

## CTPR 455: INTRO TO PRODUCTION DESIGN

An introductory course in the principles of Production Design. The course content includes: the structure of the Art Department and the duties of each person, fundamentals of design, application of design principles to film and television, preparation and procedures for production design, research, storyboarding, designing for special effects, designing for location, working with a limited budget. The course addresses all the aspects of preparation **before** the actual drafting of plan, fabrication of models, and the building of sets.

The course will consist of lectures, film/TV viewings, student projects, guest speakers from the industry, and outside readings.

The student projects will give the student experience in: script breakdown, planning a set, preparing a budget, color lighting, and related research.

There is no one text. Instead, a series of selected readings will be provided.

Each student will be expected to keep a notebook on the class. This notebook will include all the projects she/he does for the class, revised to address any comments/issues raised by the instructor. The notebook will be handed in at the end of the course and will count as part of the final project and presentation.

The student will be graded on class projects, final project and presentation, and participation in class activities.

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

Class projects.....	30%
Final Project and Presentation.....	70%

## COURSE GOALS

The goals of this course are: to introduce the student to the world of the Production Designer, to establish a basic design vocabulary, to give the student experience with various aspects of forming a design concept based on a script, to give the student first hand information about current productions through the appearance of guest speakers, and to prepare the student for practical applications in the field of production design/art direction.

## FINAL PROJECT AND PRESENTATION

This is a compilation and expansion of the work you have done thus far this semester. At a minimum it must include:

- 1) your breakdown of the script
- 2) your overall concept for the film/genre
- 3) your concept for your set
- 4) a floor plan of your set
- 5) the floor plan with camera angles and actor action clearly indicated
- 6) a storyboard of one scene in your set
- 7) the design for a hand-prop or major furniture piece
- 8) a budget Make sure it includes:
  - a) materials
  - b) furnishings
  - c) salaries
  - d) daily wages
  - e) transportation
  - f) contingencyUse the handout to generate this. Do some research.
- 9) photocopies of research material
- 10) bibliography

Many of these elements have been class assignments. Comments that I have made on them should be addressed. Corrections should be made.

Presentation is important. Pretend you are auditioning for a job. You're trying to impress a producer. Your notebook needs to be designed. It needs to work as a whole.

Good luck.

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## WEEK-BY-WEEK

There will be no office hours *per se*, but the professor is available to meet immediately before or after class.

**WEEK 1:** Introduction: What is the role of the production designer?  
Compare the design of *American Beauty* and *Elizabeth*  
Reading assignment: Mariner chapters 2 and 3  
Interview with Ken Adams  
*Boris and Natassia* (script)  
Essays by Jae Carmichael

**MARTIN LUTHER KING'S BIRTHDAY JANUARY 16<sup>TH</sup>. NO CLASS.**

**WEEK 2:** Finish introduction  
Historical perspective: compare and contrast *Trip to the Moon* with  
*The Great Train Robbery*

**WEEK 3:** Screen *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*: how did the designers control the audience's eye and still create such a complex visual world?  
Reading assignment: Pat Miller's book on script breakdown  
Bring *Boris and Natassia* to class to work on for Week 4

**WEEK 4:** Breaking down the script: work on the first 10 pages to identify scenes, sets, characters, props, costumes and special effects.  
Assignment due Week 5: reread script, make thumbnail sketches, identify protagonist, antagonist, acts and genre. List 4 sets in order of preference to design.  
Assignment due Week 7: continue breakdown, do breakdown pages, come up with set and location lists.

**WEEK 5:** Screen documentary on role of production designer. Written assignment handed in.  
Assignment: continue script breakdown

**PRESIDENTS' DAY, FEBRUARY 20<sup>TH</sup>. NO CLASS.**

**WEEKS 6-9:** Discussion of *mise-en-scene* and how it relates to production design

**WEEK 6:** *Mise-en-scene* space/framing  
Students are given set assignments.

**WEEK 7:** *Mise-en-scene* graphics: line/shape and form/size/orientation and movement  
Breakdown due.

**SPRING RECESS, MARCH 12<sup>TH</sup>-16<sup>TH</sup>. NO CLASS.**

**WEEK 8:** *Mise-en-scene* tone and color  
Itten, *The Elements of Color*  
Written assignment due Week 9: overall design for film and design concept  
for set

**WEEK 9:** Screen *Vertigo*  
Hand in written assignment/design  
**Expect to stay an hour longer on the evening of this screening.**

**WEEK 10:** Screen *Rocky and Bullwinkle* cartoons  
Discuss relationship between source material and script  
Reading assignment due Week 11: handouts on storyboarding

**WEEK 11:** Storyboarding: in-class exercise

**WEEK 12:** Budgeting – Guest lecturer, Mimi Gramatky  
Production designer *Miami Vice, VIP, Lost*

**WEEK 13:** Review  
Individual meetings

**WEEK 14:** Pitch class. April 30<sup>th</sup>. Review.

**PROJECTS DUE FRIDAY MAY 4<sup>TH</sup> AT 5PM. SCA 404.**

There are 13 class sessions in the fall semester with a probable make-up class (Week 14) on Monday, April 30<sup>th</sup>. This is a tentative schedule. It depends on the availability of the guest lecturers and how quickly we cover the material. Weeks 1-2 (introduction) and 6-9 (mise-en-scene) often require an extra half day.

The date that assignments are due remains the same regardless of any changes to the above lecture schedule. **ALL FINAL PROJECTS WILL BE DUE FRIDAY, MAY 4<sup>TH</sup>.**

## **CINEMA 455 – PRODUCTION DESIGN**

**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 that the letter is delivered to the professor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 am – 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.