

SYLLABUS

CTPR 241—FUNDAMENTALS OF CINEMA TECHNIQUE Fall, 2011

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Section: 18452D

Class Hours: 1:00 - 4:50 PM, Mon. & Weds.

Location: SCA 363

Course Credit: 2 units

Catalog Description: Introduction to cinema production techniques and equipment, including producing, directing, camera, lighting, and editing.

CLASS OVERVIEW

CTPR 241 (2 units) is a component of a broader sequence that is designed to introduce students to the fundamental technical and aesthetic concepts underlying motion picture production.

The class is designed to fulfill several functions. First, we will provide you with the information and support you will need to have a successful semester in CTPR 290. The class will present the basic technical information on camera, lighting, editing, sound, production management, acting, and directing that you must have to create your 290 projects. We assume no prior filmmaking background.

Additionally, we will investigate the aesthetic side of cinema from the filmmaker's point of view. Through lectures, film clips, discussion and in-class exercises, we will examine the power and technique of cinematic communication.

ORGANIZATION

Two instructors teach the course, one emphasizing directing and editing, the other cinematography, but both are responsible for class-wide issues such as safety, grading, etc. We will be conducting brief story conferences, scheduled by A, B, and C group, as shown in the Class Calendar.

GRADING

Your grade will be based on the following:

1. In-class exercises & class group exercise: **40%**

We will assign a series of small-group exercises to introduce specific skills. The exercises will be shot, viewed, and critiqued in class time.

2. Class participation and Attendance: **10%**

Cinema is an art of illusions, and as cinema-makers, students need to learn to see how cinematic illusions are crafted; intense analysis and class discussion are keys to such learning. The class also includes several group exercises. Class participation by every student is essential; consequently, attendance is mandatory. Meetings will begin promptly at the scheduled time—and you are expected to be *present when class begins!* Attendance is taken through the use of a sign-in sheet, so it is important to remember to sign yourself in. Students with more than three absences will be downgraded one half grade (i.e. from A- to B+).

3. Demonstration of Craft: **50%**

The quality of cinematography, editing, and soundtracks in your class exercises and 290 projects will be evaluated.

EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

The School will provide digital cameras, tripods, and editing stations. Students must pay a Lab Fee of \$500 and also an Insurance Fee of \$300.

Students will provide their own:

1. Headphones (required) for the Avid lab. We recommend Sony MDR 7506, which are available at the USC *Bookstore*.
2. SDHC Memory cards for NXCAM.
16 GB, Class 10 rated, SCA APPROVED SDHC CARDS:
 - Kingston Ultimate X 16GB SDHC Flash Card: Model # SD10G2/16GB
 - SanDisk Extreme 16GB SDHC Flash Card: Model # SDSDRX3-16GB-A21
 - SONY 16GB SDHC Flash Drive: Model # SF16NX/TQ
 - Lexar Professional 133x 16GB SDHC Flash Card: Model # LSD16GCRBNA133
 - PNY Professional Series 16GB SDHC Flash Card: Model # P-SDHC16GB10-EFS2
3. One of the following SCA approved External Hard Drives:
 - G-TECH: G-RAID (2TB RAID, up to 6TB RAID drives)
 - G-TECH: G-DRIVE (500GB Single Drive)
 - Western Digital: My Book Studio Edition II (2TB RAID)
 - Glyph-Technologies: GT-050Q (1TB Single Drive)

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE should a student use a MINI G-Tech drive, these do not work with HD footage!

A second drive and 16GB flash drives are highly recommended to back up material in the case of drive failure.

Students may be required to bring their projects to class on their drives from time to time.

The School will provide:

1. Sony NXCAM HD Cameras and tripods.

Note: WITH THE NXCAM CAMERA, THIS SETTING IS THE ONLY SETTING THAT WILL ENABLE YOU TO EDIT YOUR FOOTAGE ON AVID: HD 1080/24p FX

Setting can be found by clicking on "Menu"

Toggle down to REC/OUT SET then select "Exec"

Toggle arrow to the right and down to select "Rec Format" then select "Exec" then choose: HD 1080/24p FX and select "Exec"

To verify you've selected the correct format at the main screen select the "Display" button until you see HD 1080/24p FX on the viewfinder screen.

2. Access to lighting kits after the 5th week of classes

3. Limited grip/electric equipment for the group project.

SAFETY

No aspect of filmmaking is more important than safety. Safety issues will be given great emphasis in this class and in your 290 section.

Keep in mind that under no circumstances are you permitted to do projects requiring stunts or special effects that might compromise the safety of the crew, cast or observers. You will be given a booklet titled "HAZARDOUS SHOOTING CONDITIONS"; be sure to review it carefully for safety guidelines, since you will be required to sign a COMMITMENT TO SAFETY based on its standards. We are not trying to prevent you from using weapons or stunts; on the contrary, by consulting with your faculty and our safety expert, Joe Wallenstein, Director of Physical Production, you will learn how to get the shots you want safely. However, certain activities, such as explosions, car mounts, squibs, tying into electrical mains, etc. are *strictly forbidden*. Most effects can be suggested effectively through creative direction and editing.

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 the letter is delivered to one of the faculty (or the CA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301, and is open 8:30am–5:00pm Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

RECOMMENDED TEXT: *available in Bookstore, 3rd floor*

PRODUCING AND DIRECTING THE SHORT FILM AND VIDEO

Peter W. Rea and David K. Irving, Focal Press

Additional suggested readings:

Ball, William, ***A Sense of Direction***, New York: Drama Book Publishers 1984

Block, Bruce, ***The Visual Story***, Focal Press, Boston 2001

Goldman, William, ***Adventures in the Screen Trade***, Warner Books, New York 1984

Johnson, Claudia H., ***Crafting Short Screenplays that Connect***, Focal Press, Boston 2000

Katz, Steven D., ***Film Directing Shot by Shot***, Stoneham, Mass: Focal Press 1991

Lumet, Sidney, ***Making Movies***, New York: Vintage Books, 1996

Malkiewicz, Kris and Robert E. Rogers, ***Cinematography***, New York: Van Nostrand, 1989

Malkiewicz, Kris and Barbara J. Gryboski, ***Film Lighting***, New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1986

Mamet, David, ***On Directing Film***, New York: Penguin Books, 1991

Murch, Walter, ***In the Blink of an Eye***, Los Angeles: Silman-James Press, 1995

Schaefer, Dennis and Larry Salvato, ***Masters of Light***, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1984

Schroepfel, Tom, ***The Bare Bones Camera Course for Film and Video***,
Self-published. (May be on shelf for CTPR 290)

Additional Personal Recommendations:

STORY: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting

Robert McKee; Harper-Collins Publishers, 1997, ISBN: 0-06-039168-5

Light – Science & Magic: An Introduction to Photographic Lighting

Fil Hunter, Steve Biver, Paul Fuqua; Focal Press, 2007, ISBN-10: 0-240-80819-3

If It's Purple, Someone's Gonna Die – The Power of Color in Visual Storytelling

Patti Bellantoni; Focal Press, 2005, ISBN-10: 0-240-80688-3