

SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS  
CTPR 280 - COURSE SYLLABUS FALL 2012

JACEK LASKUS, ASC, PSC (Polish Society of Cinematographers)

**STRUCTURE OF THE MOVING IMAGE**

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| <b>INSTRUCTOR –</b> | JACEK LASKUS, ASC, PSC                                   |
| <b>CLASS TIME</b>   | THURSDAY 9.00 -11.50                                     |
| <b>LOCATION</b>     | KUROSAWA STAGE IN ZEMECKIS BUILDING                      |
| <b>OFFICE HOURS</b> | BY APPOINTMENT   |
| <b>TELEPHONE</b>    | 323 – 697 6830   |
| <b>E- MAIL</b>      | <a href="mailto:FILMOWIEC@ATT.NET">FILMOWIEC@ATT.NET</a> |
| <b>SA</b>           |  |

**COURSE OBJECTIVE:**

**Cinema is a visual media.**

**In this course we will explore and focus on that very important element.**

**“Any visual art –has nothing to do with reality, but it is a representation or interpretation of the reality “ - Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC**

Yes there is a written story, the basis for any film to be made, there are actors performing that story, there is music, and then there is a moving image.

The camera captures the actors in the variety of landscapes, inside the buildings, in space. In the computer generated backgrounds, etc

How as a filmmaker - director or cinematographer we use the camera will influence the interpretation of the story and the way the audience will perceive it.

The visual language of the cinema evolves with culture and with the technology, but the core is and will be the visual interpretation of the drama – the story.

As written story has the characters and it's arc and we will learn how to help tell the story describe the mood of the characters with the use of the color, composition, light, and movement – the elements of the visual storytelling.

What perceptual clues allow the audience to make sense of an infinitely shifting pattern of light, shade or color? How the individual shots can be combined for an emotional or intellectual experience.

We will explore how with today's technology we can create this magic moment.

Which brings us to the technology part of the cinematography.

Over the course we will conduct specific exercises to master the use of light and camera in the space for specific dramatic or comedic situations.

At the end of each class we will screen a clip from a film that in one way or other demonstrates how the visual elements are contributing to the story. We will discuss what visual techniques were used in each of the films.

The films will include such classics like: Citizen Kane, Touch of Evil, 8 ½, In Cold Blood, The Conformist, The French Connection, The Godfather, Days of Heaven, The Good, The Bad and The Ugly, One From The Heart, Laurence of Arabia, Apocalypse Now, Sacrifice, Andrei Rublev, Manhattan, The Insider.

**GRADING:**

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Attendance             | 20% |
| In-Class participation | 20% |
| Project #1             | 25% |
| Project #2             | 25% |
| Inspirational clips    | 10% |

You must discuss all absences from class with me. This is a workshop. If you miss two classes without an excuse you drop a full letter in your final grade, i.e., a B to a C. Any student arriving more than 10 minutes after the scheduled start of class will be listed as tardy. Three tardies will equal one absence.

**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 - 5pm, Monday through Friday. The phone number is 213-740-0776.

**Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *Scampus*, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

**CLASS #1     08/30/12**

Introduction to the syllabus –

To understand what it means     **STRUCTURE OF THE MOVING IMAGE**

Introduction of who we are and our background.

Why are we here and what we are trying to learn and teach.

Viewing of the documentary "Vision of Light"

Discussion

Assignment –Each student will bring for the class # 9 an inspirational clip. A 4 to 6 minutes segment from a dramatic or a documentary film that inspired him or her to

become a filmmaker. Along the clip each student will write a page long explanation why he / she has chosen this film and this particular scene.  
Screening 1<sup>st</sup> set of clips from - Citizen Kane, Touch of Evil, 8 ½, In Cold Blood,  
(B&W Lighting and Composition )

### **CLASS #2 & 3            09/6 & 13/ 12**

The first element. The camera - The essentials of the camera.

The lenses – fix focal lenses, zooms. Wide angle, normal and telephoto.

What are the reasons to use one versus the other? Same shots with different lenses of different focal length. Depth of field – what is dependent on and how we use it.

Different shutter angles. Different camera speeds.

The evolution of the camera over the years. - Different cameras for different purposes.

1) What does EI (formerly called ASA, ISO) stand for?

2) What does the term aspect ratio refer to?

3) What is a shutter in a reflex motion picture camera and what does it do?

4) What is the diopter adjustment in the viewing system and how does it function?

