

DC210: DIGITAL CINEMA PRODUCTION I

Section 503 - Winter 2018-2019

Lecture Location: CINES P0101 and Stage 15, Cinespace Campus
Day/Time: Mondays 8:30 – 11:45AM
Instructor: John Klein
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Office Location: Lobby outside Camera Vault, or by appointment
Office Hours: Mondays 12:00 – 2:00PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a beginning workshop in narrative film production. It will explore the fundamentals of production including: organization and preparation, camera and lens technology, composition, lighting, cinematography, sound recording, and directing. Utilizing digital technology, students will work together to produce several films with an emphasis on visual storytelling and personal expression.

PREREQUISITE: DC220 Editing I (*note:* editing software is not taught here)

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- Identify **filmmaking roles** from concept through completion (producing, cinematography, lighting, sound recording, directing).
- Create **short fiction projects**.
- Illustrate principles of **collaboration**.
- Apply **visualization and organizational skills** in developing film projects.
- Utilize cameras, lights, and field recording **equipment**.
- **Critique** peer work constructively.

TEXTBOOKS AND COURSE MATERIALS

- ❖ *On Directing Film* - David Mamet
- ❖ *The Filmmaker's Handbook (Fourth Edition)* - Ascher and Pincus

Additional assigned readings and video content will also be provided by the instructor on D2L.

A note: I use D2L like a bible of sorts for the course; please consult it regularly, as all your assignments will be submitted through here!

Each student should have a portable Firewire, USB 3, or Thunderbolt drive for backing up footage and for editing. (I'd recommend at least 200GB of free space.)

SOFTWARE NEEDED TO COMPLETE ASSIGNMENTS:

- ❖ Word processing program for written assignments (Final Draft, Celtx, or Adobe Story are all useful for screenplays but are not required for this course).
- ❖ Computer/reliable internet access and D2L.

- ❖ Editing software (Premiere preferred) either at home or in a computer lab at school to edit assignments.

With rare exception, we will use only one camera for all class projects: the **Canon XF100**. Even if you have access to another camera, you may not use it for any assignments in this course; if I catch you using another camera – and I’ll almost always be able to tell – you and your group will be penalized a full letter grade for the assignment.

GRADING

Grades and detailed feedback will be given for each assignment. This class requires a **significant** time commitment outside of class hours. Please make a note of production weeks and in-class exercises.

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.

Grade A: Student performs in an outstanding way. Student exhibits achievement and craftsmanship in all work.

Design criteria are 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 ideas, vocabulary, and performance.

Grade C: Criteria of assignment are 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.

ASSIGNMENT GRADING BREAKDOWN:

- ❖ **Attendance and Active Participation** (in-class and group work) **20%** - I expect you to be in class, on time, and actively involved in class and group discussions and feedback throughout the quarter.
- ❖ **“Frame It” Still Photo** (Individual) **10%** - Each of you will complete a short non-story exercise in which you’ll have to craft a series of still framings, each toward a certain goal.
- ❖ **Group Lighting Assignment** **10%** - In a group, you’ll work to achieve certain lighting and exposure test shots.
- ❖ **Documentary** **15%** - Each group will pick a topic and create a super-short documentary including an interview with three-point lighting.
- ❖ **48-Hour Film** **15%** - The midterm for the course, this follows the traditional rules of a 48-hour film competition. Plan nothing else for this weekend. Failure to participate with your group results in a zero.
- ❖ **Casting Video** **5%** - Manage and film an audition session for your final project.
- ❖ **Pre-Production Packet for Final Narrative Project** **5%** - This includes all elements of your pre-production process, including your treatment, script, shot list, permits, etc.
- ❖ **Final Narrative Project** **20%** - Your group will craft a short film that demonstrates all the knowledge you’ve gained throughout the semester while also entertaining the hell out of us.

GROUP EVALUATIONS

Most of the assignments in this class will require you to work outside of class time on a team. For these group projects, **Group/Self Evaluations** are due at the time of the final screening of each project. These evaluations are required and will be **HEAVILY** factored into your grade for

attendance and participation. Failure to submit an evaluation on time will result in an automatic drop of a letter grade. No exceptions.

DEADLINES

Media production requires strict adherence to deadlines; therefore late assignments will not be accepted for grading, and written feedback will be given at the instructor's discretion. You will not be eligible for an 'A' in the class unless you turn in all assignments on time. Do not use class time to finalize your projects. **All assignments are due BEFORE CLASS.**

Each student is responsible for his/her time management and meeting the expectations in the syllabus. The instructor is not responsible for reminding students of assignment deadlines in class. In the event of an absence it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor for details of the homework if 'assignment' is listed on the syllabus – you are still responsible for completing the assignment on time.

Late work will not be accepted.

DELIVERABLES SUBMISSION

All written assignments must be typed and submitted on D2L as either a Word DOC/DOCX file or as a PDF. Any papers must be double-spaced, Times or Arial 12pt font, typical 1" margins. Word counts for each assignment will be given out on the assignment sheets.

