

## DC 121 The Art of Production Design

Instructor     Kaitlin Creadon  
Classroom     Loop 14EAS Rm 214  
Class Time     Thursday 5:45pm - 9:00pm  
Course Web    <https://d2l.depaul.edu>  
Email          [kcreadon@depaul.edu](mailto:kcreadon@depaul.edu)  
Office Hours   STD CR 332 Thursdays 11:00am-1:00pm / 14EAS Rm 214 Thursdays 4:45pm-5:45pm

### Summary of Course

This introductory course explores production design and art direction as a narrative art form in cinema. It examines the collaborative relationship between the director, production designer, and cinematographer. Using films, observational readings, screenplays, lectures, research, and discussion, students will study the fundamentals of a production designer's approach towards visualizing and conceptualizing story. Students will also gain a historical perspective of how the role of production design has evolved and how advances in technology have influenced the various crafts.

### Textbook and Required Materials

The Filmmaker's Guide to Production Design

Vincent LoBrutto

ISBN: 978-1581152241

Paper and pen for writing during film screenings

Other reading assignments will be made available through D2L

### Course Objectives

This course is designed to help you learn about the history of production design and the evolution to what is seen today, as well as gain confidence in understanding the role of production design and visual composition.

### Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain, in well-written prose, the role of production design and how it helps convey story in cinematic media.
- Articulate and explain the various trades, craftspeople, and positions that work within the production design to achieve that end.
- Identify historical and technological landmark achievements in the field.
- Develop interpretations for the aesthetics concerning production design and the affiliated crafts.
- Contextualize and evaluate various films and visual media.
  - Do so with respect to other works of art in terms of defining its place within a border style or genre.
  - Contextualize a work of art in terms of contemporary aesthetic, social, or political concerns, discussing how these might shape the work's reception and how that might differ amongst various peoples and historical periods.

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### Course Breakdown

Attendance and Class Participation	10%
Analysis Papers (3)	30%
Midterm Quiz	10%
Mood Board Presentation	25%
Final Quiz	25%
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<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

All grading is final. During the course, late work loses 10% after the assigned due date. If not turned in by the start of class the following week, the maximum points possible drops to 50%. Final assignment will not be accepted late.

An expanded description of each follows:

Attendance and Class Participation - Class attendance is mandatory. Most of class time will be spent viewing and discussing films and assigned readings. Group discussions are a key component to the success of the class. Points will be taken off for absences and lack of contribution to class discussions. There are ten classes (the final is week 11), and you are expected to both show up and be participatory.

Analysis Papers – Students will be assigned three analysis papers (3-4 pages in length), topics are directly linked to the course objectives and will be covered in class well in advance of due dates.

Midterm and Final – The Midterm and Final Quizzes for this course will reflect a comprehension of reading assignments, class discussions, and viewed materials.

### Grading Scale

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.

A indicates excellence, B indicates good work, C indicates satisfactory work, D work is unsatisfactory in some respect, F is substantially unsatisfactory work

### Class Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory for *all* class periods. Anyone who misses three classes will automatically drop a whole letter grade. Anyone who misses four or more classes will automatically fail.

Each class consists of lectures, discussions, and screenings. The class is participatory and the instructor's material and concepts are presented during class meetings. 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 participation drops after any absence. Absence does not excuse deadlines. If you have a foreseeable conflict, or you end up sick the day of, **you need to contact me via email before the start of class** so we can discuss options. Make necessary arrangements to have the absence documented by the Dean of Students Office.

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#### **Tardiness**

One true thing in all professional fields is the lack of tolerance for tardiness. Employers do not generally tolerate such behavior, and employees who offer weak, irritating excuses frequently find themselves unemployed and unemployable. We will be working under the same rules.

Remember it is your responsibility to make the arrangements when a deadline or a class has to be missed. I will treat you professionally, expecting of you a responsible attitude. This means that it is you who must be worried about solving the problem, not me.

#### **Class Discussion Policy**

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. Second, students will be expected to demonstrate comprehension of the reading assignments. Students must keep up with the reading to participate in class discussion.

