

FILM279: VISUAL DESIGN

Section 701 (#10643) - Fall 2020-2021

Lecture Modality: Online Asynchronous
Day/Time: Modules online Mondays each week
Instructor: John Klein
E-mail: jklein38@depaul.edu
Office Location: Online via Zoom (link on D2L)
Office Hours: Wednesdays 9:30-11:30am and by appointment



COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this class you will learn how to structure your visuals as carefully as a writer structures a story or a composer structures music. Understanding visual design allows one to communicate moods and emotions, and most importantly, reveals the critical relationship between story structure and visual structure. This class relies on both experiential and theoretical study. The experiential side will be explored through photographic assignments. The theoretical side will be explored through various exercises and discussions culminating in the visual design analysis of a feature film. This class will be very challenging but rewarding as it accelerates and solidifies your cinematic/artistic evolution.

Prerequisite: *Editing I (POST110)*

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- » UNDERSTAND the elements of visual design employed in film as cinematic language.
- » IDENTIFY and graph a film's visual structure as it corresponds to dramatic structure.
- » ANALYZE visual design components used in contemporary film.
- » APPLY visual design elements to the creation of projects.
- » CREATE cinematic work for demo reels and portfolios using the concepts presented.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- ❖ **DESIRE2LEARN (D2L):** Additional readings and weblinks will be posted on D2L. **A note:** I use D2L like a bible of sorts for the course; please consult it regularly, as all your assignments will also be submitted through here!
- ❖ **NETFLIX and other streaming services** are definitely helpful, but all films will be made available on D2L via Panopto or by other means.
- ❖ **THE VISUAL STORY: CREATING THE VISUAL STRUCTURE OF FILM, TV AND DIGITAL MEDIA (SECOND EDITION)** by Bruce Block (ISBN: 9780240807799)
This book is an indispensable reference/learning guide (and hopefully rife with inspiration). **You must read this book!** It's awesome, important, essential—all the things! This book will heavily supplement the class lectures and demos, is required for the reading quizzes, and contains essential knowledge for you to have success in this course and your career.
Be sure to buy the second edition!

REQUIRED SUPPLIES

This online course is designed to be entirely remote, meaning that CDM resources such as computer labs and equipment will not be necessary to complete the assignments. You should have the following:

- ❖ **HARDWARE:** A computer capable of basic video editing, online video conferencing and film streaming. In addition, your smartphone will be used for basic photography. If you have your own camera and tripod, such as a DSLR, that will work fine, but it is not a pre-requisite for completing the assignments.
- ❖ **FILE STORAGE:** You will need some form of a USB flash drive or hard drive (internal or external) to store the work you create for class. *And please note, you are responsible for backing up all of your work!* Cloud-based storage such as **Box** or **Dropbox** can work, but please make sure to double-check and back up in physical form!
- ❖ **SOFTWARE:** **Zoom** is an online video conferencing program. Instructor office hours, individual or group meetings, and any live class sessions will take place via Zoom links, which will be sent out the morning before and posted on D2L. Students typically use **Microsoft Word**, some form of presentation software (**PowerPoint** or **Keynote**), or **GoogleDocs** as well.

Editing software: One or more students in a group must have access to editing software, either on your phones or computers. Adobe Creative Cloud is available for free trials to DePaul students, and DaVinci Resolve Lite is free. If you do not have a computer capable of running this software, however, there are free phone- and tablet-based applications that will work for assignments:

<https://www.oberlo.com/blog/best-free-video-editing-software>

ASSIGNMENTS/GRADING

- ❖ **ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:** 10% (INDIVIDUAL) Your grade here will be derived from three factors: your completion of the lecture modules on D2L, your participation in Zoom meetings as scheduled with the instructor, and group evaluations after your final project is completed. I will be able to see your completion percentage each week and at the end of the quarter!
- ❖ **DISCUSSION POSTS:** 10% (INDIVIDUAL) For each film assigned, you will be required to post in D2L's Discussions tab on the leading questions given about that week's film. After posting, you will also have to respond directly to at least one other post to receive full credit.
- ❖ **READING QUIZZES:** 15% (INDIVIDUAL) Three short reading quizzes, each centered around specific chapters from *The Visual Story*, will be available on D2L. These are open book but will rely on your ability to look at images and decipher their visual design elements. *Each quiz is worth 5% of your grade.* No late quizzes will be accepted.
- ❖ **SLS "SCAVENGER HUNT":** 10% (GROUP) You will capture a series of assigned still photographs that focus on the principles of Space, Line, and Shape.
- ❖ **MATCH CUT CHALLENGE:** 10% (GROUP) You will capture pairs of side-by-side still photographs that demonstrate assigned compositions and utilize the principles of Space, Line, Shape, Color, and Tone, to be assembled via assigned Match Cuts.
- ❖ **VISUAL DESIGN QUIZ:** 15% (PARTNER) This quiz is in preparation for the final film analysis, to make sure you're clear on all the terminology and how best to deploy it! You will work in pairs to watch and discuss the meaning behind various elements of the film.
- ❖ **FINAL FILM ANALYSIS – "EFP" VISUAL DESIGN PLAN:** 30% (GROUP). This group project will involve watching an assigned feature film, breaking down the core visual design elements, and creating two distinct elements: 1) a full visual design plan and 2) an "Every Frame A Painting"-esque video essay analysis of the film's choices, with an emphasis on the director, cinematographer, and production designer's vision and their previous work's relevance to this topic. This should be the total summation of all that you've learned during this class, and the final products should be incredibly informative for everyone!

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.

GROUP WORK POLICY

Students will be working in groups of 3 to 5 people, to allow more people to contribute to one effort. This can not only help with your workload, but also help assignment quality by having more “eyes” on the final product. All assignments can be done remotely. The goal is for all students to contribute equally to each assignment, and to avoid a scenario where 1 or 2 people do everything. Group evaluations for each assignment will help keep everything honest, but if you are having trouble with a group member “ghosting” you then please contact me immediately. ***Please be good to each other!***

With group work, you will be divvying up tasks. Everyone in the group should check over final materials to be submitted, to make sure everything is accurate and looking good...because *all group members will receive the same grade for each project*. If a group member doesn't do well on their part of the assignment, it is going to affect your grade, so groups should vet the work thoroughly before turning it in.

When doing group work (as is typical with any production), it is also very important to establish deadlines so everyone knows when things are due and the process can be streamlined. I would encourage you to assign one main producer for each project so that way one person can oversee that everything is on schedule. I would also encourage that person to submit the assignment for the group (only one person needs to submit the assignment for group work) and then notify everyone in the group that the assignment has been submitted on time. I will email the graded assignment back to the submitter of the assignment, and that person should distribute it to the rest of the group.

Again, group members who are found not to contribute to a “Group Assignment” will receive 0 credit for that assignment and will be asked to do subsequent assignments on their own.

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 (manage your exports and render times) 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 and written feedback will be given for each assignment.

Each assignment has a deadline posted on D2L. *If the deadline is 3pm, and you submit at 3:01pm, your assignment is LATE*. If you miss the original posted deadline, you can submit within 3 hours of the original posted deadline for a 10% project grade reduction. If you miss that deadline, you may submit your assignment within 24hrs of the original deadline for a 40% project grade reduction. If you miss the third deadline, you will receive zero points for the project—*this is non-negotiable and final*. Reading quizzes will not be accepted late. *Work that misses the original posted deadline does not qualify for “extra credit” or “bonus points” given on assignments.*

Group members who don't contribute to a Group Assignment (evidenced by peer evaluations) will receive a zero for that assignment and will be asked to do subsequent assignments on their own.

PROJECT FILE LABELING + FORMAT POLICY

Label all Files as such (ex. Student is STEVEN SPIELBERG and he is submitting the “RESEARCH PAPER”): **Spielberg_ResearchPaper**.

Submit all papers as DOC, DOCX or PDF files. All 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.

For other elements, I will provide detailed delivery instructions with each assignment. *Please follow them*

to the letter and contact me with any questions; distributors and exhibitors have very specific requirements in the real world, and not adhering to them can mean the difference between your work being screened or not. You may be asked for JPGs, ZIP files, MOV files, private Vimeo or YouTube links, or other requirements. Do not dismiss these elements!

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 assignment.

I will grade the last 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. and make it clear which file I'm supposed to grade! Submit the correct project file *by each deadline* – we're filmmakers, and we adhere to very strict deadlines in the real world. Work will be submitted through D2L's Submissions folder or the Quizzes or Discussions tabs. Do not leave assignment submission until the last second—upload several hours before the deadline to be safe, AND you should always double-check that your file has been successfully uploaded to D2L!

