



FILM 384

601

DIRECTING FOR TELEVISION

Spring 2024

Tuesdays, 8:30 to 11:45 am

Instructor: Phillip J. McLaughlin

Room: Cinespace 202

Course Management System: D2L

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12 to 1 pm at Cinespace

Email: p.mclaughlin@depaul.edu

Course Description:

In this class students will learn about the Director's role and responsibilities within episodic television. The class will explore both the similarities and differences of a TV Director's role when compared to feature film direction, and how to make creative decisions through collaboration with the showrunner and other key heads of department to ensure the existing tone, tenor and style of the series are embraced. Through a series of lectures and practical assignments, students will break down the prep, production, and post processes to better understand how to be successful in the television production environment.

FILM 115 is a prerequisite for this class.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

1. Analyze aesthetic components of an existing TV series.
2. Breakdown a production draft of a script from the series.
3. Simulate a pre-production meeting and planning schedule using the script.
4. Create storyboards, shotlists, and blocking diagrams for key scenes.
5. Simulate production and post-production experiences related to the episode.

Reading:

Lectures will be supplemented with handouts throughout the quarter.

Suggested:

Rooney, Bethany and Belli, Mary Lou (2016) **DIRECTORS TELL THE STORY (2ND EDITION)**; Focal Press. ISBN: 978-1-138-94847-1 (pbk)



Murch, Walter (2001) **IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE: A PERSPECTIVE ON FILM EDITING (2ND EDITION)**, Silman James Press ISBN: 1-879505-62-2

Helpful Podcasts:

Scriptnotes (Craft of screenwriting/story, Business/Industry)

Series Companion Examples

Breaking Bad Insider Podcast

Better Call Saul Insider Podcast

The Chernobyl Podcast

Grading:

Final grades will be based on completion of assignments and participation in individual and group exercises within the scheduled lecture times, which is why attendance will be a crucial component to this course. Directing for Television is a demanding job and operates on a highly compressed schedule – missed meetings and failure to develop a cohesive plan result in losing crew, losing future work, and being fired from the series that hired you. Therefore, missed classes and deadlines will result in assignment failure (0%).

MODULE 01: Pre-Prep Assignment 1: Series Review, Reading the Script 10%	MODULE 06: The Tone Meeting Assignment 6: Simulated Tone Meeting Participation 10%
MODULE 02: Preparing for the Concept Meeting Assignment 2: Script Breakdown 10%	MODULE 07: Production Schedule Review Assignment 7: Complete Schedule Review and Revisions 10%
MODULE 03: The Concept Meeting Assignment 3: Simulated Concept Meeting Participation 10%	MODULE 08: Working With Actors Assignment 8: Blocking Exercise Participation 10%
MODULE 04: Departmental Prep Meetings Assignment 4: Simulated Prep Meeting Participation 10%	MODULE 09: Post-Production Assignment 9: Cut Review and Notes 10%
MODULE 05: Storyboards, Shotlists, & Working w/ The DP Assignment 5: Storyboards, Shotlists, and Diagrams 10%	FINAL ASSIGNMENT Finished Episode Review and Critical Analysis 10%

Grading Standards:

Letter Grade	Min. % of Total Points	Letter Grade	Min. % of Total Points
A+	100	C+	78
A	92	C	72
A-	90	C-	70
B+	88	D+	68
B	82	D	60
B-	80	F	0



Course Policies:

1. Participation

At this level, students should be interested in the subject of the course. The only way to see this is through participation in class, group exercises, and actively asking questions or adding constructive comments to other student's presentations and the instructor lectures.

2. Attendance

Because many assignments are based in participation in lecture activities, attendance is required. The information you need to complete your assignments will be discussed in-class; also, examples of what you have to do will be given there. Subjects and/or assignments will not be discussed outside of the programmed sessions. This makes attendance critical, and thus not an issue to be negotiated. However, if you have to miss a meeting or a deadline, make sure to plan ahead, and inform the instructor in advance. Calling in advance does not automatically excuse an absence or a missed deadline, but it is the only way to present your case. If you fail to communicate before the next class period to explain an absence or a missed deadline, they will not be excused. Please note that work, non-emergency medical and dental appointments, hangovers, intramural games, visitors from out of town, fixing your roommate's computer fraternity/sorority events, arguments with boyfriends or girlfriends and studying for other classes do not constitute excused absences or missed assignments. To petition for an excused absence, students who miss class due to illness or significant personal circumstances should complete the Absence Notification process through the Dean of Students office. The form can be accessed at: <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/dos/forms.html>.

Students must submit supporting documentation alongside the form. The professor reserves the sole right whether to offer an excused absence and/or academic accommodations for an excused absence.

3. Tardiness

One true thing in all professional fields is the lack of tolerance for tardiness. Employers do not generally tolerate such behavior, and employees who offer weak, irritating excuses frequently find themselves unemployed and unemployable. We will be working under the same rules.

Remember it is your responsibility to make the arrangements when a deadline or a class has to be missed. I will treat you professionally, expecting of you a responsible attitude. This means that it is you who must be worried about solving the problem, not me.



4. Missed Assignments

Since television creation is a cumulative effort, if you fail to turn in any of the assignments you will fail it with 0%. There will be no exceptions. This is a zero-tolerance policy. Turning-in an assignment does not guarantee you will have a passing grade, although the opposite will be true: Not turning them in will fail you inevitably.

5. Attitude

We are going to be spending a lot of time discussing other student's or your own work. This will be made in an orderly fashion, no matter how vehemently we feel for an argument, we have to be able to provide it in a disciplined manner. It is better to wait and later speak than not speaking at all. My evaluation of your attitude and attention will be based on your participation during discussions, as much as it will be based on your assertiveness when making a comment.

6. Zoom Etiquette

The DePaul Code of Student Responsibility applies to online behavior as well as in-person or classroom behavior. The following are policies for Zoom meetings if they are required.

- General – Sign in with your preferred first name and last name. If you do not have access to a computer or smartphone with internet access, call into class. This is not optimal; try to locate an internet-enabled device to use for this course. Please stay engaged in class activities. Close any apps on your device that are not relevant and turn off notifications.
- Video – Turn on your video when possible. It is helpful to be able to see each other, just as in an in-person class. You may elect to turn off your video if you have limited internet bandwidth, no webcam or if you're unable to find an environment without a lot of visual distractions.
- Audio – Mute your microphone when you are not talking. Be in a quiet place when possible and turn off any music, videos, etc. in the background.

7. Uncivilized Behavior

Even though you are students who must constantly thrive to grow, we need to start acting professionally. Therefore, there will be no tolerance for uncivilized behavior. I require an orderly ambiance to be able to make the most of each session. By accepting this syllabus, you are indicating that you understand my expectations for students concerning attitude and work ethic. I reserve the right to drop any student with an F (0%) if they have excessive absences (more than



two, and if they don't participate in any of the assignments), engages in disruptive behavior, has a poor attitude, or in any other way is clearly not taking the class seriously.

8. Ethics

Although your grade does not contain an ethics component like some other courses, I require complete honesty in producing your work. By accepting this syllabus, you are indicating that you understand the seriousness of academic dishonesty and realize there will be serious sanctions if it is proven that you have engaged in such behavior.

You are also indicating that you understand what constitutes academic dishonesty; claims that a student did not know they were engaging in academic dishonesty will not be contemplated.

9. Plagiarism

Plagiarism, cheating and/or fabrication will not be tolerated. They are serious offenses – both in course and in media careers. Thus, I reserve the right to drop any student with a 0 if they engage in any form of academic dishonesty. I further reserve the right to recommend other sanctions as may be appropriate. Plagiarism is useless to you anyway. By having someone else do the work for you, you are missing an opportunity to immerse yourself in the television industry. You are also waiving your right to learn.

More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>.

10. Withdrawal

Students who withdraw from the course do so by using the Campus Connection system <http://campusconnect.depaul.edu>. Withdrawals processed via this system are effective the day on which they are made. Simply ceasing to attend, or notifying the instructor, or nonpayment of tuition, does not constitute an official withdrawal from class and will result in academic as well as financial penalty.

For more information on DePaul's withdrawal policy visit:

<https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/support-services/academic/Pages/late-withdrawal-process.aspx>

11. Special Accommodations:

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should inform the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.



To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at:

Student Center, LPC, Suite #370
Phone number: (773)325.1677
Fax: (773)325.3720
TTY: (773)325.7296

12. Preferred Name & Gender Pronouns:

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the quarter so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. Please also note that students may choose to identify within the University community with a preferred first name that differs from their legal name and may also update their gender. The preferred first name will appear in University related systems and documents except where the use of the legal name is necessitated or required by University business or legal need. For more information and instructions on how to do so, please see the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at: <http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332>

13. Production Policies:

SCA Production Office:

The Production office, located in LL Daley Building and at production@cdm.depaul.edu is an invaluable resource to all DePaul student filmmakers. The office can answer general questions about navigating filming inside or outside of DePaul, SCA facilities and equipment, and provide resources for casting, insurance, crew calls, etc. Office hours are listed on the CDM Production Resources page here.

SCA Central:

Run by The Production Office, SCA Central is our online information hub, filled with resources including the SCA Production Handbook, pre-production templates, waivers/contracts, job listings, SCA events, local production community news & events, internship opportunities, etc. Find it on D2L and make it your home page.



SCA Production Handbook:

Required reading for all SCA Students prior to equipment/stage/studio reservations, The SCA Production Handbook is an invaluable resource to all DePaul student filmmakers. Guidelines, policies, and procedures for filming at DePaul; using SCA facilities and equipment; and answers to questions regarding SCA resources and building contacts, are found inside. The handbook is updated regularly on SCA Central and linked to the CDM Production Resources page here.