All video assignments handed in digitally must have a slate at the beginning of the video with your name and title of assignment.

All assignments must follow standard naming convention: *Date_LastName_Project.ext*. So, if the student is Steven Spielberg and he is submitting the Narrative Project on March 11, the file name would be **190311_Spielberg_NarrativeProject.mp4**.

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* – we're filmmakers, and we adhere to very strict deadlines in the real world. 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!*

E-MAIL POLICY

You are expected to read all e-mails from the class instructor, and you are responsible for knowing the information they contain. *So, you should check your e-mail at least once every 24 hours!*

Type **DC210** 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 reply ASAP, but please allow up to 24hrs.*

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 and in multiple places! Never leave set without your footage backed up to at least two hard drives.

WORKING IN GROUPS

For production assignments in this course you will be working in groups. 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 will 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.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance and attention in class are mandatory. Any absence (missing more than 30 minutes of class time per session) will impact your grade. Anyone who misses 3 classes will automatically drop a letter grade. Anyone who misses 4 classes may automatically fail the course. The instructor reserves the right to determine whether an absence or tardy is "excused." 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.

ILLNESS

Please do not attend class if you are ill (heavy cough, fever, vomiting) or think you might be coming down with something. If you show up visibly sick, you may be asked to go home. In order to prevent a consequence with the attendance and deadline policies, contact me by email prior to missing a class due to illness and continue to keep me posted until you return. As long as I am aware of your situation and you take an active role in catching up, absences may be excused and extensions may be granted. Every situation will be handled according to individual circumstance at the instructor's discretion. Absolutely no consideration will be given for those who request special treatment without advanced notice, even with a doctor's note.

SCREENS

Unless specified by the instructor or in case of emergency, using computers, tablets or phones during class time is not allowed. Stow your phones in your bags. If I see them out I will ask you to put them away and will make you sing Happy Birthday to the class. I encourage you to take notes by hand rather than typing on your computer; trust me, you'll learn better!

CLASS DISCUSSIONS

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. Secondly, students will be called upon by the instructor to offer comments related to the assignments. Students must participate in class discussion related to their projects.

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.

FILM + VIDEO CONTENT WARNING:

A full spectrum of award-winning film and video content will be shown in class with the hope that it will enlighten and inspire you. There are times where the subject matter may be disturbing to some viewers. If you are highly sensitive to any particular cinematic content, please inform the instructor and you will be excused from watching said content.

FINAL FILMS & PRESENTATIONS

Students who are not prepared to present during the regularly scheduled time will receive a failing grade for the final unless they have contacted the instructor in advance to arrange to present early. Except in case of emergency, students contacting the instructor after the final presentation will not be allowed to make up the points for any reason.

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. 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:

- ❖ I have a life...
- ❖ I forgot...
- ❖ I didn't realize...
- ❖ I mixed up the dates...
- ❖ I don't "do" books...
- ❖ My alarm didn't go off...
- ❖ I live out of town so I can't...
- ❖ I was busy working on other projects so I didn't...
- ❖ My job called me in so I had to work and couldn't do my assignment...
- ❖ I would have made the deadline if the deadline wasn't when it was...
- ❖ It's just easier to do it my way, so I did it my way...
- ❖ Other classes don't have me do it this way, so I did it their way...
- ❖ I was not aware of class policy...
- ❖ I didn't read the e-mail you sent out, so I didn't know...
- ❖ My hard-drive crashed and I didn't back up my work...
- ❖ The internet was slow when I tried to turn in my project...
- ❖ I accidentally submitted the wrong project file, but it was on time...
- ❖ I have to go on vacation so I can't...
- ❖ I was at a bar and...
- ❖ I scheduled an appointment during class time so I can't...
- ❖ 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...
- ❖ I haven't been meeting class expectations, but I'm on scholarship and need an "A" so...
- ❖ I thought I turned in my project, but I didn't...
- ❖ I didn't look on the syllabus...

However, if you do have special considerations, please see me during the first week of class.

WEEK-TO-WEEK SCHEDULE FOR COURSE

Week 1 (1/7)

In class:

- ❖ Introduction to students, syllabus & course goals
- ❖ Safety Training Discussion
- ❖ The filmmaking process
- ❖ Core Production Roles
- ❖ Shot selection (shot sizes, angles)
- ❖ Camera Introduction and Functions (Set-up, White Balance, Focus, Iris, Depth of Field)

Assignment:

- ❖ Shoot "Frame it" still exercise (individual) - Due Week 2
- ❖ Buy and bring gloves to next class

Read/Watch for next class:

- ❖ Ascher & Pincus Chapter 1, 2
- ❖ Crew Position Handout
- ❖ Short film: *The Lunch Date*

Week 2 (1/14)

Due today:

- ❖ "Frame it" still exercise
- ❖ Bring your gloves!

