EMF 340
Lighting for Film and Video

Prerequisites: EMF 267 or EMF 271 and EMF 275 (may be taken concurrently)

COURSE DESCRIPTION
The theory and practice of lighting techniques for single camera film and video production.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
- Understanding the importance of lighting to the art and craft of film and video production, by combining a strong coalescence of theory, history and practice.
- Establishing the culture of minimum technical/monetary investment to achieve the desired impact.
- A solid command of fundamental lighting strategies and techniques for location and studio work.
- Development of a strong film and video lighting vocabulary, as well as the ability to effectively communicate concepts to others.
- Understanding the nature and physical properties of light and their impact on aesthetic choice.
- The ability to deconstruct professional cinematography, and understand the aesthetic/technical choices of professionals.
- Significant exploration into the varied approaches toward developing a project’s visual style.
- Developing a habitual consideration for all production elements and their impact on lighting (e.g. camera, location, actors, sound).
- Developing an imaginative approach to problem solving within the context of cinematography.
- Emergence of the cinematographer’s sensibility, intuition and instinct.

REQUIRED TEXTS
Additional class handouts & reserve reading and media in library.

GRADING: Plus/minus grading will be used in this course.
A  93-100%
A- 90-92%
B+ 87-89%
B  83-86%
B- 80-82%
C+ 76-79%
C  70-75%
D  60-69% (Does not count toward major)
F   0-59% (Does not count toward major)
ATTENDANCE
Attend all classes/ labs on time and stay for entire class/ lab.
Two unexcused missed classes and/ or labs will lower your final grade 1 letter; 
three unexcused missed classes and/ or labs will lower your final grade 1.5 letters; 
four unexcused missed classes and/ or labs will lower your final grade 2 letters.

Late arrivals and/ or early departures will lower your final grade.
Three late arrivals and/ or early departures will lower your final grade 1 letter; 
four late arrivals and/ or early departures will lower your final grade 1.5 letters; and so on.

REQUIRED HARDWARE
All EMF majors (and pre-majors) must own their own LaCie FireWire drive. The VML Equipment Policy Handbook states: "You must purchase an approved FireWire drive to use the VML edit suites." Contact VML Supervisor, at 410 704-3433 for a list of these drives.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
The EMF Department adheres to the Towson University “Student Academic Integrity Policy.” Any form of cheating or plagiarism is prohibited by the policy. Please visit www.towson.edu/studentlife/judicialaffairs/academicintegrity.html for details. Any violation of this policy will result in a failing grade for the course.

DISABILITY NOTE
Requirements for EMF Department classes follow Towson University’s disability policy; see www.towson.edu/dss for details. Any student who may need accommodation due to a disability, please make an appointment to see the instructor during the first week of class. A memo from Disability Support Services authorizing your accommodation will be required.

INCOMPLETE POLICY
A grade of Incomplete is not given unless you are unable to complete the work required in the course because of verifiable medical reasons or documented circumstances beyond your control as stated on page 26 of the current Undergraduate Catalog.

COURSE SCHEDULE
Week one
Course Overview, course expectations & syllabus discussion
In-class writing exercise “the function of light”
Practicum: Equipment introduction; the one-light portrait; lighting the face; basic lighting concepts; basic exposure.

Assignments: 1) “Go to the Movies.” Attend a movie selected by the class. Write a one-page critique on the lighting and cinematography
2) Read Viera, Chapter 1, “Basic Lighting Concepts” (p.3-15)
3) Read Viera Ch 4 “Basic Exposure Concepts” (p.3-66)
4) Read Brown, “The tools of lighting,” (p.142-156)
Concepts covered in session: The importance of light to film/video craft; fundamental lighting; equipment use.

Week two
Practicum: Equipment use; basic lighting placements (key, fill, back, etc.)
Lecture/Practicum: Lighting analysis; reading/preparing overhead diagrams
Lecture: Visual design/lighting design; the importance of other visual works as reference.

Assignments  1) Project #1 - Still photographic re-creation of selected visual material DUE: week four
2) Review Viera Ch 2 “Lighting Set-ups” (p17-39)
3) Find 1 article from any issue of American Cinematographer, read the article, lighting analysis and diagrams.
4) Read Brown, “Color Theory” (p128-140); “Controlling Color” (p168-176)

Concepts covered in session: lighting analysis; referencing other visual works; fundamental lighting; equipment use.

Week three
Lecture: Physical properties of light & color, part I.
Practicum: (multiple 16mm stocks and video formats): Testing exposure/contrast ratios, testing latitudes with over & under exposure, testing color saturation.

