Syllabus for Production Design I
USC SCA CTPR456  Production Design I  Spring 2015
Section: 18556  2 Units

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Course Description and Outline

Overview
Production Design I is an examination of the role of the production designer and art director in motion pictures, television or new media. Students will learn what art direction brings to the narrative storytelling process and how to identify this while watching a film or television show. They will work on projects that will give them hands on experience at the design process solving real world problems with skills they learn in class.

Course Goals
• This course will examine the history and the development of the profession of art direction.
• This course will examine the difference between the production designer and the art director.
• The creative process of art directing will be explained from the reading and break down of a script, through the development of a design concept and the implementation of that concept through research, sketches, drawings and models.
• Students will develop an understanding of the different departments on a production and how an art director interacts with each one to further the goals of the design.
• Students will develop the basic skills necessary to express a design concept through drawing a ground plan and other pre-visualization methods.
• Students will design a concept and a budget breakdown for a commercial.
• Students will design a selected scene from a movie script.
Projects

- **Art Direction Impact Presentations:** students will make two presentations on how art direction impacted two well-known movies that they have viewed.
- **Ground Plan:** students will create a ground plan of a familiar set of rooms; i.e. dorm room, family home or student housing.
- **Mid-term Exam:** There will be a mid-term exam covering the course lectures.
- **Commercial Project:** students will create a design concept/budget and breakdown for a commercial.
- **Final Project:** each student will present their design for a movie’s scene from a movie on a research presentation board including:
  - A script break down into a set list.
  - A 1/4” ground plan.
  - A color/texture palette for the set or location.
  - Location/set dressing photos.

Suggested Reading Materials

What Art Direction Does: An Introduction to Motion Picture Production Design  
By Ward Preston
The Film Maker’s Guide to Production Design  
By Vincent LoBrutto
The Art Direction Handbook for Film  
By Michael Rizzo

Grades

Production Design I is graded on a letter grade basis. Grades will be based on both subjective and objective judgments, attendance, class participation, clarity of work, and an effort indicative of a growing understanding of the role that the production designer and art director play. Success is predicated on an energetic and ongoing interaction between all members of the class. Tardiness and unexcused absences will have a negative impact on a student’s grade. If a student must miss class, call or email the professor as soon as possible and always before the next class begins.
Grade Weighting
5%: Attendance
5%: Class Participation
45%; Class Projects
  10% - Ground Plan
  15% Commercial Design
  20% - 2 Art Direction Impact Presentations
20%: Mid-term test
25%: Final Project

Course Outline

Week 1      Monday January 12
General introduction of class structure.
First lecture: “What is Production Design and what impact does it have on a production?”

Week 2      Monday January 19
NO CLASS   MLK DAY

Week 3      Monday January 26
Second lecture: “History of Art Direction”.

Week 4      Monday February 2
Student presentations on art direction’s impact.
Third lecture: “The Art Department Staff and other Production Departments”.
Fourth lecture: “Script Break Down and Budgeting”.

Week 5      Monday February 9
Student presentations on art direction's impact.
Fifth lecture: “Developing a Visual Concept and Researching and Scouting”.

Week 6        Monday February 16
            NO CLASS   PRESIDENTS DAY

Week 7        Monday February 23
            Student presentations on art direction’s impact.
            Sixth lecture: "Drafting a ground plan to express your
            design ideas".
            Assign ground plan project.
            Guest lecture.

Week 8        Monday March 2
            Student presentations on art direction’s impact.
            Mid-term Test coming up. Review in class.
            Seventh lecture: “Set Construction and Set Decoration”.
            Guest lecture.

Week 9        Monday March 9
            Mid-term Test.
            Student presentations on art direction’s impact.
            Show how your Ground Plans are progressing.
            Distribute scripts and discuss Final Project –
            “Designing a Scene from a Film”.

Week 10       Monday March 16
            NO CLASS   SPRING BREAK

Week 11       Monday March 23
            Student presentations on art direction’s impact.
            Students present Ground Plan projects.
            Eighth lecture: “Making a Presentation Board” and
            “Designing for a Commercial”.
            Assign Commercial Concept/Budget project.
Week 12  Monday March 30
Student presentations on art direction's impact.
Guest lecture: “Sketch-up Class”.

Week 13  Monday April 6
Student presentations on art direction's impact.
Group work on commercial concepts & final projects, showing projects in development.

Week 14  Monday April 13
Student presentations on art direction’s impact.
Present commercial design/budget breakdown projects.

Week 15  Monday April 20
Student presentations on art direction’s impact.
Present research and concept for final projects, showing projects in development.
Guest lecture.

Week 16  Monday April 27
Student presentations on art direction's impact.
Present research and concept for final projects, showing projects in development.

Week 17  Monday May 4
NO CLASS  STUDY DAYS

Week 18  Monday May 11
Present final film design projects.
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/.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity http://equity.usc.edu/ or to the Department of Public Safety http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault
resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems
A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.htm provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information http://emergency.usc.edu will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.