

Course: DC 110

Instructor: John Psathas

Office: CDM 462

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DC 110: Foundations of Cinema for Majors

Course Description

This course deals with visualization and cinema literacy skills. Drawing heavily on a wide array of historical examples, the course will examine the many expressive strategies potentially usable in the creation of moving image art forms: image construction and manipulation, editing, composition, sound, narrative, and performance. An emphasis will be placed on story and storytelling. In addition to analyzing the works of others, students will also produce their own projects - putting theory into practice.

Course Goals:

The course is designed as a practical look at cinematic form for filmmakers. By the end of the course students should understand cinematic language and be able to incorporate structure, the framed image, sound, and editing into their own creative work. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- *Analyze how cinematic techniques function to tell a story or convey a theme*
- *Synthesize cinematic techniques in the production of their own creative work*
- *Identify how techniques function in multiple genres and forms*
- *Create a project from concept to exhibition*
- *Utilize basic film production language*

Please Note: This course teaches concepts rather than technology. Filmmakers will take the concepts learned in DC 110 to better communicate their ideas in Digital Cinema Production I (DC 210) and beyond.

Prerequisites

None.

Textbooks and Printed Resources

REQUIRED:

Film Art: An Introduction, 11th Edition

Authors: David Bordwell & Kristin Thompson

Publisher: McGraw-Hill Education

ISBN-13: 978-1259534959

ISBN-10: 1259534952

Supplemental readings will be provided and shared on D2L.

Suggested Online Resources

[CineFix](#): A useful, entertaining and inspiring YouTube channel for video essays, interviews.

[Every Frame a Painting](#): Tony Zhou's video essays on 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.

[Raccord](#): In-depth video essays on master directors.

[Lynda](#): A useful collection of video tutorials for learning various software programs. All DePaul students have free access to Lynda. It is available at the library and by (free) subscription. It is highly recommended that you watch the essential training on Adobe Premiere CC.

Hardware/Software

Still and Video Camera, Audio Recording Equipment: Gear is available for checkout from the CDM Equipment Center.

Editing Software: CDM Computer Labs are available for software use outside of class with and offer Adobe Creative Cloud on PC and Mac operating systems.

Information on labs, rooms, production equipment, rules, and guidelines can be found at the [CDM Production Resources website](#).

Course Management System

D2L

<https://d2l.depaul.edu>

Additional Website Content

ColTube

www.coltube.cdm.depaul.edu

Netflix

www.netflix.com

Hulu

www.hulu.com

Vimeo

www.vimeo.com

Short of the Week

www.shortoftheweek.com

Grading

Silent Short Film	10%
Composition Project	10%
Scene Analysis 1	20%
Scene Analysis 2	20%
Final Short Film	20%
Class attendance and Participation	20%

LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Grading Scale:

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

Assignments

Silent Short Film: In small groups and in class, students will create a short, live action film that tells a story without sound.

Composition Project: Individually, students will take a series of 10-15 still images that tell a complete story.

Scene Analysis 1: Students will write a short analytical essay on a film. Parameters for this assignment will be given in week 5.

Scene Analysis 2: Students will write an analytical essay on a film. Parameters for this assignment will be given in week 9.

Final Short Film: In groups, students will create a short, 3-5 minute, live action film with thematic or technical restrictions. The film must be driven by visual storytelling and intelligent sound design.

Schedule

**All readings are to be completed by the date they are listed.*

Week 1 **(9/5)**
Introductions and course expectations. Discussion- What is cinema?

