INTRODUCTION TO ART DIRECTION
Syllabus

SCA CTPR 456   Fall 2017
Section: 18556 2 Units

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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 contributes 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, Texture and Finish Boards.
Set Dressing Board: furniture, fixtures, fabrics, carpets, drapery, etc.

Tools Necessary to Complete Class Assignments:

- Architects Scale (not Engineer's Scale)
- 30/60 Triangle
- 45/90 Triangle
- 25'–30' Tape Measure
- 8–1/2 X 11 Tablet of 4X4 Graph Paper
- 5 – 24" X 18" Sheets of Vellum
- Foam Core or Museum Board for Sample/Finish Boards and White Model
- 18" Metal Straight Edge
- Paint Swatch Books and Drafting Table with parallels provided by USC

Recommended Text:

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

Suggested Additional Reading:

"Production Design for the Screen: Visual Storytelling in Film and Television" By Jane Barnwell.
"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
 59% 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
       20%–Analysis of Design of chosen movie.
    20%: Mid-term test
    30%: Final Project

Course Outline

Week 1   Monday August 21
General introduction of class structure and syllabus. Attendance. Visual Diaries.
The Hollywood Art Department: The Responsibilities, The Relationships, The Office
and Page Set-up. Title Blocks and drawing in scale are discussed.
Historical Film Clips

Week 2   Monday August 28
The Physical Design – Part 1: Scouting, Interiors and Exteriors. How to photograph.
How to measure. Other details of importance. Students view the space they are
measuring through different camera lenses from wide to long.
Assignment: Students will measure a specified location to
–Hand-Draft a 1/4" scale ground plan for the space by hand, using the format
discussed in class, with Title-Block.
–Hand-Draft one 1/4"scale Elevation: Using the measurements taken at the
assigned location, including at least one door and one window.
–Match all finishes and paint colors which they will mount on a presentation board.

Week 3   Monday September 4
NO CLASS – LABOR DAY HOLIDAY

Week 4   Monday September 11
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. Script breakdowns. Logistics, nomenclature, naming
conventions. Research. Who is designing? Storyboarding, Animatics, Concept
Illustrating, Computer Modeling, Hand Drafting, White Models. Digital tools &
Workflow. Budgeting & Scheduling. Research. Film clips will be shown.

Week 5   Monday September 18
The Design Process – Part 2: Designing for the lens: Lenses 101, Camera Angles,
Lens ratios, Focal lengths.
Visual History of The Art Department from the Thaumatrope and Muybridge to

Digital Capture and Christopher Nolan. Film clips will be shown.
Preliminary 1st Assignment Presentation: Students present their Ground Plans, Elevations, and Color/Texture/Finish Boards to the class.

Week 6   Monday September 25
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.
Final 1st Assignment Presentation: Students present their Ground Plans, Elevations, and Color/Texture/Finish Boards to the class.

Week 7   Monday, October 2
Review for upcoming Mid-term Test.

Week 8   Monday, October 10
Mid-term Test.

Week 9   Monday, October 17
Review Mid-term Test.
Discuss how to analyze production design of a movie. Film Clips shown.
Assignment: Pick one movie which won an Oscar for Art Direction. Prepare a pictorial and verbal Production Design Analysis of the movie. Discuss themes; emotional tones; visual arcs. Use of light, line, shape, space and color to enhance visual story. Research needs. Budgeting & scheduling.

Week 10   Monday, October 23
Professional Panel to include any of the following: Art Director, Illustrator, Set Decorator, Prop Master, Location Manager, Set Designer

Week 11   Monday, October 30
Student Presentation: Production Design Analysis

Week 12   Monday, November 6
Discuss final project. Script breakdowns, identifying locations and builds. Concept sketches, ground plans, white models. One & Two point perspective and reserve perspective. Sizing spaces from pictures.

Week 13   Monday, November 13
Historical Techniques: Painted glass, mattes, foreground miniatures, forced perspective, front & rear projection, mirrors.
1/2 class devoted to work on Final Project

Week 14   Monday, November 20
Modern Techniques: CGI & Digital Filmmaking from Max Fleischer to Robert Zemeckis, James Cameron and Christopher Nolan.
1/2 class devoted to working on Final Projects.

Week 15   Monday, November 27
The first–time Art Director. What to expect, where to shop, how to staff.
<u>Assignment Due</u>: Visual Diaries.

Week 16   Monday, December 4
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: <u>http://www.usc.edu/dept/ publications/SCAMPUS/gov/</u>. 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: <u>http:// www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/</u>.

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* <u>https:// scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/</u>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <u>http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/</u>.

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.htmlprovides 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.