

NARRATIVE FILMMAKING

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This 5 week seminar will expose each student to the fundamentals of directing a narrative film. Classes will include basic film theory and grammar, example clips from films and practical directing techniques. Each directing student will stage a scene from a published screenplay, shoot on location and show an edited cut in class.

WEEK 1

I) Introduction to Visual Storytelling:

Directing - Guiding the coalescing of all filmmaking components toward a single VISION
Vision, leadership, organization, communication

The Triangle of production - Vision rides on the rails of your resources and time

Resonating Images: American Beauty and Raging Bull
Composing the Film - Witness/Summer Hours
Composing the frame
composing the shot, scene and sequence

Tension and Release

Contrast

Plasticity of Time

Motion Pictures: Motivated Staging/Camera Movement/Editing

Montage - Kuleshov

Mise en scene - theatrical tradition vs. film - composition, sets props actors, costumes, lighting - positioning and moving objects and actors

Renoir - All directors work between two polarities - those that place the camera first and place the actor in front of it and those that follow the actor with the camera.

POV

A sense of PLACE - City of God. Location, location, location.

Wide and tight - Pre-visualization, coverage, progression, shaping intensity

The Event of the scene

II) Dramatic Structure - Introduction of Action and Obstacle, Progression

ASSIGNMENT - Read screenplay #1, #2 begin to look for a scene.

WEEK 2

Andrei - Introduction to becoming the story.

Director Actor grammar - a language of action, less is more, doing, the actors instrument,
“truthful behavior under imaginary circumstances”
character vs. characteristics

Directors preparation - Immersing yourself in the world of the story RESEARCH -
inspirations from other sources i.e. painting, photography, music, poetry, films
THEME - What am I making a film about?
Beat to Beat breakdown
shotlist, storyboards

Preparation allows you to create better circumstances for others to create in. It allows you to offer more freedom to others contributions because you know where you are going. If an actor, DP or designer makes the journey richer and more interesting, you will recognize it if you are prepared.

IV) Casting/Auditioning - In class practicum

Casting breakdown - describe what attributes you are looking for in each character in a way that baits the hook for an actor.

Casting services: Now casting etc.
pictures and resumes
reels

Casting appointments - presenting yourself professionally, directions and details,

Setting up the room - sign in sheet, picking sides, windows, camera, table, etc.

The Audition - Two truths: the truth of the character, the truth of the actor

“selectively pouring yourself into the vessel of the character”

Make them comfortable

Quality - that ineffable thing that someone brings with them

Technique - moment to moment, preparation (action, physical, intellectual and emotional life)

Workability - conduit open, collaboration

Call backs

Chemistry

ALL SCENES ASSIGNED AND CAST

WEEK 3 and 4

Students rehearse scenes with actors in class and receive feedback from instructors. They shoot their scenes on location over the weekend.

WEEK 5

View cut scenes.