*School of Cinema-Television*

*CTPR 280: Structure of the Moving Image*

*Course Syllabus ( Fall 2010)*

**Instructor:**  Dr. Bob Miller

**Class Time:** Thursday 9:00 - 12:00

**Location:** Kurosawa Stage in the Zemeckis Building

**Office:** Room 424 SCA Building

**Office Hours:** Thursday 1:00PM - 3:00PM or by appointment

**Telephone:** 213-740-33313

**e-Mail**: [dr.rmiller@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dr.rmiller@sbcglobal.net)

**S.A.:** Nick Walker

**Rationale:**

When a writer uses language to tell stories, the written word becomes the vehicle for transmitting ideas, emotions, actions, settings and metaphorical meaning. To become a master of words demands an intense study of vocabulary, syntax, and craft wrapped in a blanket of creative imagination Cinema can also be considered a form of language with its own grammar. If the writer must be verbally literate, so too the filmmaker must be visually literate in order to use the medium effectively.

Imagination and creativity are best nurtured in an environment which fosters experimentation and this is illuminates the heart of CTPR 280. The class proposes to explore, in a practical and theoretical manner, the underlying principles of visual organization that give form and meaning to the moving image. What is the architecture of the moving image? Can individual shots be combined for emotional and intellectual significance? How have the conventions of film language evolved over time? What clues allow the audience to make sense of an infinitely shifting pattern of light, shade and color? How does one generate a rich three-dimensional space on a screen with only height and width? Is there a correlation between the elements of time, pacing, rhythm and dramatic impact?

These and other key issues of visual structure will form the spine of CTPR 280. The class grows out of a firm belief that theory and practice are equally essential to mastering the art of motion pictures. As such, the goal is not to develop technicians but to begin an educational process which will matriculate students with strong critical faculties, a wealth of ideas, and the skills requisite to express those ideas effectively through sound and image. Course content will focus on two distinct approaches. First, the course will present the fundamental theory underlying cinematography, directing, and editing and, second, time will be spent probing the interface of theory and craft. Students will confront cinema as a unique medium of communication and apply technical knowledge to the realization of artistic goals via a series of programmed exercises.

This course is scheduled deliberately in the semester prior to CTPR 290 (the beginning core production class) thus allowing students an opportunity to establish a foundation of visual literacy. Essentially, CTPR 280 will offer an opportunity to play with fundamental principles of film language within a carefully structured environment-- to grow without the pressure of necessarily "getting it right ". Project assignments will be along the lines of experiments as opposed to fully developed portfolio pieces which tend to be become too precious. In this way, the focus will remain firmly on the practical application of production aesthetics while building an effective launching pad for further course work in the production stream.

**Course Text:**

Brown, Blain. ***Cinematography: Theory and Practice*.**  New York: Focal Press, 2002.

**Recommended Reading:**

Arnheim, Rudolph. ***Visual Thinking.*** Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1969.

Mamer, Bruce. ***Film Production Technique: Creating the Accomplished Image***. Belmont CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1996

Malkiewicz, Kris and Robert E. Rogers. ***Cinematography.*** New York: Van Nostrand, 1973.

Ritsko, Alan J. ***Lighting For Location Motion Pictures.*** New York: Van Nostrand, 1973.

Campbell, Russell, Ed. ***Photographic Theory for the Motion Picture*** ***Cameraman.*** Cranbury N.Y.: A.S. Barnes, 1970.

**Grading:**

**Exercise #1………..…..5**

**Exercise #2..………….5**

**Lighting Test….….….15**

**Crewing….….……….15**

**5 Quizzes………….…20**

**Mid-term Exam….......15**

**Final Exam…….….…25**

**Letter Grades:**

**93-100........A 74- 76..........C**

**90-92..........A- 70-73..........C-**

**87-89..........B+ 67-69..........D+**

**84-86..........B 64-66..........D**

**80-83..........B- 60-63..........D-**

**77-79..........C+ 0-59............F**

***Students with Disabilities:***

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the instructor in the first week of the semester. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

**Instructional Modules**

**Aug. 26 - Exposure**

* Course Introduction
* Foot candles
* Incident Meters
* Optimum Exposure
* F-Stops
* Film Speed

**Sept. 2 - The Camera:**

* Basic functions
* Loading
* AC responsibilities
* Tripods
* Camera Reports
* Film Stocks
* Processing and Lab work

**Sept. 9 - Shoot:**

***Exercise #1 – Graphic USC.*** A visual exploration of the graphic/visual structure of the USC campus achieved through composition, framing and movement.

**Sept. 16 - Creative Use of Lenses:**

* Focal Length
* Space
* Speed
* Focus
* Mid-Term Project
* Screen Exercise #1

**Sept. 23 – Shoot:**

***Exercise #2 – Shakey Town.*** The big one finally hits L.A. Create a sense that a major earthquake strikes Southern California without, of course, destroying anything yourself. This is an exercise is cheating. Try to generate a sense of premonition, building intensity leading to a final apocalyptic climax

**Sept. 30 - Light & Shadow:**

* Mid-Term Assignment
* Expressive potential of light
* Portrait lighting patterns
* Ratios
* Balance
* Quality
* Direction
* Intensity
* Shape
* Chiaroscuro
* Painting with light
* Basic lighting fixtures
* Electricity
* Safety
* Stage operations
* Grip Equipment

**Oct. 7 -Lighting exercise**

* Mid-Term Assignment Due

**Oct. 14 -Lighting exercise**

**Oct. 21 -Lighting exercise**

**Oct. 28 -Lighting exercise**

**Nov. 4 -Lighting exercise**

**Nov. 11 -Lighting exercise**

**Nov. 12 - Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W”**

**Nov. 18 -Lighting Exercise**

**Dec. 2 -Lighting Exercise**

Final Examination: Thursday December 9 from 11:00AM - 1:00PM: