

Film 341 Spring 2011

Seattle University

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Friday Class: 1:30—5:30

Wednesday Office Hours: 2:00—5:00pm AND by appointment

Course Texts

The Visual Story, Bruce Block, 2nd ed. Focal Press

The Filmmakers Handbook, Steven Ascher and Edward Pincus, 3rd ed. Plume Press

A note on the Ascher and Pincus book:

This is a comprehensive text for Video and Film production. Therefore, there are several sections on film that will not fall under the scope of our class. There are several chapters that are not assigned but should serve as good reference material for your projects. I suggest you refer to the following chapters in this book for additional assistance: 1, 5, 10, 13, 16

Course Synopsis

As film enthusiasts, most all of us have at least a cursory knowledge of the cinema, mostly gained through watching and reading about films. This class is designed to meet students on whatever level of knowledge they already obtain regarding film and then foster and expand that level of knowledge through a rigorous instruction in the practice of producing a series of short videos. At whatever level students are entering the course this class is designed to stretch students beyond their existing knowledge of film and add to their basic skills and knowledge so that students are pushed to the next level of skill and knowledge of video production.

Class time will be dynamic and rigorous: students will be turning in video projects just about every two weeks. In between assignments we will be working on production skills, viewing and critiquing student projects, receiving guest speakers, analyzing films, and taking cinema related field trips. Instruction for operating digital video cameras, lighting, and editing will be our first priority. (Note: all equipment is available for checkout through the Media Production Center in the library for you to practice and use for your assignments.) We will also get out of the classroom for completing several of the in-class production assignments. Exercises will develop skills in camera setup, placement, angles, movement, continuity, and coverage. Basic principles of digital video editing using Final Cut Pro will be taught for students to develop their skills in editing for continuity, emotion, pace, timing, and smoothness. Lighting exercises will teach students to work creatively with dramatic lighting set ups, both on set and in studio, as well as enhance skills in working with natural light.

We will view student projects with an emphasis on providing constructive criticism from which students can improve their video production skills. Students are expected to contribute to these discussions and should also exhibit pride in all the

work they create and share with this class, as well as being able to respond well to questions and constructive criticism of their work.

Production assignments will foster student skills in the art of visual storytelling and therefore, will require students to stretch their talents in movie making by means of a set of requirements that will push students to formulate short videos that rely on **evocation rather than explanation**. For example, students will learn to create short videos that demonstrate dramatic interest and character development, but in absence of dialogue or non-diegetic music. This will be achieved by doing a series of production exercises and assignments that require students to imaginatively meet the expectations of visual storytelling.

Models of this form of filmmaking – taken from silent and classical film – will be examined to serve as instruction and inspiration for student production assignments. Emphasis will be on films that predominantly rely upon visual means to convey stories, character, and drama: that is, films that emphasize evocation over explanation. Learning from these kinds of films will serve as examples for students to develop and improve upon their own abilities to work creatively with the visual components of filmmaking in order to communicate and tell stories through strictly visual means.

Outside of our Friday class times I will be available during office hours to meet with students and discuss any concerns you may have regarding course materials, film viewings, and assignments. Guest speakers will also be invited to speak with the class and instruct on specific production topics and we will also take a field trip to attend a short film festival in Seattle.

Video Assignments (4)

All assignments will be group projects, the number depending upon the assignment. In order to give students the chance to work with a variety of other classmates, students cannot work with the same person on more than two projects. Students are expected to share duties and responsibilities for all aspects of their production. Therefore, everyone working on the project will receive the same grade. That is, I will evaluate the film (and each student) on all dimensions of production. Evaluation of projects will rely upon student abilities to meet and creatively interpret the following assignments:

- 1) In-camera Video Portrait: in groups of two students will create a portrait of one of them without any editing or addition of post-production sound.
- 2) Constructing a cinematic narrative from extant footage provided by instructor: students will edit digital footage into a short story using sound effects and musical cues (but not resulting in a music video) without the use of titles or dialogue
- 3) Recreation of a “classic” movie scene: through lighting and camera angle and movement, students will demonstrate their abilities to recreate a scene from

- a yet-to-be-determined classic movie, sound effects and music cues can be added but no dialogue or text
- 4) Creating a cinematic interpretation of a narrative/story chosen from a list of sources provided by instructor

Evaluation

Attendance and Participation = 10

Exam (wk6) = 15

Video1 (wk3) = 10

Video2 (wk5) = 15

Video3 (wk7) = 20

Video4 (wk10) = 30

Total = 100 points

Equipment

Equipment availability is limited. However, regardless of what kind of camera you end up using for your projects, you should know that I am interested in your abilities to use a camera to tell a compelling story through strictly visual means in a competent, creative, and innovative way.

In short, the kind of camera you use is of less importance than how you use it. Remember, this is an INTRODUCTORY film production course – more advanced ones will be offered in the future. There will be plenty of opportunities in the future to tinker with all the bells and whistles of more advanced camera systems.

Media Production Center

Media Production Center Hours: 9-9 M-R; 9-5 F; 10-5 S

Project request form for MPC Equipment:

https://www.seattleu.edu/library/project_request_form/

Video production equipment is available through the Media Production Center on the first floor of the Lemieux Library. There are two really *SWEET* DV cameras and two very good palm-corders, as well as lighting and audio kits. The cameras come complete with memory cards, but you must dump your data from the cards to a hard-drive when you return equipment. Equipment is not available for checkout overnight.

Tutorials

FCP: take the 2-hour FCP tutorial at the MPC: Basic Training for Final Cut Studio (other DVD tutorials are available and recommended, but this one is required and needs to be finished before week 5)

Library Circulation Desk

Two mini-DV cameras are available through the main circulation desk in the library. These require the use of mini digital videotape (which you must provide).

SU Media Club

In addition, students may wish to join the Seattle University Media Club (in the Communication Department) as another means of getting access to equipment and expanding your network of film enthusiasts at Seattle University.

Northwest Film Forum

Northwest Film Forum: 1515 12th Ave. Seattle, 206 329 2629

<http://www.nwfilmforum.org/live/collection/equipment>

The Northwest Film Forum also has video equipment and post-production facilities. I have arranged with them to give students in my class a discount for rentals. Contact Dave Hanagan (dave@nwfilmforum.org, or by phone) for reserving equipment.

Student Equipment

In addition, students are welcome (and encouraged, due to the limited cameras available on campus) to use their own equipment to complete assignments.

Accountability

Students will be held responsible for any damage to equipment so make sure you are familiar with the borrowing conditions at the various places you acquire equipment.

Course Schedule

<u>Week One: April 1</u>	<u>Visual Knowledge, Visual Storytelling</u>
Readings:	Block #1-3
Lecture:	Course introductions and overview of assignments Equipment Access Working in Groups Visual storytelling Storyboarding
In-class Project	Overview and Instruction on first video assignment --pair up, review assignment, begin brainstorming and storyboarding
Screening:	At Land, An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge, Window Water Baby Moving, Man with the Movie Camera

<u>Week Two: April 8</u>	<u>The Role of the Camera</u>
Readings:	Block #4, 7 Ascher and Pincus #3, 9
Lecture:	Production Roles and Duties Cinematography: angles, framing, movement
In-Class Assignment: (Group B)	Slam Video Project (bring cameras to class) 3-4pm
In-Class Assignment: (Group A)	Camera angles and framing (bring cameras to class) 3-4pm Operating the camera; basic functions; image making; angles, placement, movement; pre-planning and production organization
Screenings:	Touch of Evil, The Player, Goodfellas, The Straight Story, Run Lola Run, Rain, H2O, Avant-Garde of the 1920s, 30s
<u>Week Three: April 15</u>	<u>Editing as Storytelling</u>
Reading:	Block #8 Ascher and Pincus #14
View and Discuss:	Video1 (in-camera video portraits) (Screening Room at Media Center) Source footage of In-class Video Assignment (on DVD)
Lecture:	The power of juxtaposing images; continuity; thematic editing; the Jump Cut; the Montage Kuleshov Effect
Discuss Video2	Editing "found" Footage --Assigning source footage --Go to MPC to view footage
Screening:	Lighting DVD at MPC (1 hour) Battleship Potemkin, Breathless, Psycho, The Graduate, Breaking the Waves, North by Northwest, M The Lonedale Operator

