



CTPR 456 Section: 18561  
**INTRODUCTION TO ART DIRECTION**  
2 Units  
Fall 2019 Monday: 7pm–10pm

**CLASSROOM LOCATION:** SCS: W 32nd Street & Shine Place Room: SCS 107  
Adjacent to Zemeckis Center

**INSTRUCTOR:** Adjunct Professor: Mimi Gramatky  
Email: [gramatky@usc.edu](mailto:gramatky@usc.edu)  
Office Hours: By appointment

**TEACHING ASSISTANT:** TJ Ryan  
Email: [timothwr@usc.edu](mailto:timothwr@usc.edu)  
Mobile: 801-243-0028

### **Course Description**

Introduction to Art Direction examines the role of the art director in motion pictures, television and other forms of cinematic imagery. Students learn how to use art direction to contribute to the storytelling process. Students develop the skills required by an art department and create projects that offer hands on experience solving the problems of bringing a script to the screen.

### **Learning Objectives**

- This course examines the visual history and development of art direction and production design for cinema.
- The course focuses on the Hollywood Art Department: the staff, their responsibilities and relationships both internally and externally with the other crafts and departments of a production.
- Students learn how visual design elements enhance story, theme, character, location, cinematography, editing, and visual effects.
- Students learn tools to create a final presentation using script breakdowns, research boards, conceptual illustrations, sample boards, working drawings, and white models.

**No Prerequisites.**

**No Co-requisites.**

**No Concurrent Enrollment.**

### **Course Notes:**

Course is both lecture and lab, students learning practical analogue Hollywood art department tools. Students presentations are made in front of the class.

## **Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required**

Recommended: KeyPoint or Power Point for presentations.

## **Required Drafting Tools to be supplied by the student**

#2 pencils with erasers

Architect's Scale (not Engineer's scale)

18" metal straight edge

30/60 triangle

45/90 triangle

25' tape measure

Xacto knife with extra blades

Rubber cement (brush-in-lid style)

11 X 17 tablet of 4x4 Graph Paper

11 X 17 tablet or 12" wide roll of tracing paper

Five – 18" x 24" sheets of vellum

Foam Core or Museum Board for White Model

4 Pieces Illustration Board 20"X15"

**All Available:** BLICK Art Materials or Architecture Supply Store or Amazon.

## **Supplementary Reading:**

The Art Direction Handbook for Film, second edition; by Michael Rizzo

Production Design for Screen; by Jane Barnwell

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; by Cathy Whitlock & The Art Director's Guild.

**All Available:** Amazon

## **Tests, Projects & Assignments**

- Visual Diaries: students maintain a visual diary of at least one page per week of inspirational visual material – photos, sketches, colors, textures, etc. This diary is submitted to the instructor at the end of the semester.
- Assignments: Students are given a variety of classroom and take home projects.
- Mid-term Test: There is a mid-term test covering class lectures, classroom work and take home assignments.
- Final Exam: Each student creates and presents a completed design for a set.

## **Grades**

Grades are based on each student's understanding, competency and execution of the art direction and their in-class presentation process. A student's growth in the understanding of the role of the art director and skill improvement will positively affect their grade. Tardiness and unexcused absences will negatively affect a student's grade. If a student must miss class, please notify the professor and the course SA in advance via email.

**Final Grade Calculation:**

ASSIGNMENT	PTS	%AGE
Visual Diary	25	5
Class Projects/assignments	200	40
Mid-term test	100	20
Final Exam/Project	<u>175</u>	<u>35</u>
	500	100

**Grading Scale (Example)**

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

**Production Division Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Two absences will result in a student's grade being lowered by one full letter (IE: A becomes B). A third absence will result in a student's grade being lowered by one, additional full letter (IE: B becomes C). A student's grade will be lowered by one full letter for each additional absence. Two late class arrivals equate to one full absence.

