

## **EMF 455**

### **DIRECTING FOR FILM AND VIDEO**

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Fundamentals of screen directing, which includes script breakdown, scene blocking, communication with cast and crew, and the logistics of production

#### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:** Students in this class will learn to:

1. Develop a shooting script.
2. Break down the story and dialogue in a scene.
3. Pre-visualize the script for purposes of shot design and or style.
4. Understand set logistics and the role of the director in set management.
5. Communicate and work with actors and crew.
6. Block a scene with actors and for the camera.
7. Capture and covering a scene effectively.
8. Edit footage together effectively from an intended design.
9. Critically analyze approach, story, and style in terms of film directing.

#### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:**

***Directing, Fourth Edition: Film Techniques and Aesthetics (Paperback)***  
Michael Rabiger, Focal Press.

#### **Suggested Readings**

*Film Directing: Shot by Shot*, Steven Katz  
*Directing Actors*, Judith Weston  
*On Directing Film*, David Mamet  
*The Unkindest Cut*, Joe Queenan

#### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS/GRADING**

*Class Participation/Exercises* = 15%  
*Production Assignments* = 50%

#### **Scene with 2 actors-25%**

You will develop and shoot a 3 minute scene with your group. Each group member will direct one script page and or one minute of the film. You will also turn in a script, script breakdown sheets, scene layouts, storyboards, shooting script and production reports.

#### **Scene with 2-3 Non-actors/Improv/Short Doc-25%**

You will develop this project with instructor. You will turn in Film and production report and process analysis.

#### **Final Film Project-35%**

You will develop and shoot a 6 minute short group film, with 3 scenes and a minimum of 3 actors. Each group member will direct one scene. You will also turn in a script, script breakdown sheets, scene layouts, storyboards, shooting script and production reports.

## Final Film Project.

You will create a short film approx. 6 minutes in length, with a minimum of 3 scenes and 3-5 actors. You will also turn in Script, script breakdown sheets, scene layouts, storyboards, shooting script and production reports.

\*\* Production reports will be 2-3 pages.

- Group name, crewmembers, the script title, the actors' names and the date of the shoot.
- Describe any directing choices that you were attempting; what worked and what didn't work.
- Give an overall critique of your set.
- Give an overall critique of working with the actors/crew.
- Report in detail any major problems or achievements in preproduction/production/post.
- Describe something interesting that you learned from this production.
- Note any production incidences that occurred and describe in detail possible solutions. If there were no problems on set, describe why you think the production went so smoothly.
- Explain what you learned from the directing experience.

## GRADING POLICY

A	4.00	B+ = 3.33	C+ = 2.33	D+ = 1.33	F = 0.00
A-	3.67	B = 3.00	C = 2.00	D = 1	FX = 0.00
		B- = 2.67			

The grade of '**A**' is awarded for excellence, the best in the class. The '**A**' student turns in all work on time while consistently achieving the highest standards of quality and creativity. He/she actively participates in class and demonstrates technical mastery while utilizing the creative content.

The grade of '**B**' is awarded to students who actively participate in class discussions, turns in all work on time and consistently complete work in a high quality manner. The work shows creative thinking, extra effort and care in presentation. He/she demonstrates knowledge that surpasses the basic material and skills of the course.

The grade of '**C**' is given when all class work is turned in and the student demonstrates knowledge that is required of the course. He/she regularly participates. This is average grade in the class.

The grade of '**D**' or '**F**' is given for work that is incomplete, late and/ or does not demonstrate mastery of the basic material and skills of the course.

An '**I**' (incomplete) will only be given for extenuating circumstances.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE:**

All Students are expected to adhere to the University Academic code. By registering you have acknowledged your awareness of the code and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the code. Violations of the Academic Integrity code will be addressed with maximum disciplinary action.

## **ARTISTIC INTEGRITY CODE:**

As filmmakers, we understand and respect the creative work of others. Therefore, we do not borrow, steal or unfairly use the work of others. We do not take the words, ideas, images or concepts of others without crediting the source, and we hope the same respect is afforded to our work.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**ASSIGNMENTS:** Detailed descriptions will be provided for each assignment in a handout. If you have any questions about an assignment be sure to speak with the instructor before the assignment is due.

All written assignments are to be typed and double-spaced. Each page must have the student's name, course name, instructor's name, assignment name, date and page number in the upper right hand corner.

**READINGS:** The readings are listed under the class period in which they will be discussed. You should complete the readings for the class date before the class period so that you will be able to fully participate in class discussions.