#### **Sleeping**

Do not sleep during class, including the screening. If you sleep for more than 15 minutes you will be considered absent.

#### **Respect**

Please be respectful of everyone's opinions, tastes, and beliefs. We do not have to agree on everything, but we should be able to discuss anything civilly.

Please respect the films we'll watch, several of which have mature themes and situations. During screens, please do not talk and keep all comments and observations to yourself.

#### **Email**

Email is the primary means of communication between faculty and students enrolled in this course outside of class time. Students should make sure their email listed under "demographic information" at <http://campusconnect.depaul.edu> is correct. Some guidelines for your emails:

- Be clear and concise in your subject line; ex: "DC121 – Topic".
- Don't reply to class-wide email unless it pertains specifically to the subject of that email.
- Begin a new email thread for any new question, notification, etc.
- If you don't receive a response within 1 business day, please resend as there may be an email issue.

#### **Course Online - D2L**

You must use D2L to submit all assignments. Access to the site at <https://d2l.depaul.edu/> using your Campus Connect login and password. Emails sent to students will default to the email address associated with Campus Connect so set it to an email you check often. Course documents, updates to the course, lecture slides, important information, and other news will be posted there. Be sure to check D2L regularly.

#### **Computers and Cell Phones**

Computers and tablets are allowed during the lecture portion for note taking. Cell phones are NOT allowed during the lecture or screening. Pen and paper are highly recommended for taking notes

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during the screenings. Screen use during the screening, for any during, in class **will** affect your participation grade. All phones must be kept silent. Do not have a phone that is constantly buzzing in your backpack.

I understand that life happens and emergencies happen and you may need to be available by phone. If this is the case, please tell me at the start of class if you know you may need to take a call. In any event, if you do need to use your phone during scheduled class time, step outside quietly and answer your phone in the hallway. *There is no such thing as a text message emergency.*

#### **Expectations**

Yes, this is an intro level course for non-majors. That does not mean it should be, or will be, easy. I expect the same high-quality writing and work befitting DePaul's standards of excellence that all the professors in your major/program expect.

#### **Writing Help**

I strongly encourage all students to make use of the University Center for Writing-based Learning (aka The Writing Center). It is a free service provided by the University that will help ensure your assignments are of the highest quality. To learn more about the services they offer, visit their website: <http://condor.depaul.edu/writing/what/Writing%20Center/wc.html>

I also recommend downloading *Grammarly Free Assistant* onto your computer.

Points will be taken off of writing assignments for 3 or more grammar and spelling issues.

#### **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 in D2L and sent via email.

#### **Online Instructor Evaluation**

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** This course will be subject to the faculty council rules on the Academic Integrity Policy which can be viewed at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>.

#### **Plagiarism**

The university and school policy on plagiarism can be summarized as follows: Students in this course, as well as all other courses in which independent research or writing play a vital part in the course

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requirements, should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report, or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials be sure to consult the instructor.

#### **Use of Technology**

Cell phones and other similar devices will not be tolerated. In my mind, they are a clear indication of a bad attitude. I recommend students to turn off or switch to silence mode such devices. If your other commitments are so pressing that they cannot wait until the end of the session, it may be in your best interest to reconsider the priority you place on being here. In any case, students whose phones and/or computers make noise during class will be asked to leave immediately. You wouldn't use either in a movie theater, so don't do it here.

#### **Ethics**

Although your grade does not contain an ethics component like some other courses, I require complete honesty in producing your work. Plagiarism is useless to you anyway. By having someone else do the work for you, you are missing an opportunity to immerse yourself in the television industry. You are also waiving your right to learn. If you are willing to do that, then you have to evaluate if it's worth the aggravation and the time you invest in this course.

By accepting this syllabus, you are indicating that you understand the seriousness of academic dishonesty and realize I will impose the harshest sanctions possible if I can prove you have engaged in such behavior. You are also indicating that you understand what constitutes academic dishonesty; I will not tolerate an excuse that claims the student did not know he/she was engaging in academic dishonesty.

#### **Resources for 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 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.

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