

FILM 285 Directing I
Winter Quarter 2020
Thursdays 1:30 – 4:45
CDM 924

Professor: Shayna Connelly
Email: sconnelly@cdm.depaul.edu
Phone: 312-362-8907

Office: CDM 504 or Cinespace
Office Hours: W 12:30 – 1:15, 4:30 – 5:15
R 12:30 – 1:15, 4:45 - 5:30

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is an introductory course in directing actors in motion pictures. It relates script analysis to casting, rehearsals, the basic relationship between the director, actor, and script, script breakdown, camera placement, and shooting for editing.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This directing course challenges students to experiment with a variety of tools to become more effective communicators. Students will learn about director's preparation in relation to casting, rehearsing and how technical choices contribute to performance. Effective directing shapes how techniques such as cinematography, production design, lighting, sound and editing are used within a film to create a cohesive director's vision.

Prerequisites: Production II

LEARNING GOALS:

By taking this course, students will:

- learn how to do a script analysis and beat breakdown;
- identify the spine, objective, obstacle and subtext of a scene;
- understand the importance of casting as 'the first direction';
- communicate effectively with actors;
- prepare for and carry out rehearsals;
- understand the relationship between camera and performance.

TEXTBOOKS AND TOOLS:

Directing Actors Judith Weston
"EF's Visit To a Small Planet" (essay on d2l)
Various screenplays to choose from on d2l
Dedicated director's notebook

RECOMMENDED READING:

How to Read a Play: Script Analysis for Directors Damon Kiely

* Professor Damon Kiely teaches in The Theater School. Many of the exercises you will be doing are adapted from this book.

CASTING RESOURCES

Breakdown Express - This is an interactive on-line casting tool that enables you to send out a casting notice to regional Chicagoland actors and set up/manage audition appointments on-line. See the production office staff for help setting this up.

Production Office – 14 East Jackson Blvd., Lower Level 108

Monday – Friday: 10 am - 3 pm

production@cdm.depaul.edu

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

GRADING

Grades will be given for each assignment. Late work will not be accepted for grading. An assignment worth 10 points (10%) is equal to one full letter grade. In my experience, students who neglect to turn in even one assignment have difficulty passing the class.

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

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|--|-----|
| Weekly Analysis and Preparation Assignments | 80% |
| Final Scene Performance on Camera | 10% |
| In-class Exercises, Preparation and Attendance | 10% |

It is impossible to pass the course unless the Final Scene Performance on Camera is turned in on time, regardless of previous points earned.

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.

IMPORTANT DATES:

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 1/10 @11:59 | Last date to add classes |
| 1/17 @11:59 | Last date to drop classes without penalty |
| 2/21 @11:59 | Last day to withdraw from classes |

SYLLABUS**WEEK 1****Choose a screenplay to analyze and direct from the d2l examples****1/9** Introduction to Directing**Assignment:** Buy a dedicated director's notebook, First Read and General Beauty**Read:** Screenplay choice & "EF's Visit To a Small Planet" (d2l)**WEEK 2****1/16** Preparation: Given Circumstances.**Assignment:** Given Circumstances/Choose a scene to direct**Read:** Weston, Chapters 1 & 2**Due @ 11:59 pm:** Screenplay choice, First Read and General Beauty**WEEK 3****Assign casting session roles****1/23** World, character and casting.**Assignment:** Diegesis and Map of Moments**Read:** Weston, Chapters 3 & 4**Due @ 11:59 pm:** Given Circumstances/Choose scene to direct**WEEK 4:****1/30** Preparation: Moments of Change. Beat breakdowns. Dialogue Scene Analysis.**Assignment:** Moments of Change, Scenic objectives, Scenic breakdown**Read:** Weston, Chapter 5 & 6**Due @ 11:59 pm:** Diegesis and Map of Moments**WEEK 5:********Bring sides and contact information for actors********2/6** In-class casting Session.**Assignment:** Character Bones, Suffering, Relationship Web**Read:** Weston, Chapter 7**Due @ 11:59 pm:** Moments of Change and Scenic objectives

WEEK 6:

FINALIZE ACTORS THIS WEEK – GO BEYOND OUR IN-CLASS SESSION

2/13 In-class storyboard exercises.

Assignment: Photo Roman Visualization Assignment

Read: Weston, Chapter 8

Due: Character Bones, Suffering, Relationship Web

WEEK 7:

Work on pre-production for final scenes

2/20 Rehearsal Strategies.