Assignments  1) Continue work on project #2

Week four
Reviewing student work – Project #1
Lecture and in-class demonstration: Lighting interior interviews.

Assignments  1) Project #2 – design a lighting strategy & shoot an interior location interview (not in the studio). DUE: week seven.
2) Read “Placing Shadows” lighting interviews (Handout)

Week five
Lecture/field trip: The intrinsic value of Home Depot to the innovative gaffer.

Assignments  1) Buy/Construct 2 low-budget lighting or grip devices
2) Read excerpt from V.F. Perkins’ Film as Film (handout p. 83-88).
3) Read Viera Ch 6, “Creative Exposure”

Concepts covered in session: Lighting and grip on a shoestring budget; using production limitations to your advantage!
**Week six**
Lecture/Practicum: Logic, consistency & continuity in lighting. 
Lecture/Practicum: Exposure

Assignments  1) Continue work on project #2  
2) Read Brown, “Lighting as Storytelling” (p.158-167)

Concepts covered in session: Logic and credibility in lighting; lighting as a storytelling element.

**Week seven**
Reviewing student work – Project #2
Lecture: Working with natural light in uncontrolled and time sensitive conditions.
Practicum: Shooting an exterior scene

Assignments  1) Introducing project #3: design and shoot an exterior or naturally lit interior interview. DUE week 10.  
2) Read Essay on natural lighting by Arthur Miller, ASC (handout)  
3) Read selected portions of “Some Thoughts on My Profession” from A Man with a Camera (handout p 8-21) by Nestor Almendros, ASC  
4) Collect 1 film/video example of effective/innovative use of natural light

**Week eight**
NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

**Week nine**
Lecture: Cinematographer’s duties; developing a shooting plan

Assignments  1) Project #4 shooting plan proposals – Student pairs will breakdown a selected short screenplay, breakdown the script, find and photograph a suitable location, generate a shot list, lighting design and basic video storyboards. Be prepared to pitch your proposal by week 11.  
2) Read Viera, Ch 10 “Setting up a Production: The Cinematographer’s Duties.” (p 145-153)

**Week 10**
Screening and evaluating student work – Project #3
Lecture: Physical properties of light & color, part II.

Assignments  1) Project #5 Using a scene chosen from a professional visual work, write a lighting analysis, develop a lighting design and re-create your selected scene. DUE: week 14.

**Week 11**
Students pitching prospective shooting plans & locations (project #4) to class and guest professors.

Assignments: 1) continue work on project #5  
2) Read Brown, “Set Operations” (p 242-256)
Week 12
Lecture/practicum: Conducting the production meeting
The shooting plan/design is chosen. Students will be assigned crew positions. Our first production meeting will be conducted.

Assignments 1) Project #6 – On location, class production, based on the selected shooting plan. Individual assignments will vary based on crew positions.

Week 13
Production meeting

Assignments 1) Preparations for project #6; individual assignments will vary based on crew positions. 2) Read Brown, “Technical Issues” (258-282)

Week 14
Production meeting (ad hoc)
Reviewing student work – project #5

Assignments 1) Preparations for project #6; individual assignments will vary based on crew positions.

Production day! Crew call at the Media Center - 7am

Week 15
Student evaluations
Exam review
Take-home essay exam distributed

Assignments 1) Complete take-home exam

Week 16 (session scheduled according to the exam matrix)
Final exam is due
Screening and evaluating student work – Project #6

Project Descriptions – Lighting for Film and Video
Project #1 – Still photography re-creation of selected visual material.
Choose an image from one of the cards provided in class. Study the image for light, shadow, and subject placement. Using any basic still or video camera try to reproduce the lighting aspects of the image. You are not required to reproduce the exact content of the image (i.e. clothing or setting) unless they are critical to the overall lighting design. If you have a still camera with manual settings, bracket your exposures. Use a tripod.
Project #1 – 10% of overall course grade. Weeks 2-4

Equipment: Lighting Kit; any 3-chip video camera (if students don't have their own)
Groups/#of projects: 5 groups of 4 students (4 total projects produced in ea. group; 20 total projects produced in the class)

Time allowed to complete project: 3 weeks

Project #2 – Interior Interview.
For the interior interview project, your focus will be to learn the aesthetic and technical production of an interview segment using an indoor lighting situation of your own design. Consider your depth of field for your interview. Will you make up a special background using lighting or will you try to use a window? You must light an interview subject on location, in their own environment (i.e. don’t bring them into the television studio). You must design your own lighting plan using traditional three-point lighting or some variation. You must use lights from lighting kits obtained from the VML. Project #2 – 10% of overall course grade. Weeks 4-7

