

# SYLLABUS

## FILM385 DIRECTING II

Spring Quarter 2022 • Section 1

**Professor: Steve Kniss**

Email: [skniss@depaul.edu](mailto:skniss@depaul.edu)

Office Hours: Online – T 2:00-5:00pm

### CLASS SESSIONS

Th 1:15-4:30pm – In-person

### LOCATION

CINES P0022/P0101

**CREDIT HOURS:** 4 credit hours

**LENGTH:** 11 weeks

**PREREQUISITES:** FILM285

**d2l:** <https://d2l.depaul.edu>

**Zoom Link (if applicable):**

<https://depaul.zoom.us/j/99668415511?pwd=dUh1T25ka2wvdFFUeFhoSDN3Um9uZz09>

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Advanced study of directing for cinema. Students will continue exploration of directing concepts including: casting, rehearsing, analyzing script, blocking and working with actors, blocking and moving camera, and re-directing through editing and sound. Course will culminate in a final project directed by each student, using professional actors, professional equipment and/or facilities, and an original screenplay.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

The class will consist of discussions, lectures, and demonstrations to strengthen the student's knowledge of the general mechanics of filmmaking and further their understanding of directing. Study and technical workshops will prepare students to take on their projects. Through managing the technical, theoretical, and creative responsibilities of the director, students will produce a narrative fiction short film.

## COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Synthesize knowledge of directing process to work with actors and crew in developing, shooting, and editing a cohesive narrative.
2. Demonstrate how director's preparation leads to a strong character-driven short film.
3. Develop a post-production workflow to oversee completion of the visual edit, sound design, credits, and VFX after the end of the class.
4. Express technical and aesthetic understanding through the constructive critiques of other student's films.
5. Complete a short film that demonstrates technical proficiency and creative ambition that is festival ready.

## TEXTBOOKS + READINGS

Proferes, Nicholas T, Medina, Laura J. [Film Directing Fundamentals: See Your Film Before Shooting.](https://i-share-dpu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CARLI_DPU/8tvalj/cdi_askewsholts_vlebooks_9781351683128)  
New York, NY: Routledge, 2018. ISBN: 9781138052918. **Permalink:** [https://i-share-dpu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CARLI\\_DPU/8tvalj/cdi\\_askewsholts\\_vlebooks\\_9781351683128](https://i-share-dpu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CARLI_DPU/8tvalj/cdi_askewsholts_vlebooks_9781351683128)

Materials provided by the instructor  
D2L

## REQUIRED SOFTWARE

Word processing/Screenwriting software  
Editing software

## **INSTRUCTOR'S NOTES**

"It is necessary to learn from others' mistakes. You will not live long enough to make them all yourself."

-Admiral Hyman G. Rickover

## **CASTING RESOURCES**

Backstage/Breakdown Express – These are interactive on-line casting tools that enable you to send out a casting notice to regional Chicagoland actors and set up/manage audition appointments on-line. We will cover these tools in class.

Production Office – 14 East Jackson Ave – Daley Building, Lower Level 103  
Monday – Friday: 10am - 6pm  
[production@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:production@cdm.depaul.edu)

<https://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Student-Resources/Pages/Production-Office.aspx>

## **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 on SCA Central and linked to the CDM Production Resources page [here](#).

## **TALENT WAIVERS**

Talent waivers must be signed by any outside talent (non-DePaul students) **prior** to camera rolling for any projects. These waivers must be signed and submitted to the Production Office before shooting. Waivers and other commonly used forms can be found on SCA Central under "Filmmaking Paperwork".

## **DEPAUL PRODUCTION INSURANCE**

DePaul production insurance does not cover the use of fire (including pyrotechnics and fireplaces), vehicles, or animals of any kind. Insurance is required for location agreements, film permits, and any equipment rental agreements. Any questions about DePaul's production insurance should be directed to the Production Office well before shooting begins ([production@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:production@cdm.depaul.edu)).

## **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 on SCA Central under "Filmmaking Paperwork".

## **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.

**GRADING**

(1) Script:	10%
Director's Notebook Materials:	55%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (2) Pitch Packet/Logline: 5%</li> <li>• (3) Locked Script: 5%</li> <li>• (4) Script Breakdowns: 5%</li> <li>• (5) Casting Breakdowns: 5%</li> <li>• (6) Schedule and Budget: 5%</li> <li>• (7) Casting Presentation/Headshots: 5%</li> <li>• (8) Aesthetic/Visual Plan: 10%</li> <li>• (9) Scene Beat Breakdowns: 10%</li> <li>• (10) Shot List and Overheads: 5%</li> </ul>	
(11) Final Project Polished Rough Cut	20%
(12) Finishing Plan Document	5%
(13) Attendance and Participation	10%

