

## CTPR 465: Practicum in Art Direction (2 units) Spring 2017

Prerequisite: CTPR 310 Intermediate Production (for Production majors), *or*

CTPR 456 Introduction to Art Direction (for non-majors)

Classroom: SCS 107(the new Firehouse Building in Zemeckis parking lot), Tuesday's 7-10PM

Instructor: Michael Provart

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Office Hours: Thursday's 2-5PM by Appointment only, SCA 423

Production Designers are responsible for everything that is physically in front of the camera and doesn't move.

The goal of the class is to give students a practical base to implement their design strategies while working on productions here at USC and beyond. What are creative ways to stretch low-budget dollars to enable the design of the films to have more visual weight and a clear reality for the telling of a particular story. This Practicum will explore in depth the many facets of the Art Department.

When creating any cinematic image, the two elements that limit the work are time and money. You can, in a weekend, make *The Titanic* in a bathtub for a hundred bucks or spend months in the ocean and studio tanks for two hundred million and tell the story differently. But each approach is still *The Titanic* in its own right. The two constraints gravely impact all parts of film production. Generally, films have a better chance of being finished when they reflect a good management of both.

No matter how much time and money you have however, one thing remains constant is how the Art Department should function. How all of the subsets of the Art Department communicate together to help shape the collective vision of the 'Show'. An objective of this class is to introduce and examine the collaboration between all of the Art Department's sub-departments including: Set Design, Set Construction, Scenic, Set Decoration, Property, etc. By exploring these inner departments, my hope is to give you a broader base of knowledge about the Art Department and how you might fit into it after graduating from SC. Not everyone may be cut out to be a Production Designer, but being a Prop Master for instance, is just as vital to the storytelling and could be more rewarding to certain individuals.

The process of breaking the script down into manageable parts by all departments will be explained. This class will alter this standard procedure a bit and apply it in a different way to USC productions. How to set up and manage a budget will be discussed including the question of what something costs vs. what it's worth? How each department within the Art Department budgets differently and what changes a budget during production.

As we make our way through the many issues that weigh on all choices in the design process, this class will discuss the collaborative and fluid nature of the filmmaking from an Art Department perspective.

Areas of focus include: The Art Department team, script breakdown, budgets, research, measuring and dressing a location, ground plans and elevations, white model building, Sketch-Up, set plotting and set layout, basic flat construction and set construction, basic scenic applications, etc.

**ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:** Attendance is mandatory. Students are required to attend all classes.

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Two unexcused absences will result in your grade being lowered by one full letter (ex: A becomes B). A third unexcused absence will result in your grade being lowered another full letter (ex: B becomes C). Your grade will be lowered by one letter for every absence thereafter. Two late arrivals equates to one full absence.

If you cannot attend, it is your responsibility to get the information and assignment from a fellow student. Do not leave me a e-mail/voice mail inquiring about what you missed in class.

In order for an absence to be excused the student must have approval from me and provide documentation at the next attended class session.

If you have an emergency and must miss class please contact me prior to class.

**PARTICIPATION POINTS:** You will be given points for your participation per class.

**0**-Points>No show/No E-Mails/No Calls, **5**-Points>Sick/Doctor's Note/Religious Reasons/Other, **10**-Points>In Class and Participating-Engaged.

Coming prepared to work is also mandatory, Not having supplies will negatively effect your participation points. We stop 10-15 minutes before the end of class to clean-up, disregard for this clean-up policy will affect your participation points for that day. Just as we would strike a location and return it to the way it was found, we need to start that habit now. However, there may be some classes that will run longer depending on the exercise. We will adjust accordingly and some extra points may be available in those situations?

**ASSIGNMENTS POINTS:** Your assignments will be graded 1 through 10, 10 being best. Your assignment will be graded on the following factors:

- > did you follow instructions?
- > is the homework complete and submitted on time?
- > experimentation –have you pushed yourself?
- > how well you achieved the homework goal?

**QUIZES:** There will be two quizzes. 1 at Mid-term and 1 towards the end of the Semester, see week by week.

**LATE OR INCOMPLETE HOMEWORK:** Homework that is submitted **incomplete** will be graded accordingly. Homework that is submitted **late** will lose 1pt. of its possible score for each week it is late. As an example, homework that would have received an 8 but is submitted two weeks late would become a 6.

