



CTPR 456 Section: 18561  
**INTRODUCTION TO ART DIRECTION**  
2 Units  
Sp 2021 Monday: 7pm-10pm

**CLASSROOM LOCATION: ONLINE**

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

**TEACHING ASSISTANT:** Katrina Skender  
Email: [skender@usc.edu](mailto:skender@usc.edu)

### **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. Student presentations are made in front of the class.

**Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required**

Recommended: Keynote or PowerPoint for presentations.

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

#2 pencils with erasers

Architect's Scale (not Engineer's scale)

Portable drawing board

18" metal straight edge (Steel T-Square serves this purpose, no need for both)

30/60 triangle

45/90 triangle

18" Steel T-Square

25' tape measure

Xacto or Matte knife with extra blades

Rubber cement (brush-in-lid style)

11 X 17 tablet of 4x4 Graph Paper (1/4" squares)

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. presented at semester's end.
- Assignments: Students are given a variety of projects.
- Midterm Test: There is a midterm test covering class lectures and 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 email the professor and course SA in advance.

### **Final Grade Calculation:**

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

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### **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.

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### **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, January 18** **NO CLASS – MLK DAY**

### **Week 2                    Monday, January 25**

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 – ALL presented in a Keynote format ONLINE.

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

EMAILED 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 3                    Monday, February 1**

Discussion: How to find the visual concept of a story, identify the themes, emotional tone and genre. Script breakdown, research, concept illustration, storyboarding, pre-visualization, digital tools, workflow and nomenclature are discussed ONLINE.

How to draw Ground Plans & Elevations, lay out a page of drawing, fill Title-Blocks; create Presentation Boards for photos, colors, finishes, and mood boards; using portable drawing 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).

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

### **Week 4                    Monday, February 8**

Scouting Interiors. Discussion: Why locations and how to choose them. In class demonstration of site measuring and photographing locations. EACH student will choose one room in their residences to photograph, measure, match colors and finishes at location. Using a smart phone, each student will introduce their chosen rooms to professor, SA and the rest of the class. Professor and SA demonstrate, using smart phones, room views through different camera lenses. Students view their location through different camera lenses. Students photograph three panoramic views of their location using three different lenses. Students measure their location.

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

1. A hand-drafted 1/4" scale Ground Plan with **Title-Block**
2. A hand-drafted 1/4" scale Elevation with **Title-Block**  
(Elevation must include at least one door and one window)
3. Create a Presentation Board(s) displaying surface finishes, paint colors and Location photos with **Title-Block**.

4. Graduate Students will complete assignment above and then do additional drawing and presentation boards changing the location into another environment.

**Week 5                      Monday, February 15**

**NO CLASS: Presidents' Day**

**Week 6                      Monday, February 22**

ASSIGNMENT #1: Students present a Preliminary version of their Week 3 assignment: (Ground Plan, Elevation, and Presentation Boards) Using Keynote or PowerPoint each student presentation is viewed, discussed and evaluated in class. Final versions of Assignment #1 are posted on class Google Doc before class Week 6. Each page identified with a Title-Block.

Discussion: Designing for the visual narrative in various genres with ever-expanding delivery systems, and the developmental history thereof.

**Week 7                      Monday, March 1**

ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE: Using Keynote or Power Point, students post their final version of their assignment (Ground Plan, Elevation and Presentation Boards) on 456 Sp-2021 Google Doc prior to class starting.

Discussion: Designing for the camera, lenses, aspect ratios, and history of the projected and moving image. Film clips are screened – ONLINE, in Keynote Format.

**Week 8                      Monday, March 8**

Review for MIDTERM TEST. Presented ONLINE in Keynote Format.

**Week 9                      Monday, March 15**

In class MIDTERM TEST. Two sections of the Midterm will be sent to students identified with their names on each page, in a format which can be “edited” by each student. All finished segments will be saved by each student as a pdf and emailed to both the 456 Professor and the SA. The Measuring Segment: each student must print the page, complete, then copy using a smart phone or scanner, save as a pdf and email file to Professor and SA. The Drawing Segment: each student draws on graph paper, copies using a smart phone or scanner, saves as a pdf and emails completed exam to Professor and SA. If students do not have printers in their residence, concessions will be made. Grading will be completed and emailed back to students.

**Week 10                     Monday, March 22**

Review midterm test results. Graded Midterms returned to each student, ONLINE in a pdf format.

Discuss how to analyze the production design of a completed movie; how genre and era impact analysis. Screen clips. ONLINE in Keynote format.

