

INTRODUCTION TO ART DIRECTION

Syllabus

SCA CTPR 456 Spring 2017
Section: 18556 2 Units

Adjunct Professor: Mimi Gramatky
Email: mgramatky@gmail.com
Phone: 818-802-4242
Mon. 7pm-10pm Rm.# SCA 204
Office Hours: By Appt.

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 brings 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, Textures and Finishes Boards.
 - Set Dressing Board: furniture, fixtures, fabrics, carpets, drapery, etc.

Recommended Text:

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

Suggested Additional Reading:

"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

68% 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 January 9

General introduction of class structure. Visual Diaries.

“The Hollywood Art Department: The Responsibilities, The Relationships, The Office and Page Set-up”. Title Blocks and scale drawing are discussed.

Historical Film Clips.

Week 2 Monday January 16

NO CLASS – MLK DAY HOLIDAY

Week 3 Monday January 23

The Physical Design – Part 1: Scouting, Interiors and Exteriors. How to photograph. How to measure. Other details of importance.

Assignment: Students will measure a specified location and draft a 1/4” ground plan for the space by hand, using the format discussed in class, with Title-Block. Elevations: Using the measurements taken at the assigned location, students will hand-draft one elevation at 1/4”scale including at least one door and one window. Film Screened: First film to be shot entirely on location.

Week 4 Monday January 30

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

Assignment: Based on an assigned location, prepare a Presentation Board of Colors, Textures, Finishes.

Week 5 Monday February 6

The Design Process – Part 3: 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 Student Presentation: Students present their Ground Plans, Elevations, and Color/Texture/Finish Boards to the class.

Week 6 Monday February 13

The Physical Design – Part 1: Set Dressing. Vendors, studio facilities, backings, industry service listings, technical advisors, mechanical effects, specialty props, weapons, vehicles, animatronics and hand props.

Review for upcoming Mid-term Test.

Final Student Presentation: Students present their Ground Plans, Elevations, and Color/Texture/Finish Boards to the class. Assignments will be turned in.

Week 7 Monday, February 20

NO CLASS – PRESIDENT’S DAY HOLIDAY

Week 8 Monday, February 27

Mid-term Test.

Final Projects will be assigned and distributed to students online.

Week 9 Monday, March 6

Review Midterms.

Discuss Final Projects.

Assignment: Using your accumulated knowledge of Hollywood art departments, students will analyze their final project’s production design in a verbal and pictorial presented to the class.

Week 10 Monday, March 13

NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Week 11 Monday, March 20

Student Presentation: Production Design Analysis

Discuss themes, emotional tones, visual arcs and style. Research needs. Budgeting and scheduling. Concept sketches and ground plans. Script breakdowns, identifying locations and builds. Budgeting and scheduling.

Week 12 Monday, April 3

Guest Panel: To include any of the following: Art Director, Illustrator, Set Decorator, Prop Master, Location Manager

Week 13 Monday, April 10

Historical Techniques: Painted glass, mattes, foreground miniatures, forced perspective, front & rear projection, mirrors.

Film clips: GONE WITH THE WIND and NORTH BY NORTHWEST

Week 14 Monday, April 17

Modern Techniques: CGI & Digital Filmmaking from Max Fleischer to Robert Zemeckis, James Cameron and Christopher Nolan”

Film Clips: SUPERMAN 1940, INCEPTION, and HUGO

Week 15 Monday, April 24

The first-time Art Director. What to expect, where to shop, how to staff. Navigating the paperwork.

Review Final Projects.
Assignment Due: Visual Diaries.

Week 16 **Monday, May 1**
Finals Study Week – NO CLASS

Week 17 **Monday, May 8**
Present final assignments in front of 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: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. 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: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

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

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.html provides 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.