighting

BEFORE NEXT CLASS >

- » Read: FILMMAKERS HANDBOOK Pg. 304-320, 471-520, 767-774
- » Bring: ALL PRODUCTION GEAR (Headphones, Gloves, Etc) For Next Week

**CLASS 05\_April 28<sup>th</sup>**

*IN CLASS >*

PRACTICAL EXERCISE: Interview Challenge

*BEFORE NEXT CLASS >*

» Read: ON DIRECTING FILM Pg 1-55

» Read: FILMMAKERS HANDBOOK Pg 321-401

» Reserve: "The Talk" Equipment

**DUE:** May 4<sup>th</sup> by 5pm via D2L>DROPBOX>**INTERVIEW CHALLENGE + GRADESHEET**

**CLASS 06\_May 5<sup>th</sup>**

*IN CLASS >*

SCREENING+CRITIQUE: Interview Challenge

ASSIGN + GROUP MEETINGS: "The Talk" Film

*BEFORE NEXT CLASS >*

» Read: ON DIRECTING FILM: Pg 57-107

**DUE:** May 11<sup>th</sup> by 5pm via D2L > DROPBOX > **THE TALK\_FILM + GRADESHEETS**

**CLASS 07\_May 12<sup>th</sup>**

*IN CLASS >*

**DUE:** Group Evaluations/Grade Sheets for "The Talk" Films

SCREENING + CRITIQUE: "The Talk" Films

LECTURE: Pre-Production

ASSIGN: "The Room" Film

**DUE:** MAY 17<sup>th</sup> by 7pm via D2L > DROPBOX > **THE ROOM\_PREVIZ**

**CLASS 08\_MAY 19<sup>th</sup>**

*IN CLASS >*

PITCHES + CRITIQUE: "The Room" Films

LECTURE: Casting + Working with Actors

*BEFORE NEXT CLASS >*

» Reserve: "The Room" Equipment

**CLASS 09\_May 26<sup>th</sup>**

*IN CLASS >*

PREVIZ GROUP PRESENTATION: "The Room" Film

GROUP MEETINGS: "The Room" Film

**CLASS 10\_June 2<sup>nd</sup>**

*IN CLASS >*

**DUE:** Printed "Production Bible" Materials

SCREENING + CRITIQUE: "The Room" Rough Cut + Audition Footage

**DUE:** June 8th by 5pm via D2L > DROPBOX > **THE ROOM\_FILMS + GRADESHEETS**

**FINALS\_June 9<sup>th</sup> 8:30-10:45am\*\*\***

*IN CLASS >*

**DUE:** Group Evaluations

CRITIQUE: "The Room" Films

**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](mailto: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 (50pts) after any absence. 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.

**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.

*"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with others." –African Proverb*