

CTVA 342 - DIGITAL CINEMATOGRAPHY FOR TELEVISION AND FILM SYLLABUS FALL 2009

Instructor: Andrew Russo
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Office: The Stage

Class Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 7:00PM – 9:45PM
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:30PM – 7:00PM and by appointment

REQUIRED TEXT AND READING:

- 1) Cinematography: Image Making for Cinematographers, Directors, and Videographers by Blain Brown
- 2) The Visual Story, Second Edition: Creating the Visual Structure of Film, TV and Digital Media by Bruce Block
- 3) Various readings handed out in class

RECCOMENDED READING:

- 1) American Cinematographer Magazine
- 2) American Cinematographer Manual Ninth Edition
- 3) ICG Magazine

Course Objective

Like many art forms, cinematography is a rare mix of technical skill and aesthetic talent. The hope of this class is to teach students both the mechanical aspects and art of directing photography in the digital medium for television. Students will gain hands on experience working with cinema tools, while also gaining knowledge of the craft.

Lectures

These days will consist of lecturing, discussion, and training on equipment. Lectures are subject to change depending on guest lecturer's availability.

Lab 1

For the first half of the semester before the midterm, the class will be broken up into 4 shooting groups that consist of 5 people. The positions will rotate every week. There will be one cinematographer, one 1st AC, one gaffer, one key grip, and one person as the talent. Cinematographers are to bring in a DVD and replicate a scene from a movie/television show/commercial or any other programming.

Lab 2

The second half of the semester after the midterm will consist of paired shooting in class. Everyone will find a partner, and each week two pairs of partners will shoot an original scene on the stage. One person will operate the camera and head the camera department and the other will head the lighting department. This is a collaboration effort so choose your partner wisely. The following guidelines need to be adhered to:

- 1) You will write an original scene for television, music video, commercial, or short film. **You will need to get it approved by me.**
- 2) Scenes must be at least 2 pages.
- 3) There will be only one location.
- 4) There must be at least 2 different characters.

5) The final project must be edited together as one fluid piece. If you do not have editing software I advise you to find an outside editor to work with. I also recommend talking to the students that are editing in the other CSUN classes as they have final cut. NOTE: Quinn Saunders and I are talking about having his editing class cut your final projects. More to come on that later in the semester.

6) All projects must be handed in on DVD or mini DV. No other formats will be accepted.

Final Individual Project

To be completed under the following guidelines:

1) You will write an original script for a television/music video/ or short film. **You will need to get it approved by me.** The key here is original. Have fun with this, but it's also your final so make it look good.

2) Scripts must be between 3-5 pages and must have at least 2 and at most 4 different scenes.

3) There must be at least 2 different locations.

4) There must be at least 2 different characters in your scripts. Neither can be you.

5) The final project must be edited together as one fluid piece. If you do not have editing software I advise you to find an outside editor to work with. I also recommend talking to the students that are editing in the other CSUN classes as they have final cut. NOTE: Quinn Saunders and I are talking about having his editing class cut your final projects. More to come on that later in the semester.

6) You can complete the assignment whenever you want over the semester, but you will turn it in on the day specified on the syllabus or receive a failing grade on that assignment.

7) All projects must be handed in on DVD or mini DV. No other formats will be accepted.

I will not be evaluating you on actor's performance, the sound, or the directing. You will receive a grade based on your cinematography and how the story is told through the camera.

Grading

Like the entertainment business, there are hard deadlines. Students are given the schedule on the first day of class so they can deliver all assignments on time. There is no such thing as turning in a project late in this class. There will be a midterm examination (25%), two in class cinematography shoots (Lab 1=5% and Lab 2 =15% each), an Image book (20%), and one final individual project (30%). Attendance and participation in the class is mandatory (5%). No more than one unexcused absence will be tolerated or your final grade will be affected.

