Syllabus USC CNTV 456
Fall 2005

Class Overview

What you can expect to learn in this class:

In this class you will learn to draft on the computer. It's a very rudimentary program that students learn in less than a week, and improve thru the semester. You learn about a set for a television sitcom. We view past Art Direction efforts from and showing a personal history of art direction. Field trips are encouraged, and in the past we have toured Warner Brothers see the sets of West Wing, Studio 60, and the back lot. Other field trips have included a trip to the Magic Castle, a place where I do have several designs completed and in progress, as I am the resident designer. For the final project, each student chooses a topic or scenario, and designs and builds a colored model to illustrate that design. The model is then photographed and videotaped.

Class Requirements

o **Access to a computer:**
All of our first classes will use a program that is called Mac Draft and the windows version, PC Draft. There have been problems with printing PC Draft on certain printers. Make sure that you are able to print when you install your program.
Now that we have that out of the way, let's proceed.

o **Attend all classes**. This I am very firm on. Three or more unexcused absences are grounds for automatic dismissal from the class. I stress unexcused. If you know you are not going to be able to attend a class, please notify me via email or in person, as to why you will not be able to attend. Attendance is taken for every class, and these are monitored weekly.

o **Class Participation**. I ask that you always have an opinion. I may disagree, but I value the fact you have one. I try to always have discussion about any topic. Class participation is part of your grade. I take pride on giving as good as I get. Do not be shy and don't hesitate to question. That is part of the learning process.

o **Class Assignments.** When I assign a project, I expect it shown on time and explained when it is due. This is the professional attitude, and the class is conducted as to what things are in the real world.
The requirements are very simple and easy to follow. Do not hesitate to contact me on any of the points above for clarification.

Outline of Classes and Assignments

o First assignment is to attend a taping (or filming) of a Sitcom. You will have at least three weeks to complete this assignment. A written report, one page is all I require, of your visit. This to affirm that you have visited a set, and you may be called on to report to the class your experience. You may secure your tickets online by contacting the following address:

http://www.tvtickets.com/default.htm
o Assignment. After class discussion about the elements of basic drafting, you will be asked to draft a ground plan with furniture, of the room in which you sleep. This will be done in scale. The first week it is done is pencil, the following week is done on the computer.

o Assignment. Designing a set for a sitcom (three camera shoot).
After a discussion of designing for stage, film and television, principles of each are explained and a short script is distributed to the class. A brief history of the three camera shoot is also explored. We will learn about ground plans, elevations and furniture plots. This will be done over several classes. Weekly assignments are critiqued and principles of adding depth, breaking up walls and period architecture. Once approved, you will then use these drawings and make a blueprint model of these in class. This will count as a midterm.

o Assignment. Final Project. You will submit an outline of the plot and the scene you are designing. You will then construct a color model of that chosen scene, complete with props and dressings. Guest speakers will discuss areas of interest including securing and obtaining of props and set dressing, miniatures, and special effects. You will then bring this finished project to class, where it will be videotaped. You will be given a VHS copy of the footage shot.

o Field Trip. The class will make a field trip to a soundstage to visit a current working production. We have usually visited "West Wing", and attendance is mandatory. This counts as a class. It is usually done on a Friday afternoon, around 3 pm. We have found that this seems to interfere the least with class schedules.

o Extended Classes. Because we have classes lost because of Monday Holidays, we will add time to classes throughout the semester, to cover the allotted material. Usually this is only about 20-30 minutes per week.

Grading is as follows:

15%
Weekly Assignments. These are given weekly, with a follow up in the class online newsletter as to the description of the assignment.

35%
Midterm exam. This is the sitcom project, with the Blueprint model worked on in class. The projects are grade the following week.

5%
Attendance and participation in class

50%   Final Project. These are student chosen topics, and the student is responsible for presenting his or her project on time and completed. Incompletes are not given or awarded. The student will video their projects, and the instructor has a copy and the student a copy.

A week by week syllabi is distributed on CD-rom the first evening of class.

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.