**Homework submitted after two weeks will not be accepted and will receive a zero.**

**FINAL GRADES:** I will tally your participation points, homework and quiz points. A percentage will be determined by the total points you've earned as compared with the total points possible. This percentage corresponds to a letter grade: A = 100-96%, A- = 95-90%, B+ = 89- 87%, B = 86-83%, B- = 82-80%, C+ = 79-77%, C = 76-70%, D+ = 69- 67%, D = 66-63%, D- = 60-62%, F = 59-0%.

## **PD PRACTICUM FINAL PRESENTATION:**

The following elements are required:

> **Using your 480 script** <

> **25 reference/research images**

> A "Key Image" from your 480 script that anchors the Design of the show.

> A Palette for your film.

> An over arching Palette design to your film from start to finish, scene by scene.

> A 1/4" ground plan for your set, 1/4" elevations from your plan.

> A virtual model of your set utilizing a predetermined JEP House interior as your set, TBD.

> All clearly labeled and ready for presentation -loaded to your folders for the class.

> This presentation will be worth 60pts.

**MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES:** Cost is approximately \$75.+/- and is to be purchased by each student. Asterisked items are needed by the second week of class and considered a Homework assignment.

\*1- Architect scale ruler

\*1- 8"x 11" Clearprint No. 1000 HP-4, 1/4" grid, "Fade-Out" design and sketch vellum pad

\*1- 9"x 12" spiral sketchbook

\*1- x-acto knife with extra #11 blades

\*1- AlumiCutter 12" ruler

\*1- Sobo glue

\*1- Art Bin Box or equivalent

\*1- Four color pen

\*1-3/4" measuring tape 25' long, Stanley powerlock

Foamcore boards and presentation boards

Yellow Pads

### **OPTIONAL:**

Highlighters

Cutting Matte

Electric Eraser

Eraser shield

Mechanical pencil

Multiple leads

Stumps

Different sized metal rulers

Drafting Triangles and Templates

ETC.

## **THE COURSE, APPROXIMATE WEEK BY WEEK:**

### **Week 1- 01.10 Syllabus Breakdown and Participation, Room SCS 107**

The Practicum Class Pipeline

The Art Department as a whole, broken down. -Positions

Discussion: What part of the Art Department are you going to get a job in?

Developing "hindsight" and Presentation, the backbone of the Art Department.

Handouts- sample 480 scripts, 4 scripts, 4 teams

Where to start?

Breaking the script down, breakdowns per department.

A USC breakdown.

**HW:** Break down the script. Due 6 pm. Monday- 01.16

Gather supplies for the semester.

### **Week 2 – 01.17 Stage 4, Spotting and Layout of the set on a soundstage.**

The Construction Department, -Positions

Materials Used, Tools- Pneumatic and Mechanical, Kits and Vendors

Spotting and Layout of a set, Firelanes, Backings and lighting space discussion.

Basic Flat handling and connection of flats. Students build a 3 walled set.

Bracing of flats and flat safety, usage of "wailers/hog troughs" and "jacks"

"Wild Walls"

**HW:** Re-do the script breakdown, get it right. Due 6 pm. Monday- 01.23

### **Week 3- 01.24 Stage 4, Flats- Windows, Doors and Mould Details**

Handouts-Moulding styles

Students Build a three walled set.

Students Prep the floor for scenic work- week 4.

**HW:** Photograph Mould details, Due by 6pm. Monday- 01.30

### **Week 4- 01.31 Stage 4, Scenic Guest**

The Scenic Department, -Positions

Prep of walls, Low Budget and Normal Prep

Materials and Tools Used, Building a "kit"

Seams and corners –inside/outside and Surface fills

Paint application, priming/underpainting and "mud" paint.

Ageing and glazes

"Blocking"

Demo of a Basic Wood Grain Faux Finish on the Stage Floor, Students Paint the finish

**HW:** Read 4 interviews of PD's and give a reading response for each.

Due by 6pm. Monday- 02.06

### **Week 5- 02.07 JEP House Porch- Set or Location?**

Discussion: What determines a Set Build or Utilizing a Location?

The issues that drive the crucial choice of building vs. location?

Practical exteriors with stage interiors. -Matching

How to Measure and photograph a location.

Mould detail review.

Architectural Style; Prairie House, Craftsman Handout

**HW:** Photograph 6 examples of each style, post by 6pm. Monday- 02.13

## **THE COURSE, APPROXIMATE WEEK BY WEEK: CONT.**

### **Week 6- 02.14 SCS 107, Drafting by Hand. Scale Drawing Tutorial.**

#### **Drafting Materials needed.**

Plans- where everything starts, blocking, exits and entries, depth or not?