Semester Schedule

Week One:

Tuesday August 25th

Lecture: Introductions, Syllabus, Camera Movement (or lack thereof)

Thursday August 27th

Lecture: Lenses, depth of field, Exposure

Week Two:

Tuesday September 1st

Lab: Camera Equipment tutorial

Thursday September 3rd

Lecture: Digital cameras, progressive vs. interlaced, color temperature

Week Three:

Tuesday September 8th

Lab: Grip and Electric Equipment tutorial and power distribution

Thursday September 10th

Lab: Group 1 Shoots

Week Four:

Tuesday September 15th

Lecture: The Look: Getting the Vision on Screen, Pre-visualizing, Storyboarding, shot-listing, and telling the story

Thursday September 17th

Lab: Group 2 Shoots

Week Five:

Tuesday September 22nd

Lecture: Painting with Light: How the best people in the business make it happen.

Thursday September 24th

Lab: Group 3 Shoots

Week Six:

Tuesday September 29th

Lecture: Lighting for the single camera drama/ for the multi-camera comedy and how to cover a scene

Thursday October 1st

Lab: Group 4 Shoots

Week Seven:

Tuesday October 6th

Lecture: Lighting and camera for reality TV, documentary, and sit down interviews

Thursday October 8th

Lab: Group 5 Shoots

Week Eight:

Tuesday October 13th

Review/ Q&A Session for midterm

Thursday October 15th

MIDTERM EXAM

Week Nine:

Tuesday October 20th

Lecture: OFF DAY, NO CLASS

Thursday October 22nd

Lab: Pairs A shoots

Week Ten:

Tuesday October 27th

Lecture: Visual Expression lecture (Depth cues, Line, and Shape)

Thursday October 29th

Lab: Pairs B Shoots

Week Eleven:

Tuesday November 3rd

Lecture: Continue Visual Expression lecture (Color, movement)

Thursday November 5th

Lab: Pairs C Shoots

Week Twelve:

Tuesday November 10th

Lecture: MOLE RICHARDSON DAY (time TBA)

Thursday November 12th

Lab: Pairs D Shoots

Week Thirteen:

Tuesday November 17th

Lecture: Visual Expression (Shape, Color, Movement, Saturation)

Thursday November 19th

Lab: Pairs E Shoots

Week Fourteen:

Tuesday November 24th

Lecture: RED Camera demo, Post workflow, color correction, DI

IMAGE BOOKS DUE

Thursday November 26th

THANKSGIVING NO CLASS

Week Fifteen:

Tuesday December 1st

Lecture: Visual Expression lecture (Contrast and Affinity)

Thursday December 3rd

Lab: NO CLASS – Finish your final projects

Week Sixteen:

Tuesday December 8th

Lecture: **Group 1 & 2 FINAL PROJECTS DUE AND SCREENING**

Thursday December 10th

LAB: **Finish screening final projects**

ALL EQUIPMENT reserved for this class is to be used *only* for the completion of the class assignments. If equipment is used for *any* purpose other than this class, the student's equipment and editing privileges will be immediately revoked.

SAFETY: No open toed shoes will be allowed in the classroom PERIOD. If you show up with opened toed shoes you will be asked to leave and receive an unexcused absence for the day. Just wear shoes. Also, there will be no use of prop guns (with or without moving parts) unless authorized by me. Use of handguns in outside projects and in the classroom is dangerous and potentially fatal. Don't use them because there will be serious disciplinary repercussions.

OUTSIDE EQUIPMENT: I must authorize use of any specialty equipment and props. Jibs, hydraulic dollies, genies, fake knives, hospital equipment, and all other specialty items rented outside of the equipment center must go through me first.

PROFESSION BEHAVIOR is expected at all times in the course of work related to this class. Disruptive, unprofessional behavior in this class will not be tolerated. Inappropriate behavior will be dealt according to the university regulations and be referred to the Dean of Students.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: In conjunction with examinations, projects, and written assignments, it should be noted that severe penalties-including failure in the course and even expulsion from the University-might be applied for any infraction of accepted academic rules of honesty. Among other things, it is understood there shall be no sharing of information on any examination: there shall be no reference to any notes during any test (unless otherwise announced); and despite the collaborative nature of the class, individuals assigned to a position should be the one completing the task.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students with disabilities must register with the Center on Disabilities and complete a service agreement each semester. Staff within the Center will verify the existence of a disability based on the documentation provided and approve accommodations. Students who are approved for test taking accommodations must provide a proctor form to their faculty member signed by a counselor in the Center on Disabilities prior to making testing arrangements. The Center on Disabilities is located in Bayramian Hall, room 110. Staff can be reached at (818) 677-2684.