

## **FILM 280: Introduction to Directing**

Autumn 2023

Class Time: Thursdays 1:30pm-4:45pm

Location: 14 E. Jackson, Room 214

Instructor: Jimmy Boratyn

Office Hours: Online on Wednesdays 12:30pm-5pm or

by apt. Email: [jboratyn@depaul.edu](mailto:jboratyn@depaul.edu)

### **UNIVERSITY**

- DePaul will continue to update [their COVID-19 Updates and Guidance page](#). Please visit the [Health and Safety Practices page](#) for the most current mandatory protocols.

### **CDM**

- For more specific questions about CDM, check out this page for current info: [CDM Student Frequently Asked Questions](#).

### **Course Description:**

- This course is an introduction to directing for the screen. Topics include casting, script analysis, working with actors, and pre-visualization. Each student will direct and produce a short scene study. This course is NOT intended for students majoring in the BFA Film and Television Directing Concentration.

### **Learning Outcomes:** After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify subtext, themes, and intentions of a script.
- Analyze a story for its individual moments and the beats that build its arc.
- Understand and execute the casting process.
- Communicate effectively with actors.
- Prepare and carry out rehearsals.
- Execute pre-visualization of scenes through shot lists, storyboards, and floor plans.
- Learn the relationship between camera and performance.

### **Suggested Reading:**

- Anything and everything. Reading will help you think outside yourself, develop empathy, and increase your imagination. Read anything you enjoy and challenge yourself. Read comic books. Read newspapers. Read and build strong stories.
- Weston, Judith. Directing Actors: 25th Edition. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions, 2021. ISBN-10: 1615933212
- Mamet, David On Directing Film, Penguin Books 1992. ISBN-10: 0140127224

### **Casting Resources**

- All casting release and agreement forms are available in the [Forms Library](#).

- **SAG-AFTRA**
  - Students can cast SAG-AFTRA actors via the union's student film agreement. Union actors are subject to certain restrictions, however, so please contact the Production Office first at [production@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:production@cdm.depaul.edu) for more information.
- **Casting Sessions**
  - The staff of the Production Office records SCA's casting sessions in which dozens of professional actors who have expressed interest in appearing in DePaul student productions audition in a single day.
- **Hiring Actors from The Theatre School at DePaul**
  - The Production Office is the contact for hiring Theatre School student actors. Only certain Theatre School students are eligible to participate in DePaul student films. To contact Theatre School actors for an audition, send a casting notice to the Production Office at [production@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:production@cdm.depaul.edu)
- **Backstage/Breakdown Express/Actors Access**
  - 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.

## Supplies

- **REQUIRED:**
  - 1 External Hard drive (500 GB minimum)
  - 1 USB flashdrive for project backups and submissions (8 GB)
  - Grip Gloves
- **Suggested:**
  - Audio- Closed Back Headphones (no earbuds)
  - G&E- Multi-tool, Flashlight, Gaff Tape, Black Wrap, Gels, Diffusion
  - Camera- Lens Tissue, Lens Fluid, Lens Cloth, Lens Blower Bulb, Allen Wrench tool, Paper Tape, Sharpie, MEMORY CARDS (CF & SD)

## Hardware/Software

- Still and Video Camera, Audio Recording Equipment: Gear is available for checkout from the CDM Equipment Center, Cinespace Stage, and Camera Vault.
- 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. This course will require you to use a non-linear editing system to edit several of your assignments.
  - Information on labs, rooms, production equipment, rules, and guidelines can be found at the [CDM Production Resources website](#).

### **Additional Costs**

- Producing digital content is rarely a cheap endeavor. Such costs will potentially include items for art direction (costumes, make-up, set decoration), production (gaff tape, black wrap, camera media), post-production (primary external hard drives and a back-up) and general necessities (transportation costs and craft services). As a general guideline for all films that you make, your project budgets should always include a 10% contingency fee to help account for cost overruns.

### **D2L:**

- The course materials for this course, such as syllabus, announcements, course documents, and assignments will be available to you through D2L site at <https://d2l.depaul.edu/>. Please make sure to have access to D2L. You should be able to log into with your Campus Connect credentials.

### **Additional Website Content**

- Netflix
- Hulu
- Vimeo
- YouTube
- Short of the Week

### **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.
- Fandor: An informing source for video essays.
- No Film School: In-depth video essays and articles on all kinds of topics.
- [LinkedinLearning](#): A useful collection of video tutorials for learning various software programs. All DePaul students have free access to LinkedInLearning. It is available at the library and by (free) subscription. It is highly recommended that you watch the essential training on Adobe.