<u>Week Four: April 22</u>	NO CLASS
<u>Week Five: April 29</u>	<u>Light Moving in Time</u>
Read:	Block #5, 6 Ascher and Pincus #8, 12
View and Discuss	Video2 projects (editing) (Screening Room at Media Center)
Lecture:	Lighting and Color
Production Workshop:	Studio Lighting (Jamie Peterson): Group A: 2:30-3:30pm; B:3:30-4:30pm
Production Workshop:	On-set Lighting (KTA) Group B: 2:30-3:30pm; A: 3:30-4:30pm
Screening:	The Third Man, The Saddest Music in the World, Citizen Kane, Days of Heaven, Apocalypse Now
<u>Week Six: May 6</u>	<u>Production Design and Sound</u>
Exam	(covers lectures and readings for weeks 1-5)
Readings:	Ascher and Pincus #11
Lecture	Production Design and Mise en Scene Sound: Enlarging the Screen; Complementing the Image; Setting Time, Place, Character, Mood
Screening:	
Production Design:	The Rules of the Game, Kubrick, Insomnia, L'aventurra, The Cook, The Thief, His Wife, and Her Lover, All That Heaven Allows, Reflecting Pool
Sound:	Y Tu Mama Tambien, Meshes of the Afternoon, Dracula, Eraserhead Amadeus Lumiere Brothers, Lumiere and Company
Discuss	Video3 progress

<u>Week Seven: May 13</u>	<u>From Ideas to Images to Story</u>
Reading:	Block #9
View and Discuss	Video3 projects (recreation of classic movie scene) (Screening Room at Media Center)
Lecture	Writing for the Screen
Handout source material	Video4 projects
Class Exercise	Writing a Screen Treatment (from Video 4 Source Material)
Screening	Annie Hall, Lost in Translation, Fight Club, Reflecting Pool
<u>Week Eight: May20</u>	<u>Cinematic Auteurs</u>
Read:	Ascher and Pincus #19
Lecture	Auteurs of the Cinema Producing and Distributing Movies
Discuss and Review	Screen treatments and storyboards for Video4 projectsn
Screening	The Good, the Bad and the Ugly, Solaris, 8 1/2, 2001, A Clockwork Orange
<u>Week Nine: May 27</u>	<u>Screening Works in Progress</u>
View and Discuss	Rough Cuts and Footage of Video 4 Projects
Course Review	Ways to Improve the Course, What you've learned, Future Projects/Interests
Field Trip	NWFF: 16mm and 35mm cameras and projection
Screening	Heaven's Crossroad, Night Cries
<u>Week Ten: June 3</u>	<u>Screening Final Projects</u>
View and Discuss	Video4 projects (Screening Room at Media Center)

Film 341, Spring 2011, KTA
In-Camera Video Portraits (10 points)
Due: Week Three

Assignment

- Work in groups of two to create a one-minute video portrait of one of you.
- This footage cannot be edited, so you need to preplan and decide what order you want the footage to be in.
- Also, since it cannot be edited you can only do one take of each shot. Again, pre-planning is essential for this assignment.

The Interview

- Decide who will be the filmmaker and who will be the subject
- Interview your partner to find out what kind of person he/she is like.
- This can include activities and interests, but should go beyond these to include attitude, demeanor, hopes, fears, habits, phobias, passions, repulsions, etc.
- The two of you will then collaborate in designing the one-minute video portrait.

Pre-production

- Working from your interview notes design a shot list, including what you will shoot, how you will shoot it (angle, framing, lighting, etc.).
- Design a storyboard (it need not be beautifully drawn) that shows each of your shots in the order in which they will appear in the video.