Equipment: Lighting Kit; Panasonic DVX100B kit (w/audio); grip equipment

Groups: 5 groups of 4 students (4 total projects produced in ea. group; 20 total projects produced in the class)

Time allowed to complete project: 3 weeks

Project #3 – Exterior or natural light interview
For the exterior or natural light interview you will shoot an interview segment much like the interior interview but without setting up lights from one of the VML. You can use reflector cards/bounce cards to redirect sunlight or other devices you may obtain from Home Depot based on our class field trip. Imagine you flew to a location to shoot an interview and none of your lighting equipment made it to the location with you. You need to improvise with non-professional lighting equipment and still produce a professional looking interview. Project #3 – 10% of overall course grade. Weeks 7-10

Equipment: Panasonic DVX100B kit (w/audio)

Groups: 5 groups of 4 students (4 total projects produced in ea. group; 20 total projects produced in the class)

Time allowed to complete project: 3 weeks

Project #4 – Location/shooting plan
In pairs, students will be given a short script, and will be required to breakdown the script and find a location they believe is suitable. Students will be required to shoot photographic stills and prepare diagrams (based on the locations floor plan); engineer a lighting design; generate a shot list and shoot basic video storyboards. The project is designed to emulate what a cinematographer’s process in developing a shooting plan and
style for a prospective project. All students will be given the same script. Project #4 – 10% of overall course grade. **Weeks 9-11**

**Equipment:** any 3-chip video camera  
**Groups:** 10 groups of 2 students (1 project produced in ea. group; 10 total projects produced in the class)  
**Time allowed to complete project:** 2 weeks

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**Project #5 - Deconstructing and re-creating a scene from a professional’s work.**  
This project will entail the step by step analysis of a professionals work, which includes identification of lighting sources; analysis of lighting qualities, intensities, colors; a physical re-creation of the lighting design in the studio or on location; and the accurate rendering of the re-creation on video format. Individuals will cycle through a production schedule. Groups will be formed and will serve as a rotating crew. Project #5 – 15% of overall course grade. **Weeks 10-14.**

**Equipment:** Lighting Kit; Panasonic DVX100B kit (w/audio); grip equipment  
**Groups:** 5 groups of 4 students (4 total projects produced in ea. group; 20 total projects produced in the class)  
**Time allowed to complete project:** 4 weeks

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**Project #6 – Class production**  
One shooting plan will be chosen by a volunteer panel of EMF professors, based on the quality of strategy, innovation and feasibility. The two students will serve as co-cinematographers. The instructor will serve as the director. All class members will participate in the production. Based on the shooting plan and script, we will spend one day in production on location. This will most likely be on a weekend – be prepared to make whatever arrangements are necessary to attend. Crew call will be at EMF. Project #6 – 15% of overall course grade.  
**Production scheduled for week 14**

**Equipment:** TBD (Instructor checks out all gear; instructor is on set at all times)

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**Project Grading Criteria**  
Projects are expected to be submitted on time and to demonstrate technical proficiency of the task at hand. Projects are expected to be free of major technical issues (e.g. focus, composition, basic exposure, an image free of debris, scratches, fogging or smudges). While technical proficiency is a must, projects will also be graded on creativity and aesthetic considerations. Technical proficiency will account for 65% of the grade, and will reflect how accurately images have been analyzed and rendered according to the intention of the student. Creativity and aesthetic choices will make up 35% of the grade, and will reflect the quality and consideration of the student’s intention in determining a lighting design.
**Late work policy**
Projects drop 1/3 grade point for every three days late. More details will be provided later.

**Final Exam**
Take-home essay exam based on all class materials (lectures, readings, demonstrations, projects and field trips). Scheduled according to the exam matrix.

**Quizzes**
Unannounced quizzes scattered throughout the semester requiring you to demonstrate familiarity with readings. If you read the weekly assignments you will easily accomplish this. You may miss two quizzes without penalty (or drop the two lowest scores if you take all).

**Class Participation**
Actively participate in class discussion, post-screening analyses, and in class shooting exercises.

This course cannot be repeated more than once without permission of the Academic Studies Committee.

**Grading Breakdown**
10% Project #1 – still photography reproduction of visual material
10% Project #2 - Lighting for the interior location interview
10% Project #3 - Exterior/natural light interviews
10% Project #4 - Shooting plan proposal/location
15% Project #5 - motion picture re-creation of selected scene
15% Project #6 - On location class production
10% Quizzes
10% Attendance and participation
10% Final Exam

**Bibliography**