



School of Cinematic Arts  
Fall Quarter

**DC 414 – FUNDAMENTALS OF CINEMA PRODUCTION**

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<b>INSTRUCTOR:</b>	Brian Zahm	<b>SECTION:</b>	701
<b>OFFICE HOURS:</b>	W 5:00-8:00pm	<b>CLASS #:</b>	16800
<b>OFFICE LOCATION:</b>	CDM 455	<b>CLASS TIMES:</b>	TH 6:00-9:15 PM
<b>E-MAIL:</b>	bzahm@cdm.depaul.edu	<b>CLASS LOCATION:</b>	PST16 Cinespace

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Welcome to DC 414: Fundamentals of Cinema Production. This course is a beginning workshop in narrative film production. The course provides an introduction to the fundamentals of cinema production, including camera and lens technology, composition, lighting, directing, sound recording, and basic editing techniques. Students will produce short film projects with an emphasis on visual storytelling and proper technological execution. This highly immersive class is designed to prepare you for further study in digital cinema.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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

- » UNDERSTAND the language of cinema and employ basic production techniques to express a story visually.
- » OPERATE video cameras, basic lighting and sound equipment in order to create the required projects.
- » 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 projects from concept to exhibition, ones that will hopefully make it on your demo reels.

**PREREQUISITES**

None

**REQUIRED TEXT**

- » **FILMMAKING IN ACTION: YOUR GUIDE TO THE SKILLS AND CRAFT**

by Adam Leipzig / Barry S. Weiss / Michael Goldman  
(ISBN-13: 978-0312616991 ISBN-10: 0312616996).

This book is an indispensable reference/learning guide (and hopefully rife with inspiration). This text 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.

- » **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. *This will also be used as a course management system.*

**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! You will need some form of external drive to store your project files on.

## SUGGESTED SUPPLIES

» YOU **WILL NEED GLOVES** TO HANDLE LIGHTING EQUIPMENT. And I would highly recommend (but this is not required) having on set, a MULTI-TOOL, FLASHLIGHT, GAFF TAPE, BLACK WRAP, COLOR-CORRECTION GELS/DIFFUSION (you can check out gels from The Cage) 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 cards/devices to record to, especially if you're using an SD or CF cards! For any sort of camera/audio recording, you should make sure the SD card has a "Class 10" Rating.

## 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.

## PRODUCTION RESOURCES

» **SCA's PRODUCTION RESOURCES WEBPAGE** is a very convenient and informative site that points you to information about producing projects (facility hours/ equipment/ casting/location insurance/equipment/room reservations) with DePaul's resources. Simply go here: <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Production-Resources.aspx>

» **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!

» **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 if you need help setting this up.

» **Backstage.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 if you need help setting this up.

» **SCA's ACTOR DATABASE** is a great casting resource. Under CASTING & CREW you will find hundreds of actors looking for work in student films who come into the Quarterly Casting Sessions. <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/CurrentStudents/Pages/Production-Resources.aspx>

» **LYNDA.com** is a useful collection of video tutorials specially for learning various software programs. All DePaul students have free access to Lynda. <https://offices.depaul.edu/information-services/services/technology-training/Pages/online-training.aspx>

» **VIMEO.com/YOUTUBE.com** fall down the rabbit hole into the multitude of boundary pushing and award-winning work of filmmakers from across the globe.

» **COLTube** <https://coltube.cdm.depaul.edu/> A DePaul based media site where you can find many (not all) of the films used in the various classes on campus.

» **Final Draft** <https://store.finaldraft.com/final-draft-10-edu-verified.html/> DePaul Discount Code: **IOX9YW** You can get Final Draft Screenwriting Software for \$99 (after discount). This is industry standard screening writing software (it's not required for this class!)

## ASSIGNMENTS / GRADING (Academic Quarter Total: 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 class. Every class, you will learn a lot. Also, you will be working in groups most of the time, and cooperation/participation is key.