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students who pay attention to the lecture modules derive more from the course and generally have greater success on course work. Take notes, follow along with the readings, watch the clips – please do not neglect your work each week, as this will hugely inform your path toward being a successful filmmaker in any and all capacities.

Attendance and participation grades will be calculated from D2L's metrics (I can see when you have or have not viewed something!) and your presence at scheduled meetings. For Zoom meetings, if you plan on missing or being late, you are expected to e-mail the instructor BEFORE that session. See below for a more complete rundown of how Zoom will be used for those live sessions.

Zoom – Guidelines:

This class will use Zoom, a video conferencing tool, for instruction and/or collaboration. Students should follow general guidelines and meet participation expectations for Zoom meetings.

- Use your given or preferred name as your display name.
- Don't use distracting or inappropriate profile photos or virtual backgrounds.
- Don't share meeting links, passwords, screenshots, recordings, or other meeting information with people outside the class.
- Mute your microphone when you're not speaking to minimize background noise.
- If connectivity issues impact your audio/video quality, try turning off your camera.

Contact DePaul's Technology Support Center at 312.362.8765 if you need assistance during a video call.

Participation Expectations:

Student participation will be measured in several ways. Students are encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the class topics. Questions will be posed to the class in discussion formats; students are encouraged to offer answers, insights and best guesses.

- Be on time or notify your instructor if you will be late or unable to attend.
- Minimize distractions, such as televisions and cell phones, when possible.
- Don't engage in other activities during sessions (driving, cooking, cleaning, etc.)
- Try to put your device at eye level on a solid surface. Holding your device or placing it in your lap can add movement to your video, which can be distracting.
- If you think you might have trouble actively participating in meetings, let your instructor know in advance, if possible.

Please note: Students should report any incidents of behavioral misconduct (including harassment) in video conference meetings to their instructor. Any incident of harassment and/or behavioral misconduct that impedes the teaching & learning environment may be reported to the Dean of Students Office for referral to the student conduct process. This includes sharing meeting links, passwords, screenshots, recordings, or other meeting info in a way that could facilitate harassment or misconduct by others.

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 **FILM279** or **VISUAL DESIGN** 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.*

SAFETY DURING PRODUCTION

While you will not be engaging in narrative film production for this class, there is still a photography production element, and so the following rules stand:

- » 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.

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. As a student at DePaul SCA, you are required to know this information. 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>

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, and while I will do my best to provide content warnings on a weekly basis**, if you are highly sensitive to particular cinematic content, please inform the instructor and you will be excused from watching said content.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This schedule and all content are subject to change; advance notice on D2L, in the syllabus, and via email and lectures will be provided if such a change occurs.

Each week's material will be available on D2L that Wednesday morning, and will consist of a series of short lecture modules, films and clips, and online readings, all viewable on D2L. Please follow the order in which each element is laid out on D2L, as everything builds from one module to the next. Each week also has assigned readings from the textbook. If a film is listed, it will be available on D2L via Panopto or made available via other means.

All assigned **readings** are to be **completed either before or alongside the lecture modules for that week.** **Quizzes** and **assignments** are *generally due by 11:59pm on the Sunday after they are assigned.* Specific assignments may have different due dates as specified on D2L and via news items and emails; please look there for details and consult with me if there are any questions or concerns.

In addition to this material, I will schedule regular **individual and/or group Zoom meetings** to facilitate discussions and your further understanding of the material, and also to simply get to you know better as people. These will be *dependent on your schedules but are required.*

This course is designed to teach both professional conduct and particular skillsets. 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*.

You should expect to spend at least 3-6 hours each week on this class, between lecture modules, assignments, readings, watching and analyzing films, and meetings with groups or with me.