**ATTENDANCE:** Attendance is not required, but since class participation counts towards your final grade, as well as the fact that there will be numerous hands on production workshops, it is "highly" recommended. Students who are absent must obtain class notes and handouts from fellow classmates. These students are responsible for learning any material covered in class. There will be no make up classes.

**E-MAIL:** Instructor will e-mail additional course information/documents to student's Towson e-mail account.

**DEADLINES:** Project deadlines will be strictly adhered to. Late assignments will be accepted but penalized 1/2 letter grade for each day past the due date. Therefore a "B" project turned in 2 days late will receive a "C".

**DISABILITIES:** Since production can often times be mentally as well as physically demanding, any student that suffers from a disability that might compromise their performance in class assignments must inform the instructor in writing.

## **COURSE OUTLINE\***

\*(Subject to change, as announced in class.)

## WEEK 1

- Intro, syllabus.
- Explanation of assignments/grading.
- Introduction to story analysis and script breakdown.
- Introduction to working with Actors.
- First Project assignment.
- Self-assessment exercise.
- Develop and assign working groups.
- In class acting exercise.

***Assignment:** Form a working group of 3 members and select a 3-minute scene (not original) that has 2 characters.*

## WEEK 2

- Seeing with a Moviemaker's Eye.
- Story analysis and script breakdown.
- Blocking actors in class practice.
- Visualization of scene.
- The design.
- Working with the crew.
  - Screenings TBA

*Reading: Rabiger, Chapters 1-3, 7-9,  
**DUE:** 2 Character scene script.*

## WEEK 3

- **ACTORS & DIRECTORS MEET**
- Groups assigned actors for 2-character scenes.
- Discuss script, breakdown.
- Start to organize shoot.

*Reading: Rabiger, Chapter(s) 12,15,16,17  
**DUE:** 2 Character scene script breakdown, shot outline.*

## WEEK 4

- Rehearsal.
- Planning coverage.
- Mis-en-scene.
- POV.
- Blocking and cinematography.
- Rehearsal exercise.

*Reading: Rabiger, Chapter(s) 18, 29, 35.*

## WEEK 5

- Production design.
- Preproduction meeting.
- Developing a crew.
- **2<sup>ND</sup> HALF OF CLASS IS AN OPEN WORK SESSION**

*Reading: Rabiger, 26, 27, 28*

## WEEK 6

- **SCREEN AND REVIEW PROJECTS** with actors

*Reading: Rabiger, Chapter 13, 14, 15*

**DUE:** Edited 2 character scene, production reports.

## WEEK 7

- Setting Limitations
- Directing techniques for improv and non-fictions.
- View documentary story example and watch how scenes are broken down.

*Reading: Rabiger, Chapter 11, 19,*

**Assignment:** Project #2 non-actors/doc/improv/ Dogme project.

## WEEK 8- NO CLASS SPRING BREAK

## WEEK 9

- In class **CASTING SESSION** for final projects.

*Reading: Rabiger, Chapter 21 "Casting".*

*Assignment: Casting report*

## Week 10

- Preparing a scene
- Planning coverage
- Exploring the script

*Reading: Rabiger, Chapter 23, 24, 25*

**Assignment:** Storyboard for final project.

**DUE:** Casting report

## WEEK 11

- **OPEN CLASS PERIOD:** Work on final acting and directing projects
- Review and discuss the storyboards.

*Reading: Rabiger, Chapter 30 "Shooting Script"*

## WEEK 12

- **SCREEN AND DISCUSS ALL PROJECTS.**
- Continuity.
- Directing actors revisited.
- Directing the Crew.

*Reading: Rabiger, Chapter 32,34, 36.*

**DUE:** Project #2, production reports.

### **WEEK 13**

- Screen raw footage from projects and discuss.
- Preparing to Edit.
- First Assembly Cut.
- Editing principles.
- Analysis and feedback
- Screening: TBA

*Reading: Rabiger, Chapters 38, 39, 40, 41.*

**DUE:** Storyboard for final project.

### **WEEK 14**

- Working with music.
- Editing from fine cut to sounds mix.
- Promotional Material.
- Promotional exercise.

*Reading: Rabiger, Chapter 44, 43, 44.*

### **WEEK 15**

- Breaking into the industry.
- Careers.
- Course discussion/feedback

*Reading: Rabiger, Chapter 45, 47.*

### **WEEK 16**

- **DUE: Final Projects** screening/discussion