

INTRODUCTION TO ART DIRECTION

Syllabus

SCA CTPR 456 Fall 2016
Section: 18556 2 Units

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Mon. 7pm-10pm Rm.# SCA 204
Office Hours: By Appt.

Course Description and Outline

Overview

Introduction to Art Direction examines the role of the art director in motion pictures, television and new media. Students will learn what art direction brings to the storytelling process and how to identify these contributions when watching a movie, television, playing a video game or streaming internet content. Students will work on projects that give them hands on experience solving practical problems using design skills they learn in class.

Course Goals

- This course examines the visual history and development of art direction and production design.
- This course focuses on the Hollywood Art Department: the staff, their responsibilities and relationships both intra-departmentally and with the other crafts and departments.
- Students will see how design elements enhance story theme, character, plot, tone, location, period, cinematography, editing, and visual effects.
- Students will learn budgeting and scheduling.
- Students will design a final presentation using script breakdowns, research boards, conceptual illustrations, working drawings, and models.

Projects

- Visual Diaries: students will maintain a visual diary of at least one page a week of inspirational visual material – photos, sketches, colors, textures, etc.
- Assignments: Students will be given a variety of in-class and take home projects.
- Mid-term Exam: There will be a mid-term exam covering class lectures and assignments.

- **Final Project:** each student will present their design for a built set and a location scene from a selected movie. This includes:
 - A script breakdown into a set list, identifying locations and builds.
 - Research/Concept Boards
 - 1/4" ground plan of a set to be built and location.
 - 1/4" Elevations of all walls of built set.
 - Color, Textures and Finishes Boards.
 - Set Dressing Board: furniture, fixtures, fabrics, carpets, drapery, etc.

Recommended Text:

"The Art Direction Handbook for Film" Second Edition By Michael Rizzo

Suggested Additional Reading:

"What An Art Director Does: An Introduction to Motion Picture Production Design"
By Ward Preston

"Film Architecture from Metropolis to Blade Runner" Edited by Dietrich Neumann

"The Film Maker's Guide to Production Design" By Vincent LoBrutto

"Designs on Film, A Century of Hollywood Art Direction" By Cathy Whitlock and The Art Directors Guild.

Grades

This class uses letter grades:

90-100%=A

80-89%=B

70-79%=C

60-69%=D

68% and under=F

Grades will be based on creativity, originality and competency of the design, execution process and presentation. A student's growing understanding of the role of the art director as well as skill improvement will positively affect their final grade. Tardiness and unexcused absences will negatively affect a student's grade. If a student must miss class, please notify the professor by email.

Final Grade Basis:

5% - Visual Diary

5% - Attendance

40%:-Class Projects

10%-Ground Plan

10%-Elevations and Sample Swatch Board

10%-Double-hung window, construction drawing

10%-Analysis of Design of chosen movie.

20%: Mid-term test

30%: Final Project

Course Outline

Week 1 Monday August 22

General introduction of class structure. Visual Diaries.

“The Hollywood Art Department: The Responsibilities, The Relationships, The Office and Page Set-up”. Title Blocks and scale drawing are discussed.

Assignment: Singly or in pairs, students will measure a specified location and draft a 1/4” ground plan for the space by hand, using the format discussed in class, with Title-Block.

Week 2 Monday August 29

Visual History of The Art Department from the thaumatrope and Muybridge to digital capture and Christopher Nolan. Film clips will be shown.

Assignment: Elevations: Using the measurements taken at the assigned location, students will hand-draft ~~at least~~ one elevation at 1/4” scale including at least one door and one window.

Week 3 Monday September 5

NO CLASS – LABOR DAY HOLIDAY

Week 4 Monday September 12

The Design Process – Part 1: Landing the visual concept; finding the visual arcs within the story; identifying thematic elements; recognizing emotional tones; Beginning the design process. Research. Film clips will be shown.

Assignment: Based on an assigned location, prepare a Presentation Board of Colors, Textures, Finishes.

Week 5 Monday September 19

The Design Process – Part 2: Logistics, nomenclature, tools and workflow. Budgeting and Scheduling.

Student Presentation: Students present their Ground Plans, Elevations, and Color/Texture/Finish Boards to the class.

Week 6 Monday September 26

The Design Process – Part 3: Who is designing? Storyboarding, Animatics, Concept Illustrating, Computer Modeling, Hand Drafting, White Models.

Week 7 Monday, October 3

The Physical Design – Part 1: Scouting, Interiors and Exteriors.
Guest Lecture: Location Manager

Week 8 Monday, October 10

The Physical Design – Part 2: Set Dressing. Vendors, studio facilities, backings, industry service listings, technical advisors, mechanical effects, specialty props, weapons, vehicles, animatronics and hand props.
Guest Lecture: Set Decorator
Review in class for upcoming Mid-term Test.

Assignment: Pick one of the movies discussed in class. Using your accumulated knowledge of Hollywood art departments, analyze the movie's production design in a verbal and pictorial presentation to the class.

Week 9 Monday, October 17

Mid-term Test. Distribute scripts.
Discuss Final Project

Week 10 Monday, October 24

Review Midterms.
Student Presentation: Production Design Analysis
Discuss final project. Script breakdowns, identifying locations and builds.

Week 11 Monday, October 31

The design process for Student Final Projects: discuss themes, emotional tones, visual arcs and style. Research needs. Budgeting and scheduling. Concept sketches and ground plans.

Week 12 Monday, November 7

The design process for Student Final Projects: Scouting & Construction. Set Decoration & Props.
Guest Panel: Construction Coordinator, Set Decorator and Prop Master

Week 13 Monday, November 14

Historical Techniques: Painted glass, mattes, foreground miniatures, forced perspective, front & rear projection, mirrors.

Week 14 Monday, November 21

Modern Techniques: CGI & Digital Filmmaking from Max Fleischer to Robert Zemeckis, James Cameron and Christopher Nolan".

Week 15 **Monday, November 28**

The first-time Art Director. What to expect, where to shop, how to staff.
Assignment Due: Visual Diaries.

Week 16 **Monday, December 5**

Finals Study Week

Week 17 **Monday, December 12**

Present final assignments in class

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.html 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.