

506 - VISUAL EXPRESSION

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SYLLABUS

Just as a writer is concerned with story structure or a musician with musical structure, a picture maker must be concerned with visual structure. Visual structure is the only language available to picture makers yet it is often misused or simply ignored. The key to using visual structure is an understanding of the basic visual components and how visual structure relates to narrative/story structure. The basic visual components are: space, line, shape, color, tone, movement, and rhythm. It is through the control of these basic visual components that the picture maker stirs an audience's emotions, creates a visual style and gives structure and unity to their work. The principles discussed in this class can be used to create and control pictures for any format including theatrical motion pictures, television shows and commercials, internet sites, and computer games, using live-action, traditional or CG animation. This class relates all of the visual concepts to practical production and bridges the gap between theory and practice.

The Structure of the Class:

1. Define each basic visual component.
2. Divide the components into sub-components.
3. Show how to recognize these components.
4. Demonstrate how these components communicate to an audience.
5. Apply the components to a text/script.
6. Discuss how the component is used technically and aesthetically in actual production.
7. Show examples from films.

Lecture Outline:

Listing of material for each lecture is approximate since discussion lengths will vary. NOTE: This class meets as a double-session class. The lecture outline does not reflect the actual class schedule of meetings.

LECTURE 1: Orientation and overview of the basic visual components. Basic class terms are defined. Space is introduced with an overview followed by the organization of space into four basic categories.

LECTURE 2: Definition of basic types of space continues. Discussion moves to aspect ratio and screen formats.

LECTURE 3: Discussion of surface divisions and open and closed space. The final assignments for the class (individual student notebook and group films) are given.

LECTURE 4: Visual structure. The relationships between visual and narrative structure, structural analysis and visual economy are discussed.

LECTURE 5: Visual structure continues. The Principle of Contrast & Affinity is discussed. Graphing, charting and visual change is discussed.

LECTURE 6: Visual structure completes. Line and shape discussion begins. Linear motif, basic shapes, perception of line, and methods of creating shapes are discussed.

LECTURE 7: Color. Color structure and systems are discussed to clear up and simplify an extremely misunderstood visual component.

LECTURE 8: Color continues with color interaction, meaning, and control.

LECTURE 9: Tone & Light. Although tone is an aspect of color, tone also relates to directorial and exposure control. Tone and light are related to gray scale control.

LECTURE 10: Movement. Movement is defined in relation to the screen, the camera, a single object and then an object and the background. Fragmented and continuous structures of movement are discussed. Continuum of Movement is described.

LECTURE 11: Rhythm. Visual rhythm is discussed in stationary and moving objects, and editing.

LECTURE 12: Screening & discussion of a feature length film. Completion of any additional visual areas.

LECTURE 13: Lecture break to prepare, shoot and edit student films.

LECTURE 14: Screen student's final films and discuss.

LECTURE 15: Screen student's final films and discuss.
Student photographic notebooks are due.