Assignment: Personal Connection

Read: Weston, Chapter 9

Due @ 11:59 pm: Photo Roman Visualization Assignment

WEEK 8:

Photo Roman due before class at 1:00 pm Content > Box Uploads for Photo Roman

2/27 View Photo Roman Assignments

Assignment: Preparation for in-class blocking exercise (due before next class)

Read: Weston, Chapter 10

Due @ 11:59 pm: Personal Connection

WEEK 9

DUE MONDAY MARCH 2ND @ 11:59 pm: Preparation for in-class blocking exercise

3/5 In-class blocking exercises

Assignment: Shoot Final Scene and in-class exercise reflection

WEEK 10

3/12 Directing on set. Directing crew. Editing and performance.

Assignment: Edit Final Scenes

Due @ 11:59 pm: In-class blocking exercise reflection

WEEK 11/ FINALS WEEK

*****Final Films due on d2l: content > box uploads for finals on 3/19 @ 11:59 pm*****

COURSE POLICIES:

In addition to the DePaul University course policies (see student handbook), the following policies apply to this course:

DESIRE TO LEARN – The course uses D2I to post notes and assignments. Please visit <https://d2i.depaul.edu> and use your campus connect ID to enter the site.

FAQ DISCUSSION BOARD – Please post any questions you have about assignments, the course, logistics, etc. on the FAQ discussion board. Students are required to subscribe to this board (see d2i for instructions).

HANDOUT & ASSIGNMENT COPIES – Handout and assignment copies are available on d2i.depaul.edu. Written assignments will be submitted to a dropbox on d2i.

FILE LABELING – All files (.mov, mp4, PDF or word) must be labeled last name_first name_assignment . Also be sure to write your name on the paper you turn in or include a credit/slate with your name on any movie files.

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

STUDENT CLASS PREPARATION – Students are required to bring paper and writing utensils to every class for note taking and in-class exercises. Students are expected to complete all assigned work listed on the syllabus.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES – Each student is responsible for being pro-active, managing their time well and meeting the expectations stated on the syllabus and checklists. The professor will not remind students of assignment deadlines. In the event of an absence it is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor for homework assignments. You are still responsible for getting the assignment details and turning it in on time.

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.

INTERNET ACCESS AND EMAIL – Students must have 24-hour internet access and are responsible for reading all communications from the professor via email, news items and discussion boards. Update your email address in campus connect and check your junkmail box regularly.

DEADLINES – 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. Deadlines are listed on the syllabus, assignment sheets and d2l. No emailed work will be accepted. Do not upload to d2l close to the deadline.

STALLING TACTICS – Submitting a blank document, incorrect document or corrupted document on d2l are understood as ways to buy more time for an assignment. If I cannot open your assignment, it is the same as not turning it in and it will receive zero credit.

ACCEPTED FORMATS – PDF and Word documents only. No JPEG, PNG or Pages files will be accepted. For film work .mov or .m4v files will be accepted. Test your exports on a Mac computer other than the one you created the project on before sending.

ATTENDANCE – Attendance and attention in class are mandatory. Any absence (missing more than 15 minutes of class time per session) will impact your grade. Each student is allowed ONE absence (equal to two tardies) before your grade is affected.

ILLNESS – 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 will be sent 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. Every situation will be handled according to individual circumstances and at the professor's discretion. All communication regarding illness and its impact on the class must be initiated by the student. Students with illnesses affecting more than 1 week of the quarter should contact the Dean of Students office to inquire about a medical withdrawal. **Absolutely no consideration will be given for those who request special treatment without advanced notice and active participation after the situation is passed.**

INCOMPLETES – No incompletes will be given.

EXTRA CREDIT – Independent study/extra credit projects will receive no points toward the final class grade. No aspect of the extra credit assignment may be used in place of a required class assignment.

COMPUTER/SMART PHONE USE – I can tell the difference between using your laptop to take notes and using it for other purposes. Turn off your phone during class.

PLAGIARISM – Plagiarism on assignments or cheating on exams are serious offenses. Students caught plagiarizing earn a failing grade and/or fail the course depending on the egregiousness of the infraction. All cases of plagiarism result in an Academic Integrity Violation. Students are expected to understand what constitutes original research and how to use proper citation methods. All papers are automatically run through anti-plagiarism software turnitin.com.

INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY – I am available during office hours, listed at the top of the syllabus and online. You may email me at any time. I check my email and d2l several times a day, however I do not keep student hours. If you need specific help with your

work, allow 24 hours notice for a reply. If you notice a problem on d2l (incorrect deadline, something locks before it should, etc.) or if you have a general question about an assignment or policy, post in the FAQ discussion board.

ADDRESSING THE PROFESSOR – Students call me Shayna (rhymes with Dana). The only time you should address me as ‘Professor Connelly’ is if you are writing an email to multiple professors and are using titles for all addressees.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES – Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact me 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 +1 (773) 325-1677, Student Center #370.

ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS – This course includes instructional content delivered via audio and video. If you have any concerns about your ability to access and/or understand this material in its default format, please notify me within the first week of the course so accommodations can be made.

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact me as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted:

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