

FILM 170-701
The Art of Production Design

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| Instructor | Kaitlin Creadon | Email | kcreadon@depaul.edu |
| Classroom | Levan Center Room 305 | Class Time | Th 6:00-9:15 PM |
| Office Hours | Loop: CDM 632A T/Th 9-10 AM, 12-1:15 PM Lincoln Park: Student Center 332 Th 3:45-5:45 PM | | |

Summary of Course

This introductory course explores production design and art direction as a narrative art form in cinema. It examines the collaborative relationship between the director, production designer, and cinematographer. Using films, readings, screenplays, lectures, research, and discussion, students will study the fundamentals of a production designer's approach towards visualizing and conceptualizing story. Students will also gain a historical perspective of how the role of production design has evolved and how advances in technology have influenced the various crafts.

Textbook and Required Materials

Recommended Physical Book:

[The Filmmaker's Guide to Production Design](#) by Vincent LoBrutto (ISBN: 978-1581152241)

Paper and pen for writing during lecture and film screenings

Other reading assignments will be made available through D2L

Course and Learning Objectives

This course is designed to help you learn about the history of production design and the evolution to what is seen today, as well as gain confidence in understanding the role of production design in film. By the end of the class, students will be able to:

- Explain in well-written prose the role of production design and how it helps convey story in cinema.
- Articulate and explain the various trades, craftspeople, and positions that work within the production design to achieve that end.
- Identify historical and technological landmark achievements in the field.
- Develop interpretations for the aesthetics concerning production design and the affiliated crafts.
- Contextualize and evaluate various films and visual media.
 - Contextualize a work of art in terms of contemporary aesthetic, social, or political concerns, discussing how these might shape the work's reception and how that might differ amongst various peoples and historical periods.

Course Breakdown

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|------------------------------|-------------|
| Attendance | 10% |
| Discussion and Participation | 20% |
| Analysis Papers (2) | 20% |
| Midterm Quiz | 10% |
| Script Breakdown | 10% |
| Mood Board Presentation | 30% |
| Total | 100% |

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All grading is final. During the course, late work loses 10% after the assigned due date. If not turned in by the start of class the following week, the maximum points possible drops to 50%. Final assignment will not be accepted late.

An expanded description of each follows:

Attendance and Class Participation— Class attendance is mandatory. Most of class time will be spent viewing and discussing films and assigned readings. Contribution is a key component to the success of the class. Points will be taken off for absences and lack of contribution to the class. There are ten classes (the final is week 11), and you are expected to both show up and be participatory. Each class is worth one attendance and two discussion/participation points.

Furthermore, students will be expected to demonstrate comprehension of the reading assignments. Students must keep up with the reading to participate in class discussion.

Analysis Papers – Students will be assigned two analysis papers (approx. 4 pages in length).

Midterm— The Midterm Quiz for this course will reflect a comprehension of reading assignments, class discussions, and viewed materials.

Script Breakdown and Mood Board Presentation—Students are required to find an original script, no more than 20 pages in length. Create a full script breakdown focusing on the design and a mood board indicating the desired visual look for the short film (discussing color palette, art/architecture, props, wardrobe, etc.). There is a presentation at the end of the course, with each student getting 6-8 minutes to present.

Grading Scale

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 Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory for *all* class periods. Anyone who misses two classes will automatically drop a whole letter grade. A warning email will be sent at this time. Anyone who misses three or more classes will automatically fail. You get **one** excused absence with proper documentation and proof.

Each class consists of lectures, discussions, and screenings. The class is participatory and the instructor's material and concepts are presented during class meetings. Students are expected to attend each class and to remain for the duration. Coming 10 minutes late or leaving 10 minutes early constitutes an absence for the student. The overall grade for participation drops after any absence. Absence does not excuse deadlines. **If you have a foreseeable conflict, or you end up sick the day of, you need to contact me via email before the start of class so we can discuss options.** Make necessary arrangements to have the absence documented by the Dean of Students Office.

Tardiness

One true thing in all professional fields is the lack of tolerance for tardiness. Employers do not generally tolerate such behavior, and employees who offer weak, irritating excuses frequently find themselves unemployed and unemployable. We will be working under the same rules.

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Remember it is your responsibility to make the arrangements when a deadline or a class has to be missed. I will treat you professionally, expecting of you a responsible attitude. This means that it is you who must be worried about solving the problem, not me.

Respect in the Classroom

- Do not use your phone. If you use your phone in class, you will be considered absent. Step outside if it's important.
- Do not sleep. If you sleep for more than 10 minutes you will be considered absent.
- Please be respectful of everyone's opinions, tastes, and beliefs.
 - We do not have to agree on everything, but we should be able to discuss anything civilly.
- Please respect the films we'll watch, several of which will have mature themes and situations.
 - During screenings, do not talk. Keep all comments/observations to yourself until the end.

Email

Email is the primary means of communication between faculty and students enrolled in this course outside of class time. Students should make sure their email listed under "demographic information" at <http://campusconnect.depaul.edu> is correct. Some guidelines for your emails:

- Be clear and concise in your subject line; ex: "FILM 170-701 – Topic".
- Don't reply to class-wide email unless it pertains specifically to the subject of that email.
- Begin a new email thread for any new question, notification, etc.
- 24 hour maximum response time during the week, 48 on weekends.