GRADE CRITERIA	Letter Grade	% Grade
Performs at the highest level and demonstrates full, uncompromised commitment and effort	A	93-100
	A-	90-92.99
Performs at a high level and demonstrates consistent and effective achievement in meeting course requirements	B+	88-89.99
	B	83-87.99
	B-	80-82.99
Meets the basic requirements of the course	C+	78-79.99
	C	73-77.99
	C-	70-72.99
Meets minimum standards and performs at a level sub-par to basic requirements	D+	68-69.99
	D	63-67.99
	D-	60-62.99
Fails to meet minimum course requirements	F	< 60

**GRADE BREAKDOWN**

04/01	Last date to add classes
04/08	Last date to drop classes without penalty
05/13	Last day to withdraw from classes

More info here: <https://academics.depaul.edu/calendar/Pages/default.aspx>

# COURSE CALENDAR

*Subject to change with notification*

## **Week 1            3/31 – Cinespace**

### **Due on the first day of class: (1) Polished Draft of Script**

Lecture:            Overview of syllabus, class, me and you. Directing, Producing, Production notebooks, Story, Scripts.

Workshop:        Creativity Exercises, Script table readings and critiques (Part 1)

**Assignment due 4/07:** Pitch Packets including Loglines for your projects (see assignment guidelines for the definition of a proper logline)

**Read:** N/A

## **Week 2            4/07 – Cinespace**

### **Due: (2) Pitch Packets**

Lecture:            How to choose your crew, Budgets, Locations, Script Breakdowns

Workshop:        Creativity Exercises, Spine Exercise, Script table readings and critiques (Part 2)

**Assignment due 4/14:** Scripts (ALL) – a locked final version is due next week!; Script breakdowns for every scene (ALL)

**Read:** Proferes/Medina - Chapter 2

## **Week 3            4/14 – Cinespace**

### **Due: (3) Final, locked draft of script (ALL); (4) Script Breakdowns (ALL)**

Lecture:            Equipment, Casting, Casting Breakdowns, Scene Spines, Actions, Dramatic Blocks, Fulcrums

Workshop:        Character outline workshop

Calendar:        Start Casting! Must be fully cast by 5/05 (ALL)

**Assignments due 4/21:** Casting Breakdowns for each character (ALL); Watch VAS Casting Panel

**Read:** Proferes/Medina - Chapter 3, Chapter 6

## **Class 4            4/21 - Cinespace**

### **Due: (5) Casting Breakdowns for each character (ALL); VAS Panel Reflection**

Lecture: Blocking and staging for the camera, Visual Design, VAS Casting Panel Discussion

Calendar: Continue Casting – Must be fully cast by 5/05 (ALL)

**Assignments due 4/28:** Shooting Schedules & Budgets (ALL)

**Read:** Proferes/Medina - Chapter 5

**Class 5            4/28 - Cinespace**

**Due: (6) Shooting Schedules & Budgets**

Lecture/Workshop: Working with actors  
Calendar: Continue Casting – Must be cast by next week

**Assignments due 5/05:** Casting Presentation (ALL); Aesthetic/Visual Plan (ALL); Scene Dramatic Block Breakdowns (ALL); Shot lists/Overheads (GROUP 1)

**Read:** Proferes/Medina - Chapter 10

**Class 6            5/05 - Cinespace**

**Due: (7) Casting Presentations (ALL); (8) Aesthetic/Visual Plan (ALL); (9) Scene Dramatic Block Breakdown (ALL); (10) Shot Lists/Overheads (GROUP 1)**

Lecture: Ready to shoot?  
Workshop: Present cast to class  
Calendar: GROUP 1 SHOOTS THIS WEEK

**Assignments due 5/12:** Shot lists/Overheads (GROUP 2); Bring in raw or edited footage (GROUP 1)

**Read:** Proferes/Medina - Chapter 11

**Class 7            5/12 - Cinespace**

**Due: (10) Shot lists/Overheads (GROUP 2); Bring in raw or edited footage (GROUP 1)**

Workshop: Raw/Edited Footage (GROUP 1)  
Calendar: GROUP 2 SHOOTS THIS WEEK, GROUP 1 EDITING

**Assignments due 5/19:** Shot lists/Overheads (GROUP 3); Bring in raw or edited footage (GROUP 2);  
*Watch Mipso in Japan*

**Read:** Proferes/Medina - Chapter 12

**Class 8            5/19 - Cinespace**

**Due: (10) Shot lists/Overheads (GROUP 3); Bring in raw or edited footage (GROUP 2)**

Lecture: Working with an editor  
Workshop: Raw/Edited Footage (GROUP 2)  
Calendar: GROUP 3 SHOOTS THIS WEEK; GROUPS 1 and 2 EDITING

**Assignments due 5/26:** Bring in raw or edited footage (GROUP 3); Bring in polished rough cut (GROUP 1)

**Read:** N/A

**Class 9      5/26 - Cinespace**

**Due: Bring in raw or edited footage (GROUP 3); (11) Bring in polished rough cut (GROUP 1)**

Lecture: Class Choice

Workshop: Raw/Edited Footage (GROUP 3); Screen Polished Rough Cuts (GROUP 1)

