



CTPR 456 Section: 18561
INTRODUCTION TO ART DIRECTION
2 Units
Spring 2023 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
Office Hours: By appointment

TEACHING ASSISTANT: Raagini (aka Jilmil) Das
Email: raaginid@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 learn 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

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. 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. 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:

| <u>ASSIGNMENT</u> | <u>PTS</u> | <u>%AGE</u> |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| 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, January 9

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 script, used in class for script breakdowns.

Week 2 Monday, January 16

NO CLASS – MARTIN LUTHER KING

Week 3 Monday, January 23

Finding 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.

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).

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

Week 4 Monday, January 30

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 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 with **Title-Block**.

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

Week 5 Monday, February 6

ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE: Students present a preliminary version of their Week 4 assignment (Ground Plan, Elevation and Boards). Using Key Note or Power Point, students presentations are viewed, discussed and encouraged in class.

Final versions of Assignment #1 are posted to each student's personal 456 Google Doc.

Week 6 Monday, February 13

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. 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, February 20

NO CLASS – PRESIDENTS DAY

Week 8 Monday, February 27

Review for MID-TERM.

Week 9 Monday, March 6

MID-TERM TEST.

Week 10 Monday, March 13

NO CLASS-SPRING RECESS

Week 11 Monday, March 20

Review Mid-Term Test results.

Discuss how to analyze the production design of a completed movie; how genre, era and technology impact analysis. Screen clips.

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 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 12 Monday, March 27

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 13 Monday, April 3

ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE: Each student presents a visual and verbal analysis of an Oscar nominated feature film (assignment from Week 9) in Keynote or Power Point format to the entire class; then posted to their personal 456 Google Doc.

ASSIGNMENT #3 (FINAL EXAM): Each undergrad student will choose one set from a list of existing sets to complete their final project. Provided by Professor, each set will be dimensioned, though not necessarily drawn in scale. Graduate students will choose two sets, preferably one interior and one exterior. Each final project will include:

1. Ground Plan and Full Set of Elevations at 1/4" = 1' - 0" scale
2. White Model built from copies of aforementioned plans
3. Three Presentation Boards including:
 - A. Research/Mood Board
 - B. Construction, Paint and Finishes Board
 - C. Set Dressing Example Board.

Each piece will be identified with a **TITLE-BLOCK**. All will be presented in specified manner, in Keynote or Power Point.

Week 14 Monday, April 10

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 15 Monday, April 17

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

Student will bring their Final Projects to class. They may show their progress and ask for any clarification they might need.

Week 16 Monday, April 24

ASSIGNMENT DUE: Visual Diaries are shared in Key Note or Power Point format, saved and posted to their personal 456 Google Doc.

Student will bring their Final Projects to class. They may show their progress and ask for any clarification they might need.

Week 17 Monday, May 1

Finals Study Week. Instructor's Office Hours by appointment are available for meetings.

Week 18 Monday, May 8

FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE: This class is the Final Exam. Attendance for this 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.** Veteran, professional art director and set decorator will attend these final presentations.

Production Division Attendance Policy

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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>