In-Class:

- ❖ Cinematography and Lighting Introduction
- ❖ Three-Point Lighting set ups
- ❖ Hands-on Camera and Lighting

Assignment:

- ❖ Group Lighting Project - Due Week 3
- ❖ Start brainstorming ideas for Narrative Project

Read/Watch:

- ❖ Ascher & Pincus Chapters 3, 4, 9
- ❖ Short film: *Curfew*

Week 3 (1/21)

Martin Luther King Jr. Day – **NO CLASS!**

DUE:

- ❖ Group Lighting Project (on D2L)

Read/Watch:

- ❖ Ascher & Pincus Chapters 12, 14
- ❖ Online lecture: Principles of Cinematography
 - Lenses / Depth of Field
 - Camera Movement
 - Continuity and the 180 degree rule
 - Lighting Aesthetics, Types of Lights, controlling light, safety
 - Character, Environment and Mood
- ❖ Short film: *The Man From Medina*

Week 4 (1/28)

In-Class:

- ❖ Sound Aesthetics and Recording techniques

- ❖ Assign Groups for Documentary Project
- ❖ Development:
 - Treatment writing
 - Visual characters
 - Story/Plot
- ❖ Pre-production package:
 - Breakdowns
 - Scheduling, Overheads, Shot Lists, Locations, etc.
 - Storyboards and pre-visualization

Assignment:

- ❖ The Documentary - Due Week 5
- ❖ Final Narrative Film Treatment & Pitch - Due Week 5

Read/Watch:

- ❖ Ascher & Pincus Chapters 10, 11, 13, 15
- ❖ Short film TBD

Week 5 (2/4)

DUE:

- ❖ Documentary Project
- ❖ Final Narrative Film Treatment & Pitch

In-Class:

- ❖ Screen Documentaries
- ❖ Discuss Final Narrative Project and Select Groups
- ❖ Pitch Final Films
- ❖ The Short Film
- ❖ Pre-Production Meetings w/ Groups & Work on Scripts

Assignment:

- ❖ Final Narrative Film Script Draft I

Read:

- ❖ Mamet Chapters 1, 2
- ❖ Screenplay Formatting and Tips (handout)
- ❖ Short film TBD

FRIDAY 2/8 @ 3pm: 48 HOUR FILM PROJECT ASSIGNED - DUE 3pm SUNDAY 2/10

Week 6 (2/11)

DUE:

- ❖ Final Narrative Film Script Draft I

In-Class:

- ❖ Screen 48-hour Films
- ❖ Feedback on Draft I Scripts
- ❖ Mamet and Directing: Casting, Working with Actors, Rehearsals
- ❖ Post-Production Workflow
- ❖ Pre-Production Meetings with Groups and work on Scripts

Assignment:

- ❖ Final Narrative Film Scripts Draft II
- ❖ Short film TBD

Week 7 (2/18)

DUE:

- ❖ Final Narrative Film Scripts Draft II

In-Class:

- ❖ Read Scripts out loud in class
- ❖ Group work on Pre-Production Packet
- ❖ Feedback on Draft II Scripts

Assignment:

- ❖ Pre-Production Packets for Final Narrative Film - Due Week 9
- ❖ Casting Session Videos - Due Week 9
- ❖ Short film TBD

Week 8 (2/25)

In-Class:

- ❖ Pre-Production Meetings with Groups
- ❖ Directing styles and tips
- ❖ More Short Films
- ❖ Production Trouble-shooting roundtable
- ❖ Prepare for Casting sessions
- ❖ Review/Revise Pre-Production Packets

Assignment:

- ❖ Casting Session Videos
- ❖ Pre-Production Packets for Final Narrative Film
- ❖ Short film TBD

Week 9 (3/4)

DUE:

- ❖ Casting Session Videos
- ❖ Pre-Production Packets for Final Narrative Film

In-Class:

- ❖ Meetings with Groups
- ❖ Film Festivals, Digital Platforms, and Distribution
- ❖ Continuity Editing vs. Elliptical Editing
- ❖ Navigating Film School and Beyond as an Independent Artist
- ❖ Review Casting Videos

Assignments:

- ❖ Rough Cut of Final Film - Due Week 10

Week 10 (3/11)

DUE:

- ❖ Rough Cut of Final Film

In-Class:

- ❖ Meet with Final Narrative Film Groups
- ❖ Screen and Critique Rough Cut of Final Films

Assignment:

- ❖ Fine Cut of Final Film - Due Finals Week 11!

Week 11 (3/18)

DUE:

- ❖ FINE CUT FOR FINAL NARRATIVE FILM

In-Class:

- ❖ Screen and Critique Fine Cut of Final Films
- ❖ Short film: *Cry It Out*

****ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY.** Absence will result in an F grade on Narrative Project.

DEPAUL STANDARDS

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. I 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. I will partner with the Dean of Students Office to assist in managing such issues.

INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY – Please email any time you have a question or concern about the class. If you do not hear back from me within 24 hours, it means I did not receive your message so please check the address and contact me again. If you are unable to meet during my office hours, contact me to make other arrangements.

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 under Announcements in D2L and sent via email.

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. Evaluations are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. They 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.

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