» **"CAMERA TEST" EXERCISE:** 100pts (GROUP)

You will be assigned a series of shots to execute successfully. The aim of this assignment is to help you become more familiar with the camera, the lenses, their operation and equipment checkout procedures.

» **"THE ACTIVITY" SILENT FILM:** 150pts (GROUP)

This silent film will portray one character doing one activity from start to finish. (Ex. brushing teeth, juggling, playing pinball, eating an apple etc). This project will better help you understand the use of cinematic language and composition.

» **INTERVIEW CHALLENGE:** 150pts (GROUP)

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

» **"THE MEETING" ONE SHEET:** 50pts (INDIVIDUAL)

Each student will create a "One-Sheet" to help pitch their concept of "The Meeting" film to potentially be produced by their group. This will consist of a logline, short treatment, and inspiration images.

» **"THE MEETING" PREVISUALIZATION PACKET:** 150pts (GROUP)

This is the previsualization packet for "The Meeting" film. This packet will include a logline, a treatment broken down into the three-act structure, a storyboard and shotlist. The storyboard should be created with still photographs, be numbered, and feature important sound effects.

» **"THE MEETING" FILM:** 250pts (GROUP)

This short narrative film is about two people going to a meeting where they have 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 film is very simple in concept, but it will be very challenging. This will further hone your production and storytelling skills and push you toward creating clean, professional product.

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 (please see list of excuses) or being late to a class are expected to e-mail the instructor **BEFORE** that particular class. The second time you "call off" sick to a class, you must go through the Dean of Students Office after completing an Absence Notification Form. 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.

### GROUP EVALUATIONS

All of the assignments in this class will require you to work in a team. After each assignment, 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; if evaluations are negative, the grades of the group members in question will be docked. These evaluations will be HEAVILY factored into your grade for each assignment.

### 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 **DC414** 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 SUBMISSION POLICY

Label all Files as Such (ex. Student is STEVEN SPIELBERG and he is submitting the “MEETING” Film): **SPIELBERG\_MEETING** or if it’s for his group project **GROUP03\_MEETING**

- » All films/videos should be submitted in **H.264** format (.mov or .mp4 only) via **D2L only** (1gb max file size through D2L).
- » All documents (grade sheets, previz, etc) should be submitted in **PDF** format via **D2L only**.

**Projects NOT labeled properly, NOT submitted in the proper format or NOT submitted via D2L 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. 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 or Safari (Chrome has trouble many times) to upload work, along with a fast internet connection, should make uploading a breeze. If you are having trouble uploading, the first thing you should do is try a different browser. **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.

» 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.

### 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 <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Documents/DePaul-SCA-Student-Production-Handbook.pdf>

### EQUIPMENT CHECKOUT POLICIES

Students are expected to follow all equipment policies when checking out gear from The Cage or Cinespace. All of these policies can be found under "Equipment" on the Production Resources Website. <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Production-Resources.aspx>

### CINESPACE ORIENTATION AND SAFETY TRAINING

Students who have not filmed 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](mailto:ADembek@depaul.edu) - with any questions

### 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.

### 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.

## 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\_ September 7<sup>th</sup>

*IN CLASS >*

SAFETY TRAINING LECTURE: This is required before you work at Cinespace!!!

REVIEW: Syllabus/Course Objectives

LECTURE: "What is Cinema?"

SCREENING: Film Odyssey

*BEFORE NEXT CLASS >*

» Read: FILMMAKING IN ACTION : Chapter 1 / 2 (Chapters, not to be confused with "Parts!")