Restrictions

- no dialogue or titles (ambient sound and diegetic music are fine)
- no editing
- at least three locations
- at least one mobile camera shot
- at least one static camera shot
- at least one zoom (in or out)
- at least one birds-eye angle
- at least one dutch angle
- one over-exposure shot
- use of a motif (framing style, object, action, color)
- Needs to convey more than one emotional tone in the portrait
- Burn your original tape/card to DVD and bring to class

Again, no editing is allowed for this assignment: I want to see how well you can preplan and how proficient you are shooting on location without any do-overs.

Screening

These will be screened in class during week 3

- Class will comment on the video in terms of content, style, and overall execution
- Filmmaker and Subject can then field questions from the class and inform us as to what they were trying to achieve with the video portrait.

Picture and Sound Editing (15 points)**Due: Week Five (April 29)****Video 2****Source Material**

Footage from Week Two's In-class exercise:

--Camera Angles/Framing

--Slam Video

This material has been uploaded to a hard drive in the MPC

Bring your own hard drive to the MPC to download the available footage and THEN begin your editing process.

Source Material:

--MPC room 129 computer (HD2, Engl 341 V2 Source Clips)

Original Sounds

Scope/Requirements

1) You must work with another student whom you have not worked with before on any other assignments for this class (Video 1 or In-class from Week Two)

2) From this material you must edit (in groups of two) a 2-4-minute short film that demonstrates the following:

--a coherent story and plot based on one of the Slam Video themes:

"Once again, it's over me"

"Porcupines have nothing on me"

"Heaviness, sorrow, and nothing but light"

"Quickness is for the unthinking"

"Tripping on life"

"Now the struggle has a name"

"Tragically hip"

--continuity – in both theme and rhythm – between shots and scenes

--editing for emotion and evocation

--creation of a dynamic soundtrack that works in conjunction with your story

3) You must use footage from at least three of the camera angles/framing footage, in addition to the source material from any (or all) of the Slam Videos

Note: you can add post-production sound, but no music or intertitles

4) Titles (must adhere to the following)

--opening title (theme of original Slam Video)

--end credits

a. Names and production roles:

Editor -- ??

Sound Designer -- ??

b. Video 2: Picture and Sound Editing

Introduction to Filmmaking

English 341: Professor Kevin Taylor Anderson

Seattle University, Spring 2011

5) Submit your project as a DVD, labeled with:

--your names, name of class, Video 2, Seattle University Spring 2011

Process/Advice

- 1) Bring a portable hard drive to the MPC and download the footage under the file "Engl 341 V2 Source Clips" from edit suite 129
- 2) Review all of the Slam Video projects and, based on your viewing of the available footage, select which theme you will use as your source material for editing your project
- 3) Review all the Camera Angle/Framing source material
--select which shots will work best in your interpretation of the theme you've selected
- 4) Stretch your technical abilities and your imagination to edit together the footage in any manner you see fit (while still following the guidelines/requirements of the assignment)
- 5) Think creatively about your soundtrack:
--go into the field, into the studio and create and/or capture and record original sound to complement your image track, set a mood, and for providing rhythm and pacing to your image track
- 6) Work as a team but designate individual responsibilities:
--one of you needs to take the lead on editing and the other for sound recording/design
--you will be graded for the overall project AND for your credited individual role as either editor or sound designer
- 7) You and your partner are reinterpreting the footage of the in-class assignment from week two.
--You are free to use Slam Video footage and edit it according to a different theme (listed above)
--But remember that your project will be evaluated for its ability to artfully and technically illustrate your chosen theme
--So if you choose a theme not addressed by your source footage you better get very creative as to how you will rework this footage to illustrate your chosen theme
--projects that demonstrate a bold attempt to re-imagine the original footage will be given special consideration in their evaluation (but they still need to demonstrate the ability to follow directions and hold to the requirements of the assignment)
- 8) Demonstrate your ability to follow directions, showcase your technical skills and imagination, and push yourself towards new levels of achievement

Video Assignment 3: Lighting Design
Storyboard due May 6; DVD of Project due May 13

This is your most advanced assignment, and is designed as the last one before you are “set free” to create your own short film. So you are expected to demonstrate to me that you have competency in these technical aspects of filmmaking: lighting, camera, editing, sound.