Elevations- architectural style applied.

The character & story ramifications of architecture.

How to draw plans and elevations of the JEP house.

Handouts: Drafting Basics

HW: **FINISH** Drawing a 1/4" scale Plan and Elevations of the JEP House, bring to class.

### **Week 7- 02.21 SCS 107, White Models, Presenting a visual idea- physically.**

The White Model, how it's used.

Building a 1/4" scale white Model of the JEP House

HW: **FINISH** the White Model

### **Week 8- 02.28 SCS 107, White Models, Presenting a visual idea- physically.**

Building a 1/4" scale white Model of the JEP House

Complete in class...

HW: **FINISH** the White Model and photograph it due b 6pm Monday- 03.06.

**MID-TERM TEST – 4opts.**

### **Week 9- 03.07 SCS 107, Dressing the Set**

The Set Decorator and Set- Dressing department, -Positions

Dressing for character Development, broad strokes into details.

Dressing a set and dressing a location, tricks and mindset,

Building a low-budget "kit"

Handouts: Mildred Pierce & Genius

Location set dressing Demo, tricks.

HW: Cell phone film Interiors and make a new Set Dressing break down pass.

Post by 6pm. Friday- 03.10

### **Week 10- 03.14 SPRING BREAK**

### **Week 11- 03.21 Either SCS 107 or the JEP House, Dressing a location**

Kit applications at a location.

### **Week 12- 03.28 SCB 120 SketchUp, Another way to Present Visual Ideas**

Guest: Ryan Garton presents SketchUp.

Begin basic exercises in Sketch-Up.

HW: Continue working on Sketch-Up at home, due next class.

### **Week 13- 04.04 SCB 120 SketchUp, Another way to Present Visual Ideas**

Guests: Ryan Graton and Nathan Ogilvie, push-pulling openings, sections, perspectives and tabs.

HW: Continue working on Sketch-Up at home, due next class.

### **Week 14- 04.11 SCB 120 SketchUp, Another way to Present Visual Ideas**

Guests: Ryan Garton and Nathan Ogilvie,

HW: **FINISH** SketchUp assignments, upload them to your homework folders by Monday-6pm-04.17.

## THE COURSE, APPROXIMATE WEEK BY WEEK: CONT.

### **Week 15- 04.18 SCS 107 Imagining the Design.**

Quantifying mood and tone- the tools at a designers' disposal. Inspirational films, photographers, tear sheets, research, etc.

Developing a design concept and using visual metaphor. Inspirational imagery and research imagery.

HW: Your Final Presentations due on Week 17- 05.09 based on your 480 script and using the JEP House as one of your locations in the story, TBD.

You must present:

- > 25 reference/research images
- > A "Key Image" from your 480 script that anchors the Design of the show.
- > A Palette for your film.
- > An over arching Palette design to your film from start to finish, scene by scene.
- > A 1/4" ground plan for your set, 1/4" elevations from your plan.
- > Using SketchUp, create 3 scenes of your set utilizing a JEP House interior as your set.
- > **ALL** clearly labeled and ready for presentation -loaded to your folders for the class by 05.03.
- > This presentation will be worth -6opts.

### **Week 16- 04.25 SCS 107 Guest Speaker and Quiz -2opts.**

### **Week 17- 05.02 Study Week- No Class**

### **Week 18- 05.09 Final Presentations Due -FINAL EXAM CLASS**

### **SUGGESTED READING:**

Hollywood Art - Art Direction in the Days of the Great Studios  
Beverly Heisner; McFarland & Company; 1990  
A scholarly study.

By Design - Interviews with Film Production Designers  
Vincent LoBrutto; Praeger; 1992  
Interviews with a wide range of designers.

The Art Direction Handbook for Film  
Michael Rizzo, Focal Press, 2005  
Describes today's art department in detail.

Setting the Scene - The Great Hollywood Art Directors  
Robert S. Sennett; Harry N. Abrams, Inc.; 1994

DESIGNS on FILM: A Hundred Years of Hollywood Art Direction  
by Cathy Whitlock and the Art Directors Guild; Harper Collins; 2010

### **STATEMENT FOR 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 me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

### **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/>.

**Assignment:** Create 2 construction budgets. A build from scratch and renting of a predetermined set.

## **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](mailto: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/academicssupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicssupport/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.