» Read: D2L>CONTENT>Crew Roles and Departments

### CLASS 02\_ September 14<sup>th</sup>

*IN CLASS >*

LECTURE + DEMO: Camera + Cinematography Basics

PRACTICAL EXERCISE: Camera Test Drive

ASSIGN: Groups / "CAM TEST" Exercise

*BEFORE NEXT CLASS >*

» Read: FILMMAKING IN ACTION : Chapter 6 / 7

**DUE: September 20<sup>th</sup> by 1pm via D2L > SUBMISSIONS > CAM TEST EXERCISE (Film + Filled Out Grade Sheet)**

### CLASS 03\_ September 21<sup>st</sup>

*IN CLASS >*

**DUE:** Group Evaluations

SCREENING + CRITIQUE: "CAM TEST" Exercise

LECTURE: Directorial Design + The Film Crew

ASSIGN: "THE ACTIVITY" Film

*BEFORE NEXT CLASS >*

» Read: FILMMAKING IN ACTION : Chapter 3 / 4 / 11 / 12

» Read: D2L>CONTENT>Match Cut PDF

**DUE: SEPTEMBER 26<sup>th</sup> by 3pm via D2L > SUBMISSIONS > THE ACTIVITY\_FILM (Film + Filled Out Grade Sheet)**

### CLASS 04\_ September 28<sup>th</sup>

*IN CLASS >*

**DUE:** Group Evaluations

SCREENING + CRITIQUE: "THE ACTIVITY" Film

LECTURE: Sound in Film

*BEFORE NEXT CLASS >*

» Read: FILMMAKING IN ACTION : Chapter 10

» Bring: Headphones to Class Next Week

### CLASS 05\_ October 5<sup>th</sup>

*IN CLASS >*

LECTURE + DEMO: Double System Sound Recording

PRACTICAL EXERCISE: Location Sound Recording

*BEFORE NEXT CLASS >*

» Read: FILMMAKING IN ACTION : Chapter 8

» Bring: Gloves / Multi-Tools For Next Week's Lighting Exercise

### CLASS 06\_ October 12<sup>th</sup>

*IN CLASS >*

CRITIQUE: Location Sound Recording Exercise

LECTURE+ DEMO: 3-Pt Lighting

*BEFORE NEXT CLASS >*

» Read: FILMMAKING IN ACTION : Chapter 9

» Bring: ALL PRODUCTION GEAR (Headphones, Gloves, Etc) For Next Week

### CLASS 07\_ October 19<sup>th</sup>

*IN CLASS >*

PRACTICAL EXERCISE: Interview Challenge

**DUE: October 24<sup>th</sup> by 3pm via D2L> SUBMISSIONS >INTERVIEW CHALLENGE (Film+ Filled Out Grade Sheet)**

## CLASS 08\_October 26<sup>th</sup>

IN CLASS >

SCREENING+CRITIQUE: Interview Challenge

LECTURE: Narrative Form + Function

ASSIGN: "THE MEETING" Film "ONE SHEET"

BEFORE NEXT CLASS >

» Read: FILMMAKING IN ACTION : Chapter 5

**DUE:** October 31<sup>st</sup> by 3pm via D2L > **SUBMISSIONS** > **THE MEETING\_ONE SHEET (PDF of the "One Sheet")**

## CLASS 09\_November 2<sup>nd</sup>

IN CLASS >

PITCH/VOTE: "One Sheets"

LECTURE: Pre-Production and Pre-Visualization

ASSIGN: Pre-Viz Packet

BEFORE NEXT CLASS >

» Reserve: "The Meeting" Equipment for your Shoot! (The Cage is busy at the end of the quarter!)

» Read: FILMMAKING IN ACTION : Chapter 14 /15 (optional)

**DUE:** November 7<sup>th</sup> by 3pm via D2L > **SUBMISSIONS** > **THE MEETING\_PREVIZ PACKET (Packet + Filled Out Grade Sheet)**

## CLASS 10\_November 9<sup>th</sup>

IN CLASS >

PREVIZ PRESENTATION + CRITIQUE: "The Meeting" Films Previz

GROUP MEETINGS: Final Group Meetings Before Production

**DUE:** November 15<sup>th</sup> by 3pm via D2L > **SUBMISSIONS** > **THE MEETING\_FINAL (Film + Filled Out Grade Sheet)**

## FINALS\_NOVEMBER 16<sup>th</sup> 6:00-8:15pm

IN CLASS >

**DUE:** Group Evaluations

SCREENING+CRITIQUE: "THE MEETING" Film

### 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 after any unexcused 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.