

DC 210-604 Digital Cinema Production 1  
Spring 2016/17  
Wednesdays 8:30 AM - 11:45 AM  
Cinespace Studios

**Instructor: Josh Wolff**

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**Office: Cinespace Studios**

**Office Hours: T,W 12:00pm - 1:30pm**

### **Summary of the Course**

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:** DC 220 Editing 1 – editing software is not taught in DC 210

### **Learning Outcomes**

Students will be able to:

- Describe the roles, responsibilities, and hierarchy of a working film production.
- Explain the language of film and video.
- Employ basic shooting and editing techniques to express a story visually.
- Create a finished short film using video cameras, lights, sound equipment, and non-linear editing programs.

### **Textbooks and Readings**

*On Directing Film* David Mamet

*The Filmmaker's Handbook* Ascher and Pincus

Additional assigned readings provided by the instructor.

### **COURSE MATERIALS TO BE OBTAINED BY THE STUDENT:**

A portable Firewire, USB 3, or Thunderbolt drive for editing.

### **SOFTWARE NEEDED TO COMPLETE ASSIGNMENTS:**

- Word Processing Program for written assignments.

- Computer/reliable internet access and D2L.
- Editing software, Premiere preferred, either at home or in a lab at school to edit assignments.

## **GRADING**

Grades 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.

**Late work will not be accepted.**

## **GRADE BREAKDOWN:**

Attendance and Active Participation (in-class and group work) 20%

Frame It - Still Photo (Individual) 10%

Group Lighting Assignment 10%

Documentary 15%

48-Hour Midterm 15%

Casting Video 5%

Pre-Production Packet Final Narrative Project 5%

Final Narrative Project 20%

## **GROUP EVALUATIONS:**

Most of the assignments in this class will require you to work in a team. Group/Self evaluations are due at the time of the final screening of each project. These evaluations will be **HEAVILY** factored into your grade for attendance and participation.

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.

## **STANDARDS FOR ACHIEVEMENT:**

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.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES** – 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.

**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.**

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:** Must be typed.

**DIGITAL ASSIGNMENTS:** All assignments handed in digitally must have a slate with your name and title of assignment.

**SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:** If you have any special considerations please see the instructor.

**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.

**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 can 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 15 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 can automatically fail.

**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** – 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.

**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.

**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. Students contacting the instructor after the final presentation will not be allowed to make-up the points for any reason.

**CLASS DISCUSSION** – 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 reading assignments. Students must keep up with the reading to participate in class discussion.

**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](mailto:csd@depaul.edu).

Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.

Phone number: (312)362-8002

Fax: (312)362-6544 TTY: (773)325.7296

## **Week by Week Outline**

### **Week 1 3/29**

#### **In-Class:**

- Introduction to students, syllabus & course goals
- Safety Training

- The filmmaking process
- Core Production Roles
- Shot selection (shot sizes, angles)
- Storyboards and pre-visualization

**Assignment:**

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

**Read for next class:**

- Ascher & Pincus Chapter 1, 2
- Crew Position Handout

**Week 2 4/5**

**DUE:**

- “Frame it” still exercise

**In-Class:**

- Camera functions (Set-up, White Balance, Focus, Iris, Depth of Field)
- 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
  - Three-Point Lighting set ups
- Bring Gloves
- Hands-on Camera and Lighting

**Assignment:**

- Group Lighting Project - Due Week 3

**Read:**

- Ascher & Pincus Chapters 3, 4, 9, 12, 14

**Week 3 4/12**

**DUE:**

- Group Lighting Project

**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.

**Assignment:**

- The Documentary - Due Week 4
- Start brainstorming ideas for Narrative Project

**Read:**

- Ascher & Pincus Chapters 10, 11, 13, 15

**Week 4 4/19**

**DUE:**

- Documentary Project

**In-Class:**

- Screen Documentaries
- Directing: Casting, Working with Actors, Rehearsals
- In Class Demo: Breakdown Express
- Discuss Final Narrative Project and Select Groups
- In-Class Lighting Workshop \* Subject to change

**Assignment:**

- Final Narrative Film Treatment & Pitch - Due Week 5

**Week 5 4/26**

**DUE:**

- Final Narrative Film Treatment & Pitch

**In-Class:**

- Pitch Final Films
- Writing the Short Screenplay, Formatting, Tips, etc.
- The Short Film
- Pre-Production Meetings w/ Groups & Work on Scripts
- In-Class Production Workshop \*Subject to change

**Assignment:**

- Final Narrative Film Script Draft I - Due Week 6

**Read:**



- Mamet Chapters 1, 2

### **Week 6 5/3**

#### **DUE:**

- Final Narrative Film Script Draft I

#### **In-Class:**

- Review
- Feedback on Draft I Scripts
- Mamet
- Post-Production Workflow
- Pre-Production Meetings with Groups and work on Scripts

#### **Assignment:**

- Final Narrative Film Scripts Draft II - Due Week 7

**\*FRIDAY 5/5 @ 2pm MIDTERM 48 Hour Film Project Assigned - DUE 2pm SUNDAY 5/7\***

### **Week 7 5/10**

#### **DUE:**

- Final Narrative Film Scripts Draft II

#### **In-Class:**

- Screen Midterm Projects
- Group work on Pre-Production Packet
- In-Class Production Workshop

#### **Assignment:**

- Pre-Production Packets Final Narrative Film - Due week 9
- Casting Session Videos - Due Week 9

### **Week 8 5/17**

#### **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 - Due Week 9

- Pre-Production Packets Final Narrative Film - Due week 9

### **Week 9 5/24**

#### **DUE:**

- Casting Session Videos
- Pre-Production Packets 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 5/31**

#### **DUE:**

- Rough Cut of Final Film

#### **In-Class:**

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

#### **Assignment:**

- Fine Cut of Final Film - Due Finals Week 11

### **Week 11 6/7 8:30am - 10:45am**

#### **DUE:**

- FINE CUT FOR FINAL NARRATIVE FILM

#### **In-Class:**

- Screen and Critique Fine Cut of Final Films

**\*\*ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY.** Missing final class will result in a grade of “F” on Narrative Project.