Week 2 **(9/10)**
90 Minute Film History

(9/12)
The "Cage" and equipment. Silent Short Film Project - in class

READ: *B&T, CH.1*

Week 3 **(9/17)**
Silent Short Film Project - in class

READ: *B&T, CH.2-3*
ASSIGNMENT: **Silent Short Film**

(9/19)
Cinematography and Composition, Screen silent films

READ: *B&T, CH.4*
DUE: **Silent Short Film**

Week 4 **(9/24)**
Mise-en-scene

READ: *B&T, CH.5*

(9/26)
Editing Theory

Week 5 **(10/1)**
Citizen Kane

READ: *B&T, CH.6-7*
ASSIGNMENT: *Scene Analysis 1*

(10/3)
Citizen Kane

Week 6 (10/8)
Storytelling, Narrative Forms, Classic Hollywood cinema

(10/10)
Screening

DUE: *Scene Analysis 1*

Week 7 (10/15)
Storytelling: Challenging Classical Cinema. Neo-Realism and the New Wave.
Independent Cinema?

ASSIGNMENT: *Composition Project*
READ: *B&T, CH.8-9*

(10/17)
Screening

Week 8 (10/22)
Documentary, Experimental, and Avant-garde

READ: *B&T, CH.10*

(10/24)
Screening

DUE: *Composition Project*

Week 9 (10/29)
Screening

ASSIGNMENT: *Scene Analysis 2*

(10/31)
Discussion

Week 10 (11/5)
The Rise and Fall of the Blockbuster. state of affairs, Digital Platforms

(11/7)
How to survive film school - What is cinema?

DUE: *Scene Analysis 2*

Week 11 (11/14) **FINALS WEEK**
Exam date and time: **WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14th 8:30 a.m - 10:45 a.m.**

DUE: Final Short Films

Attendance at the scheduled final is mandatory- no exceptions.

Course Policies

Student responsibilities and the Syllabus:

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

Attendance:

Each weeks class consists of lectures and screenings; attendance is mandatory. All absences will result in a reduction of the participation grade. Students are allowed two (2) unexcused absences. Each additional absence will result in a full letter grade deduction from your final grade. Excessive tardiness (more than 10 minutes late) will also be penalized. Excused absences are handled through the Dean of Students Office after completing an Absence Notification Form [here](#).

Group Evaluations:

Most of the assignments in this class will require you to work in a team. After the 48 Hour Midterm and at the end of the quarter, each group member is required to turn in a written evaluation of their team members. If all evaluations are uniformly positive, all group members will share the grades in all assignments; if evaluations are negative, the grades of the group member's in question will be docked. These evaluations will be **HEAVILY** factored into your grade for your silent and final film (each worth 20% of your final grade).

Deadlines:

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

Phones, Texting, Facebook, Email, Chatting:

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

Food Policy:

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

Email Policy:

Please type **DC 110 FOUNDATIONS** in the subject of all e-mails to the instructor about this class to ensure that they are responded to in a timely fashion.

Assignment & Project Labeling/Format Policy:

Please label all assignments as NAME_ASSIGNMENT. For example, I would label the film essay as: PSATHAS_FILM_ESSAY.pdf.

Assignment Submission Policy:

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

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

SCA Production Handbook:

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

Cinespace Campus:

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

Equipment Checkout Policies:

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

REQUIRED Cinespace Orientation and Set Safety Training:

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

Use of Prop Firearms:

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

ABC - Always Be Careful:

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

Original Work:

All work submitted for this class should be original and made specifically for this class. If you are found to be submitting work you have made for another class you will receive zero credit for that particular assignment.

Academic Integrity Violations:

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

Content Changes:

Depending on time factors, the assignments projected for the term may require alteration or rescheduling. You will be notified of all changes. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L, and/or sent via email. As the quarter progresses, some items may change at the instructors discretion, but the overall workload will not. Make sure you pace yourself accordingly.

Classroom Decorum and the Student Handbook:

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

University Policies***Online Course Evaluations:***

Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the student's identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online in [CampusConnect](#).

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>. If you have any questions be sure to consult with your professor.

Academic Policies:

All students are required to manage their class schedules each term in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the [University Academic Calendar](#). Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at: cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment.

Students with Disabilities:

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at: csd@depaul.edu.

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