If a student misses class due to an emergency, the student must contact the professor prior to class or contact the Production Office at 213-740-3317.

**Assignment Submission Policy:**

See attached Course Outline.

**Grading Timeline:**

See attached Course Outline.

**Additional Grading Policies:**

Without permission from the professor and/or the Teaching Assistant, late assignments will be lowered one letter grade for every week they are late (ie: A becomes B). If a student must turn in an assignment late due to an emergency, contact either the professor or the teaching assistant prior to class.

## Course Outline

### **Week 1                    Monday, August 26**

Overview of class structure, syllabus and Visual Diary. Introduce the Hollywood Art Department's personnel, office configuration, division of labor and departmental responsibilities. Discuss the Art Department's relationship to the other departments on a production. Explain script breakdowns, working drawings, and locations vs. construction. Introduce analogue drawing tools and how to use them.

Clips shown: Owen's Blind Date and The Wizard Behind the Curtain.

HANDOUT: 4 pages of a scene-numbered screenplay. This screenplay will be used in class; students must bring this handout to class each week.

### **Week 2                    Monday, September 2**

NO CLASS – LABOR DAY HOLIDAY

### **Week 3                    Monday, September 9**

In class demonstration of site measuring and photographing; scale drawing: drafting Ground Plans & Elevations, laying out a page of drawing, Title-Blocks; creating finished Presentation Boards for photos, colors and finishes using drafting boards and students' tools. Students watch demonstration and make their own drawings using drafting tools supplied by the student (see list of required tools on page 2 of this syllabus). Drafting boards are supplied by the university and are available in class.

HANDOUT: Exercises using architect's scale and free-hand drawing.

### **Week 4                    Monday, September 16 – CAMPUS LOCATION**

Scouting interiors. Entire class meets on USC main campus at designated location to photograph, measure, match colors and finishes at location. Class will also view location through different camera lens lengths. Students measure and photograph the location in teams.

ASSIGNMENT #1: (Preliminary version due Week 5): Based on location photographs, research and measurements, students create:

1. A hand-drafted ¼" scale Ground Plan with Title-Block
2. A hand-drafted ¼" scale Elevation with Title-Block  
(Elevation must include at least one door and one window)
3. Create a presentation board displaying surface finishes, paint colors and location photos.

**Week 5                      Monday, September 23**

ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE: Students present a preliminary version of their Week 4 assignment (Ground Plan, Elevation and boards). Presentations are discussed and evaluated in class. Students continue working on Assignment #1 and will present their final version to the class in Week 6.

Students bring the 10 page scene-numbered screenplay from Week 1 handout. Discuss how to find the visual concept of a story and identify the themes and emotional tone. Script breakdown, research, concept illustration, storyboarding, pre-visualization, digital tools, workflow and nomenclature are discussed.

**Week 6                      Monday, September 30**

ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE: Students present the final version of their Week 4 assignment (Ground Plan, Elevation and boards). Each page must be identified with a Title Block. Student presentations are discussed and evaluated in class.

Discussion about camera angles, lenses, aspect ratio and history of projected image and it's importance to art direction. Film clips are screened and discussed.

**Week 7                      Monday, October 7**

Review for mid-term test.

**Week 8                      Monday, October 14**

In class MID-TERM TEST.

**Week 9                      Monday, October 21**

Review mid-term test results.

Discuss how to analyze the production design of a completed movie. Screen clips.

ASSIGNMENT #2 (DUE Week 11): From a list of movies nominated for an Oscar in production design, each student picks one title. Each student prepares a PowerPoint or Keynote and a verbal presentation/analysis of the production design of a movie. Discuss how visual themes, emotional tone, visual structure and arcs including space, line, shape, light and color contribute to the authenticity of the story and its characters so the audience suspends their disbelief and is transported to another reality.

**Week 10                     Monday, October 28**

GUESTS: Professional panel (depending on availability: art director, set designer, illustrator, set decorator, prop master, location manager, construction coordinator) discuss their jobs, resumes, work experiences, etc.