Course Online - D2L

You must use D2L to submit all assignments. Access to the site at <https://d2l.depaul.edu/> using your Campus Connect login and password. Course documents, updates to the course, lecture slides, important information, and other news will be posted there. Be sure to check D2L regularly.

Use of Technology

Cell phones and computers are NOT allowed during class. Pen and paper are highly recommended for taking notes. Phones must be kept silent. Any type of screen-use during in-class film viewings, for any duration, **will** affect your participation grade. You wouldn't use it in a movie theater, so don't do it here. They're a distraction to everyone, including yourself.

The Writing Center

I strongly encourage all students to make use of the University Center for Writing-Based Learning. It is a free service provided by the University that will help ensure your assignments are of the highest quality. To learn more about the services they offer, visit their website:

<https://condor.dpu.depaul.edu/writing/index.html>

I also highly recommend downloading *Grammarly Free Assistant* onto your computer. Points **will** be taken off of writing assignments for 3 or more grammar and spelling issues.

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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 in D2L and sent via email.

Academic Integrity This course will be subject to the faculty council rules on the Academic Integrity Policy which can be viewed at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>.

Online Instructor Evaluation

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.

Plagiarism

The university and school policy on plagiarism can be summarized as follows: Students in this course, as well as all other courses in which independent research or writing play a vital part in the course requirements, should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report, or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials be sure to consult the instructor.

Ethics

Although your grade does not contain an ethics component like some other courses, I require complete honesty in producing your work. Plagiarism is useless to you anyway. By having someone else do the work for you, you are missing an opportunity to immerse yourself in the film industry. You are also waiving your right to learn. If you are willing to do that, then you have to evaluate if it's worth the aggravation and the time you invest in this course.

By accepting this syllabus, you are indicating that you understand the seriousness of academic dishonesty and realize I will impose the harshest sanctions possible if I can prove you have engaged in such behavior. You are also indicating that you understand what constitutes academic dishonesty; I will not tolerate an excuse that claims the student did not know he/she was engaging in academic dishonesty.

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Resources for Students with Disabilities

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist your success. <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx>

There are two office locations:

Loop Campus – Lewis Center #1420 – (312) 362-8002

Lincoln Park Campus – Student Center #370 – (773) 325-1677

Students who are registered with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact me privately to discuss how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will use in this course. This is best done early in the term. Our conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible.

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| CLASS | TOPIC | SCREENING | READING DUE FOR FOLLOWING WEEK | HOMEWORK DUE ON THIS DATE |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| <u>Class One</u> 9/12/19 | Introductions and Syllabus Introduction to Art Design and Its History | | -Introduction -Chapter 1 -Chapter 2 -Glossary | |
| <u>Class Two</u> 9/19/19 | Art and Architecture | <i>Wall Street</i> Designer: Stephen Hendrickson | -Chapter 3 -Chapter 4 -Chapter 5 -Chapter 9 | <i>Choose What We Watch</i> Survey on D2L Closes at 10 PM |
| <u>Class Three</u> 9/26/19 | Film Noir Costume Design | <i>To Catch a Thief</i> Designer: Joseph McMillan Johnson | -Chapter 6 -Chapter 8 | |
| <u>Class Four</u> 10/3/19 | Action and Adventure Importance of Props Importance of Texture | <i>The Goonies</i> Designer: J. Michael Riva | | |
| <u>Class Five</u> 10/10/19 | The Epic, the Blockbuster, and Science Fiction | Survey Winner: | -Chapter 10 -Chapter 11 -Chapter 12 -Chapter 16 | Paper #1 Due to D2L at 11 PM |
| <u>Class Six</u> 10/17/19 | Drama/Suspense | <i>Passengers</i> Designer: Guy Hendrix Dyas | -Chapter 7 -How to Use Color in Film (D2L) | Midterm Quiz on D2L Opens at 9:15 PM Closes on 10/20 at 9 PM |
| <u>Class Seven</u> 10/24/19 | The Importance of Color in Film | <i>Crazy Rich Asians</i> Designer: Nelson Coates | | |
| <u>Class Eight</u> 10/31/19 | Music Videos and Television | Survey Winners: | -Chapter 13 -Chapter 14 -Chapter 15 -Chapter 16 | |
| <u>Class Nine</u> 11/7/19 | Low Budget and Indie Filmmaking | <i>The Mustang</i> Designer: Carlos Conti | | |
| <u>Class Ten</u> 11/14/19 | Figuring Out Your Vision: Steps to Becoming a Production Designer | <i>Something's Gonna Live</i> Designers: Robert Boyle, Henry Bumstead, Albert Nozaki | | |
| <u>Class Eleven</u> 11/21/19 | Mood Board Presentations | Must be present 6:00-9:15pm | | Script Breakdown and Mood Board Due to D2L by 5:00 PM |
| 5:00 PM 11/23/19 | | | | Paper #2 to D2L Extra Credit to D2L |