Assignment

Recreate either of the chosen scenes from the following films:

Exterior: *The Third Man*

(chasing Harry: “What are you tailing me for? [to] Abandoned square with kiosk)

Interior: *Chinatown* (#1; 3:42—5:45)

Storyboard (Next Week): May 6

Bring in a storyboard of your scene (on paper) along with any notes you have regarding camera placements, movements, and use of color in your scene

Evaluation

--Interpretation of assignment, adherence to guidelines (including evaluation of storyboard), overall quality of finished project (10 points)

--Lighting: quality, style of illumination, use of color, shadow, and pattern (10 points)

--Camera work: framing/composition, angle choices, stability, movement (10 points)

--Editing: rhythm, continuity, dramatic effect (5 points)

--Sound: quality, use as supportive and complement to the visuals (5 points)

Explanation

--I will evaluate the overall project and award it anywhere between 0-10 points

--I will evaluate each production role and award that role anywhere between 0-10 points

--Each production member will have their individual points for their contribution added to the points awarded to the overall project

Important Reminders

--You can recreate the scene according to your own artistic tastes and skills BUT the scene must still be recognizable as a recreation of the original scene.

--Your scene cannot add anything superfluous: gun shots, car chases, jumping out a window, flying saucers, etc.

--Your scene should remain true to the spirit of the original, but again, should also be a creative and innovative recreation of the original

--Your scene must adhere (within reasonable approximation) to the running time of the original scene

--You can add music for dramatic effect, but it must be used sparingly (let the weight of your scene rest on the visuals and sound effects)

--Note: the actors used in your video can be credited, but they cannot be any of your group members

Credits

Opening Credit

--Video 3: Lighting Design: [either] Chinatown [or] The Third Man

--Introduction to Filmmaking

--English 341: Professor Kevin Taylor Anderson

--Seattle University, Spring 2011

End Credit

--Lighting Designer

--Camera Operator

--Editor and Sound Designer

--Actors

Film 341, Spring 2011, KTA
Video 4: "To Live and Die in Seattle"

Due Dates

Storyboard, shooting locations, and cast list: May 20

Rough Cut (4 mins. Max): May 27

Final Cut on DVD (5-10 mins.): June 3

Restrictions

No dialogue, subtitles, or intertitles

No non-diegetic music

No superfluous action

Story needs to be set in the here and now

Students need to take on a different role than on the last project (V3)

Evaluation

Emphasis on Evocation over Explanation: you will need to demonstrate to me with your final film that you have technical competency with camera work, lighting, picture editing, and sound design. Further, that you are competent enough with the technical aspects of cinema to convey story, character(s), and drama through visual and non-verbal means.

Editing (of picture and sound) – should maintain continuity and be inventive, use the juxtaposition of picture and sound in a way that enhances and expands the story

Story and Direction – should be original, void of cliché's, and demonstrate attentiveness to mise-en-scene

Camera and Lighting – should show attentiveness to composition, placement, framing, light and color, and smoothness of movement

Film (including storyboard and rough cut) = 15 points

Production Role = 15

Credits

--Writer and Director

--Camera and Lighting

--Editing and Sound

Note: if you have four people in your group you can divide up Camera and Lighting

Theme

--film has to have some reference to each of these topics and must also provide a connection between the three; i.e. "Life" "Death" "Seattle"

--Your film/story need not be bleak or tragic (everyone lives and eventually dies) although you are certainly welcome to take a bleak and tragic tone

--Remember that you can be subtle – even symbolic and metaphorical – in your references to “life” “death” and “Seattle” in your film.

--Or, you can be quite literal about these three components to the theme