### **CHANGES TO THE SYLLABUS**

- This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. Depending on many variables outside of our control, the assignments projected for the term may require alteration or rescheduling. If a change occurs, it will be posted under Announcements in D2L. Please ensure that campus connect and D2L have your correct email address. Also, make sure you are receiving all notifications via D2L

#### Grading:

- Assignment 1: Casting and Location 10 points
- Assignment 2: Scene 1 Script 5 points
- Assignment 3: Scene 1 & Scene 2 Script 10 points
- Assignment 4: Scene 2 & Scene 3 Script 10 points
- Assignment 5: Scene 3 & Scene 4 Script 10 points
- Assignment 6: Scene 4 5 points
- Final: Scene 5 Script and Film 20 points
- Participation 20 points
- Attendance 10 points
- **Total 100 points**

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 Schedule and Course Outline:

- WEEK 1 (9/7)
  - Introductions and Course Expectations. Group Assignments.
- WEEK 2 (9/14)
  - Lecture: Casting and Locations
    - HW Assignment 1: Casting and Locations Presentation
- WEEK 3 (9/21)
  - Lecture: Breaking Down Scripts (Beats, blocking, and more)
    - **DUE Assignment 1 - Casting and Locations Presentation**
    - HW: Assignment 2 - Scene 1 Script and Production Plan
- WEEK 4 (9/28)
  - Lecture: Working with Actors
    - **DUE: Assignment 2 - Scene 1 Script and Production Plan**
    - HW: Assignment 3: Shoot Scene 1 and Scene 2 Script and Production Plan
- WEEK 5 (10/5)
  - Watch Scene 1 and Breakdown Scene 2 Script and Production
    - **Due: Assignment 3 - Scene 1 and Scene 2 Script and Production Plan**
  - HW: Assignment 4 - Shoot Scene 2 and Scene 3 Script and Production Plan
- WEEK 6 (10/12)
  - Watch Scene 2 and Breakdown Scene 3 Script and Production
    - **Due: Assignment 4 - Scene 2 and Scene 3 Script and Production Plan**
    - Assignment 5 - Shoot Scene 3 and Scene 4 Script and Production Plan

- WEEK 7 (10/19)
  - Watch Scene 3 and Breakdown Scene 4 Script and Production Plan
    - **Due: Assignment 5 - Scene 3 and Scene 4 Script and Production Plan**
    - Assignment 6 - Scene 4 & Begin Writing Scene 5 (Final Scene)
- WEEK 8 (10/26)
  - Watch Scene 4
    - **Due: Assignment 6 - Scene 4**
    - HW: Final – Scene 5 Script and Scene 5
- WEEK 9 (11/2)
  - Scene 5 Table Reads, Breakdown Scene 5 Script, and Production Plan
    - **Due: Scene 5 Script and Production Plan**
    - HW: FINAL – Scene 5
- WEEK 10 (11/9)
  - Scene 5 Rough Cuts/Revised Scripts
    - **Due: Scene 5 Rough Cut or Revised Script**
    - HW: FINAL – Scene 5
- WEEK 11 – FINAL WEEK (11/16) **11:30am-1:45pm**
  - **DUE: Scene 5**
    - Attendance at the final class is mandatory – NO EXCEPTIONS

#### **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 instance 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.

#### **Student responsibilities and the Syllabus:**

- Each student is responsible for their time management and for meeting 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.

**Reading and Screening Assignments:**

- “The man who does not read has no advantage over the man who cannot read.” – Mark Twain

**Statement on Challenging Material:**

- Learning is uncomfortable. We will screen films that experiment with perception and may include disruptive sounds, flashing lights, or images/speech of a violent, sexually explicit, or politically charged nature. This is an inclusive environment, which means you may be exposed to identities that may affirm or undermine your own. This is a chance for growth. Film can be transformative and cathartic. However, it can also bring up past trauma. We will discuss these topics courageously, respectfully, and honestly as equals. If you ever need to step out, due to something that happens externally or internally at class, go ahead, but you will be expected to take responsibility for missed work and schedule a time to propose an alternative way to engage with the course material.

**Attendance:**

- This course is demanding, both in terms of creativity and collaboration. Absences are an impediment to the artistic results of those demands. Given the uncertain nature of the world we currently find ourselves in, however, I have no intention of making your life any more challenging with an unforgiving or punitive attendance policy. With most creative efforts, however, you get out what you put in— the same can be said of this course.

**Group Evaluations:**

- Most of the assignments in this class will require you to work in a team. At the end of each assignment, 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 the assignment; if evaluations are negative, questions will be asked and the grades of the group member(s) in question may be docked. These evaluations will be HEAVILY factored into your final grades.

**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, Social Media, Email, Chatting:**

- Please do your best to avoid electronic distractions in class. If it becomes an issue, you will be asked to leave and considered absent. If you must use a cell phone or electronic device for any reason, please leave the classroom.

**Email Policy:**

- Please type **FILM 285 Directing** in the subject of all e-mails to the instructor about this class to ensure that they are responded in a timely fashion.

**Assignment & Project Labeling/Format Policy:**

- Please label all assignments as GROUP#\_ASSIGNMENT. For example, I would label the Assignment 3 as: GROUP\_4\_ASSIGNMENT\_3.mov.

**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. In case of internet issues, you should also bring an .h264 video file of your assignment to class.
- 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.

**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 to Production and Set Safety Training: Students who have not shot at Cinespace before MUST complete the Cinespace Orientation to Production and Set Safety Training (O.P.S.S.) before being allowed to do so. The three O.P.S.S. Modules and Quizzes are available in SCA Central here. Students must watch each Module video and score 100% on the accompanying quiz to pass the O.P.S.S. training. Please complete this by our 2nd class meeting.

**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.

**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).

**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.

**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.

**Respect for Diversity and Inclusion:**

- Respect for Diversity and Inclusion at DePaul University is 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 creators, 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.

**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.



**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.

**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 [here](#)

**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 this [website for Services and Contact Information](#).