ASSIGNMENT #2 (DUE Week 13): 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 the visual themes, visual structure, tone and arcs using space, line, shape, color, and light contribute to the authenticity of the story and its characters allowing the audience to be transported to another reality; how the era in which it was shot and its genre impact the visualization of the story as well.

### **Week 11                    Monday, March 29**

GUESTS: Professional panel (depending on availability: art director, set designer, illustrator, set decorator, prop master, location manager, construction coordinator) discusses their jobs, resumes, work experiences, etc. All guests will join us ONLINE.

### **Week 12                    Monday, April 5**

ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE: Each student presents a visual and verbal analysis of an Oscar nominated feature film (assignment from Week 9) in Keynote or PowerPoint format ONLINE to the entire class for comments and evaluation.

ASSIGNMENT #3: Each student will choose one of five different existing sets to complete their final project. Provided by Professor, each set will have basic dimensions, though not necessarily drawn in scale. Graduate students will choose two sets. Each Final Project will include a Ground Plan, Full Set of Elevations, and White Model (all 1/4" = 1'-0" scale); Presentation Boards (Mood Boards) featuring visual research photos, surface finishes, color palette for their chosen set(s). Each piece will be identified with a **Title-Block** – All presented in a specified manner, in Keynote or PowerPoint ONLINE.

### **Week 13                    Monday, April 12**

ONLINE demonstration of white model building. Using film created during Spring Semester 2020 for reference, students using photocopies of their drawings from Week 3's class on Residential Location Measurement. Materials and tools supplied by the student (see list of required tools on page 2 of this syllabus). Discussion will include what to use and what not to use for as cutting board found in their residences and how to use knives safely and their metal straight edge.

### **Week 14                    Monday, April 19**

ONLINE Lecture in Keynote: The art department's historical VFX beginnings through modern techniques, including In-Camera FX using backings, matte paintings, miniatures, rear screen projection and preparation for Post Production blue/green screen. Also CGI, VR and 3-D.

### **Week 15                    Monday, April 26**

ASSIGNMENT DUE: Visual diaries are submitted in Keynote, PowerPoint, Pinterest ONLINE then saved and posted on their personal 456 Google Doc and shared with the class.

Students will bring their final projects to class to show their progress, ask for any clarification they might need.

## **Week 16                      Monday, April 26**

Final Study Week. 456 Professor and SA are available for consultation during specified days and hours.

## **Week 17                      Monday, May 3**

FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE: This class is the Final Exam. Attendance at this three hour class is mandatory. Each student presents ONLINE in Keynote or PowerPoint in pre-specified order and manner their Final Exam Project's Ground Plan, Elevations, White Model and Presentation Boards. Each item identified with a title-block. Each student will then save their presentation as a pdf and post it on their personal 456 Google Doc. Grad Students will do two presentations: an interior and exterior. A veteran, professional art director and set decorator will attend these final presentations ONLINE.

### **Production Division Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class.

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.

### **Additional Policies**

#### **Production Numbers:**

Production Numbers will be given to any class who normally receives numbers. Students will be instructed when it is possible for them to go onto SCACommunity and create numbers where authorized for their class. Class SAs will aid students in making, or correcting, production numbers if needed. Note many classes work in teams where they share a production number. Ask your SA about the needs for your particular class.

This semester, the School of Cinematic Arts will be covering all student Insurance Premiums and Lab Fees which are normally charged to students. Students will be required to use approved "Fast Track" Insurance companies only for rentals and equipment. No other insurance requests will be honored. USC does not insure Share grid or companies not on the "Fast Track List."

Students may still make requests for location insurance verifications (or COIs) when requested by locations. Students are reminded that these requests can take 3-10 days from request to final approval.

All necessary forms and online request forms are available on SCACommunity under the "Student Productions" heading. Contact your SA with any questions that you may have.

### **Asynchronous Learning**

All class sessions will be Zoom recorded and made available for asynchronous viewing until end of the grading period in early December. Students enrolled in this course from outside the U.S. Pacific Time Zone will still be expected to participate in real time assuming that the official class time falls between 7am and 10pm in their time zones. Wherever possible faculty will be understanding and make accommodations to ease the inconvenience of asynchronous learning.

Students from outside the U.S. Pacific Time Zone for whom the class falls between the hours of 10pm and 7am may still be required to complete certain components of the course synchronously. These components will be announced at the beginning of the semester and students with concerns about meeting these requirements should discuss them with their faculty at that time.

## **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.suicideprevention-lifeline.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 micro-aggressions 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>