Week 1 (9/14) – posts early

LECTURE TOPICS:	Syllabus/Course Objectives, Review of Key Concepts
READ:	Syllabus and D2L Overview <u>The Visual Story, Chapter 1-2</u>
WATCH:	<i>High and Low</i> (RT: 2:23:20) EFP: “Akira Kurosawa: Composing Movement” (RT: 8:25)
ASSIGNMENTS:	Reading Quiz #1 (<u>TVS</u> Ch1-2) Discussion Post #1 – <i>High and Low</i> Zoom meeting with professor

Week 2 (9/21)

LECTURE TOPICS:	Space, Line, and Shape, Breakdown of <i>High and Low</i>
READ:	<u>The Visual Story, Chapter 3-4</u>
WATCH:	“Movie Geometry: Shaping The Way You Think” (RT: 3:59)
ASSIGNMENTS:	SLS Scavenger Hunt, Group Evaluation

Week 3 (9/28)

LECTURE TOPICS:	Color and Tone, Critique Scavenger Hunt Assignment
READ:	<u>The Visual Story, Chapter 5-6</u>
WATCH:	<i>Moonlight</i> (RT: 1:51:00) Logan vs. Logan Noir (opening scenes) (RT: 2:08) Colour in Storytelling (RT: 16:25)
ASSIGNMENTS:	Reading Quiz #2 (<u>TVS</u> Ch 3-6) Discussion Post #2 - <i>Moonlight</i>

Week 4 (10/5)

LECTURE TOPICS:	Match Cuts, Visual Structure, Breakdown of <i>Moonlight</i>
READ:	<u>The Visual Story, Chapter 9</u>
WATCH:	“Match Cut: The Art of Cinematic Technique” (RT: 3:01)
ASSIGNMENTS:	Zoom meeting with professor Match Cut Challenge, Group Evaluation

Week 5 (10/12)

LECTURE TOPICS:

READ:

WATCH:

ASSIGNMENTS:

Motion and Rhythm, Critique Match Cut Assignment

The Visual Story, Chapter 7-8

The Social Network (RT: 2:01:00)

EFP: "David Fincher: And The Other Way Is Wrong"

Discussion Post #3 – *The Social Network*

Final films and groups assigned

Week 6 (10/19)

LECTURE TOPICS:

READ:

WATCH:

ASSIGNMENTS:

Point Of View, Putting It All Together, Breakdown of *The Social Network*

The Visual Story, Chapter 10

Rear View (RT: 17:02)

Assorted Video Essays on *The Social Network*

Reading Quiz #3 (TVS Ch7-10)

Discussion Post #4 – *Rear View*

Week 7 (10/26)

LECTURE TOPICS:

READ:

WATCH:

ASSIGNMENTS:

Analyzing Scripts Visually, Breakdown of *Rear View*

Hunt by Ben Kurstin

MORE (RT: 6:25)

Visual Design Quiz on *MORE*

Week 8 (11/2)

LECTURE TOPICS:

READ/WATCH:

WATCH:

ASSIGNMENTS:

Lookbooks, Breakdown of *MORE* (with answers)

Visual Design Plan/EFP Video Essays - examples

The Last Black Man in San Francisco (RT: 2:00:41)

Discussion Post #5: *The Last Black Man in San Francisco*

Zoom meeting with professor

Week 9 (11/9)

LECTURE TOPICS:

WATCH:

ASSIGNMENTS:

Breakdown of *The Last Black Man in San Francisco*

Your final films for your EFP project

Visual Design Plan

Week 10 (11/16)

WATCH:

ASSIGNMENTS:

Inferno (RT: 37:21)

Zoom chat with *Inferno* crew – live/recorded

Final EFP Visual Essay

Zoom group meeting with professor

Week 11 (11/23)

Final projects are **due Sunday 11/22 at 11:59pm** and group evaluations and any extra credit are **due Wednesday 11/25 at 11:59pm**. We will schedule an online screening for the final films, though it is not mandatory. *You must have one last Zoom meeting as a group scheduled with me before break to receive credit on your project!*

OTHER SYLLABUS ITEMS:

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.

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 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.

Preferred Name and Gender Pronouns:

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the quarter so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. Please also note that students may choose to identify within the University community with a preferred first name that differs from their legal name and may also update their gender. The preferred first name will appear in University related systems and documents except where the use of the legal name is necessitated or required by University business or legal need. For more information and instructions on how to do so, please see the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at <http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332>

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

While certain assignments may be group-based, and you may be encouraged to work with other students, it's important that the work you do be entirely your own, and only for and during this class. 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.

Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.

Phone number: (312)362-8002

Fax: (312)362-6544

TTY: (773)325.7296

THANK YOU!