## **Week 11                    Monday, November 4**

ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE: Each student presents a visual and verbal analysis of an Oscar nominated feature film (assignment from Week 9). In class comments and evaluation of each presentation.

ASSIGNMENT #3: Based on the feature film each student selected in Week 9, pick one set from that film to art direct. For Week 12, bring a printed-on-paper screen grab (size at least 8½ x 11) of a wide shot of that set, also bring #2 pencils and a 9 x 12 tablet or 12" wide roll of tracing paper.

## **Week 12                    Monday, November 12**

ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE: Students bring a printed-on-paper screen grab (size at least 8½ x 11) of a wide shot of a set from their Oscar nominated feature film.

Students should also bring #2 pencils and a 9 x 12 table of tracing paper. In class demonstration of 1 & 2 point perspective and reverse perspective. Each student draws a reverse perspective view of their set screen grab.

ASSIGNMENT – FINAL EXAM: The Final Exam/Project includes a Ground Plan, Elevations, White Model, visual research materials and surface & color presentation boards of their chosen set. **Each item identified with a title block**. This assignment is due during the Exam Week class on December 7. A veteran art director and set decorator will attend these final presentations, which will last a full three hours.

## **Week 13                    Monday, November 19**

In class demonstration of white model building. Students make their own white model using photo-copies of their drawings from the Week 4 Town & Gown location measurement class. Materials and tools supplied by the student (see list of required tools on page 2 of this syllabus). Cutting boards are supplied by the university and are available in class.

## **Week 14                    Monday, November 26**

Students work in class on their final projects. Students should bring their materials and tools to do this work. See list of required tools on page 2 of this syllabus.

The art department's historical VFX beginnings through modern techniques are discussed from In-Camera VFX using backing, matte paintings, miniatures, rear projection to Post Production green screen, CGI, and VR.

## **Week 15                    Monday, December 3**

Students work in class on their final projects. Students should bring their materials and tools to do this work. See list of required tools on page 2 of this syllabus.

Discussion of the first-time Art Director: what to expect, how to develop a network; where to shop, how to find and develop a staff; Union vs Non-Union.

ASSIGNMENT DUE: Visual Diaries are submitted.

**Week 16                      Monday, December 10**

Finals Study Week. Instructor's office hours by appointment are available for meetings.

**Week 17                      Monday, December 17**

**FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE:** This class is the Final Exam. Attendance for this three-hour class is mandatory. Each student presents their Final Exam/Project's Ground Plan, Elevations, White Model and Presentation Boards. **Each item identified with a title block.** A veteran, professional art director and set decorator will attend these final presentations.

**Production Division Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Two unexcused absences will result in a student's grade being lowered by one full letter (IE: A becomes B). A third unexcused absence will result in a student's grade being lowered by one, additional full letter (IE: B becomes C). A student's grade will be lowered by one full letter for each additional unexcused absence. Two late class arrivals equate to one full absence.

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

If a student misses class due to an emergency, the student must contact the professor prior to class or contact the Production Office at 213-740-3317.

**Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

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 Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>.

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>.

**Support Systems:**

*Student Counseling Services (SCS)* - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline* - 1-800-273-8255 Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

*Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP)* - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call Free and

confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

*Sexual Assault Resource Center* For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX compliance – (213) 740-5086* Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu/>

*Bias Assessment Response and Support* Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

The Office of Disability Services and Programs Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. <http://dsp.usc.edu>

*Student Support & Advocacy – (213) 821-4710* Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

*Diversity at USC – <https://diversity.usc.edu/>* Tabs for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students

#### *USC Emergency Information*

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, <http://emergency.usc.edu>

*USC Department of Public Safety – 213-740-4321 (UPC) and 323-442-1000 (HSC) for 24-hour emergency assistance or to report a crime.*

Provides overall safety to USC community. <http://dps.usc.edu>