Calendar: GROUPS 2 and 3 EDITING; GROUP 1 FINE CUTS AND SOUND

**Assignments due 6/02:** Bring in polished rough cut (GROUP 2); Watch VAS on Film Festivals

**Read:** N/A

**Class 10      6/02 - Cinespace**

**Due: (11) Bring in polished rough cut (GROUP 2)**

Lecture/Discussion: Class Choice; VAS on Film Festivals

Workshop: Screen Polished Rough Cuts (GROUP 2)

Calendar: GROUP 3 EDITING; GROUPS 1 and 2 FINE CUTS AND SOUND

**Assignments due 6/09:** Bring in polished rough cut (GROUP 3); Submit a document outlining what you plan to do to complete your films, be detailed as this can impact your grade on your final project.  
(ALL)

**Read:** Proferes/Medina - Chapter 19

**Week 11      6/09 FINALS WEEK**

**Due: (11) Bring in polished rough cut (GROUP 3); (12) Document uploaded outlining what you will do to complete your films (ALL)**

Workshop: Screen Polished Rough Cuts (GROUP 3)

Calendar: GROUPS 1, 2, and 3 FINE CUTS AND SOUND

Attendance to the final exam period is mandatory.

**Assignment for Commencement/Summer Vacation:** Celebrate!

# ACADEMIC POLICIES

## 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.

## COVID-19 HEALTH AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Keeping our DePaul community safe is of utmost importance in the pandemic. Students, faculty and staff are expected to (1) wear a mask as required at all times while indoors on campus; (2) refrain from eating and drinking in classrooms; (3) keep current with their COVID-19 vaccinations or exemptions; (4) stay home if sick; (5) participate in any required COVID-19 testing; (6) complete the online Health and Safety Guidelines for Returning to Campus training; and (7) abide by the City of Chicago Emergency Travel Advisory. By doing these things, we are Taking Care of DePaul, Together. The recommendations may change as local, state, and federal guidelines evolve. Students who do not abide by the mask requirement may be subject to the student conduct process and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office. Students who have a medical reason for not complying with any requirements should register with DePaul's Center for Student with Disabilities (CSD).

## RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT DEPAUL UNIVERSITY AS ALIGNED WITH OUR VINCENTIAN VALUES

At DePaul, our mission calls us to explore “what must be done” in order to respect the inherent dignity and identity of each human person. We value diversity because it is part of our history, our traditions and our future. We see diversity as an asset and a strength that adds to the richness of classroom learning. In my course, I strive to include diverse authors, perspectives and teaching pedagogies. I also encourage open dialogue and spaces for students to express their unique identities and perspectives. I am open to having difficult conversations and I will strive to create an inclusive classroom that values all perspectives. If at any time, the classroom experience does not live up to this expectation, please feel free to contact me via email or during office hours.

## 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. Please see <https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/Pages/online-teaching-evaluations.aspx> for additional information.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. All students are expected to abide by the University's Academic Integrity Policy which prohibits cheating and other misconduct in student coursework. Publicly sharing or posting online any prior or current materials from this course (including exam questions or answers), is considered to be providing unauthorized assistance prohibited by the policy. Both students who share/post and students who access or use such materials are considered to be cheating under the Policy and will be subject to sanctions for violations of Academic Integrity.

More information can be found at <https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/academic-integrity/Pages/default.aspx>.

Posting work on online sites, such as Hero

All students are expected to abide by the University's Academic Integrity Policy which prohibits cheating and other misconduct in student coursework. Publicly sharing or posting online any prior or current materials from this course (including exam questions or answers), is considered to be providing unauthorized assistance prohibited by the policy. Both students who share/post and students who access or use such materials are considered to be cheating under the Policy and will be subject to sanctions for violations of Academic Integrity.

**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>

**INCOMPLETE GRADES**

An incomplete grade is a special, temporary grade that may be assigned by an instructor when unforeseeable circumstances prevent a student from completing course requirements by the end of the term and when otherwise the student had a record of satisfactory progress in the course. All incomplete requests must be approved by the instructor of the course and a CDM Associate Dean. Only exceptions cases will receive such approval. Information about the Incomplete Grades policy can be found at

<http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Grading-Policies.aspx>

**PREFERRED NAME & 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>

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling them to access accommodations and support services to assist with their success. There are two office locations:

- Loop Campus (312) 362-8002
- Lincoln Park Campus (773) 325-1677
- Email: [csd@depaul.edu](mailto:csd@depaul.edu)

Students who register with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact Dr. Gregory Moorhead, Director of the Center, privately to discuss how he may assist in facilitating the accommodations to be used in a course. This is best done early in the term. The conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible. Please see <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx> for Services and Contact Information.

**ONLINE OFFICE HOURS**

For the current quarter, I will be conducting online office hours. If for some reason, my hours do not work with your own, please reach out to schedule a different time that can work for both of us.