5) What is the aperture (also know as iris or diaphragm)? What is a T stop?

6) What is the depth of field on a 25mm, 50mm, and 100mm lens at f2.8 at 6 feet?

7) Explain the exposure values of the following filters ND .3, ND .6, ND .9

8) Indicate in the right hand column the proper t stop adjustment for the given frame rates:

FRAMES PER SECOND

T STOP ADJUSTMENT

12

24

0(no increase)

36

48

96

Getting to know the camera – Ins and outs of the camera settings.

Camera care, and maintenance.

Screening 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> set of clips

The Conformist, The French Connection, The Godfather, Days of Heaven, The Good, The Bad and The Ugly, One From The Heart

Use of color – Lighting and composition for color in dramatic films)

### **CLASS #4 & 5            09/ 20 & 27 /12**

The essentials of lighting

What is the meaning of the Key light, the fill light, and the backlight?

What is the difference between the hard light and soft light, direct light and bounce light and ambient light.

When dealing with a light source what is the difference between what a scrim does and what diffusion material does?

What is a Fresnel light and what does it do?

Name 3 ways to make a light source softer.

What is the color temperature of the light and how we can use it for enhancement of the visual expression. Color temperature is noted with a specific term to determine degree, what is this

What are the color temperatures of the following?

1) Household lamp, 2) candle flame, 3) nominal daylight, 4) HMI at optimum conditions, 5) Sunrise, 6) sunset

How to convert tungsten balanced film to 5600K. - Daylight

How to Reduce intensity without changing color temperature.

Using the light meter. What data are you collecting with an incident meter?

With a reflective meter?

White Balance – How to obtain the natural look or the look we want with the digital camera.

Technical aspects – What is amp? How much amps 1 K draws. Stage check out

How many amps does 200 watts draw -650 watts, 1000 watts, and 2000 watts -? (Round off)

Screening 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> set of clips - Laurence of Arabia, Apocalypse Now, Sacrifice, Andrei Rublev, Manhattan, The Insider,

## **CLASS #6& 7            10/04 &11/12**

What is the role of the Director of Photography?

Description and responsibilities of the jobs of

Production Design, Wardrobe design, Prop

Locations – how to choose them.

Collaboration between the members of the creative teams.

Working with the 1AD and the production

Creating the “LOOK” of the film – Team process. Watch clips from films that illustrate such a collaborations.

Watching DVD from Kodak Master series

4 Cinematographers were given the task to shoot the same scene.

“Shooting for Drama” - Allen Daviau, ASC, Sasha Vierny,

“Shooting for Realism” - Robby Muller, and Peter James, ASC, ACS

Review of what we have learned so far.

Discussion on how different visual approach affects the telling of the same scene

Using exposure, depth of field, light and color to create a simple scene

– lighting it and shooting.

The essentials of covering the scene

What is 180 degree line. What is screen direction?

What is significant about “Mise en scene”?

Wide shot, Medium shot, close up, over the shoulder.

Moving master.

Camera + lights

Now how to combine both - use the camera movements.

Review all the visual elements of film frame.

**CLASS # 8    10/18/12**

Screening of "The Road to Perdition" with the commentary by Sam Mendez.  
Discussion of all the visual elements that went into making of this film

**CLASS # 9    10/25/12**

Screening of inspirational clips each student has 10- 12 minutes including reading the prepared statement.

**CLASS #10, 11, 12, & 14    11/1 , 8,15, &29 /12**

**NO CLASS WEEK 13 – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

Dividing the class into 2 groups - 8 in each group.

Assigning tasks - Producer, Director, DP, PD. Crew, talents

Creating a scene to be shot by each of the groups.

During this four classes 2 groups each class will create and shoot a short 1-2 minutes scene that will be told through images, movement and editing.

The other students will be participating as actors, crew members, and will be watching the process

**CLASS #15    12/6/12**

Watching the finished 8 films – discussing them.

Final notes.

**RECOMMENDED READINGS**

Cinematography: Theory and Practice, 2nd Edition Image Making for Cinematographers and Directors - By Blain Brown

Cinematography: Third Edition - by Kris Malkiewicz and M. David Mullen, ASC

Film Directing Shot By Shot: Visualizing from Concept to Screen - by Steven D. Katz

Film Craft: Cinematography - By Tim Grierson

Matters of Light and Depth - by Ross Lowell

Painting With Light - by John Alton

Reflections: Twenty-One Cinematographers at work - by Benjamin Berge