Talent Waivers:

Talent waivers must be signed by any outside talent (non-DePaul students) and submitted to The Production Office prior to camera rolling for any projects. Waivers and other commonly used forms can be found on SCA Central under "Info & Forms". DePaul

Production Insurance:

DePaul production insurance does not cover the use of fire (including pyrotechnics and fireplaces), use of vehicles for shooting (moving or stationary), or animals of any kind and is therefore not permitted for SCA projects unless proof of personal production insurance is provided.

Read more about DePaul's requirements via the SCA Production Handbook. Any questions about DePaul's insurance should be directed to The Production Office well before shooting begins (production@cdm.depaul.edu).

Use of Prop Weapons:

Rules and regulations MUST be followed when using prop weapons, including firearms. The instructor must approve the appearance of a prop weapon in any student film, including class syllabus assignments. An approved/signed Prop Weapon Request Form must be submitted to the Production Office prior to filming (find it on SCA Central under "Info & Forms"). For safety purposes, The Production Office may also review the filmmaker's plan for transportation of prop firearms prior to receiving approval for use.

ABC - Always Be Careful:

Film and video production shoots can be hazardous. Above all, work safely in all situations and always think before you act. Please don't hesitate to ask faculty if you're unsure about anything regarding your shoot, in or out of class.



Course Organization and Schedule:

We will meet Tuesdays from 8:30 to 11:45 am. Students should've reviewed all the pertinent material, we will begin by answering questions that students may have regarding the content of the class or upcoming assignments, then we will proceed to the presentations by the instructor and the exercises and activities pertinent to the current topics. We will have a break at 10:15 am and reconvene at 10:30 am. At the end of the class we will leave time to answer specific questions regarding the topics covered during the lecture and any assignments or tasks to prepare for the following class.

This syllabus is subject to modification; circumstances may arise that require changes. I reserve the right to amend the class schedule, or the syllabus, if such circumstances make it necessary. You may receive at least one revised syllabus or schedule before the quarter is over. If assignments or deadline dates change, I will inform you well in advance. Constantly reviewing D2L announcements and emails is recommended for these Purposes.

CINESPACE:

There is a **SHUTTLE** to Cinespace, it will leave from the Loop in front of Barnes and Noble. There is also a shuttle from Lincoln Park, it will leave from the corner of *N. Sheffield Ave. and W. Belden Ave.* (The shuttle will be parked next to the DePaul Student Welcome Center or in the parking lot across from the Ray Meyer Center). Please be a little early or on time for the shuttle! **Shuttle Schedule:** (under the "Getting Here" tab) <https://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Student-Resources/Pages/Cinespace-Studios.aspx>

DePaul faculty, students, and staff do not need to show ID to enter while on the shuttle. However, everyone should still have a DePaul ID on them regardless. The shuttle drop off and pick up location at Cinespace is in the blue curb area on the east side of Rockwell between 16th Street and 15th Place.

Parking: For students that *absolutely must* drive to Cinespace, our parking lot, lower lot C (2525 W. 15th Street) is outside of the Cinespace main gates, and you do NOT need a Cinespace ID to enter. If you ever have any issues with parking or campus access, you can reach out to Val Rosales, our Office Manager at 312-362-7411 or vrosale5@depaul.edu. If lower lot C is full, you may park in our upper lot J. To reach the upper lot you will need a Cinespace ID. Please don't be late for class because of a parking issue.



ANNUAL *MANDATORY* SAFETY TRAINING:

Each SCA student must go through SCA Production Training before having access to reserve production equipment from any of our equipment centers. This online training is accessible through SCA Central (<https://d2l.depaul.edu/d2l/le/content/653204/Home>) on D2L to do at your own pace. You can find it by clicking on “SCA Production Training” in the blue box towards the top of the main page. You could do this ASAP and get it out of the way!

BRING YOUR DEPAUL ID TO CLASS EACH WEEK:

All Depaul Faculty, Students, and Staff must have a DePaul-issued ID on them at all times when at Cinespace. The security gates are now in full operation at Cinespace.

DePaul personnel will now need a **Cinespace-issued ID card** to enter through any gates and secured walkways at all times. Please note that the main gate at Rockwell and 15th Street is the only gate that will remain accessible outside of normal studio business hours (5am-8pm M-F). **Cinespace IDs** will be distributed within the first two weeks of classes by Val Rosales. If you are not in attendance during the distribution of Cinespace IDs, please email Val at vrosale5@depaul.edu to schedule a pick-up time to receive your Cinespace ID.



Schedule:

Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due the week after assigned.

Module 01: PRE-PREP: HOW TO START BEFORE YOU START

2-Apr Introduction to the course and facilities walkthrough.
Series introduction, script handouts.

Assignment 1: Episode Review; Read Script

Module 02: PREPARING FOR THE CONCEPT MEETING

9-Apr Discussion of script breakdown strategies and practices.
What is the Concept Meeting and what to prepare?

Assignment 2: Script Breakdown for Concept Meeting

Module 03: CONCEPT MEETING

16-Apr Simulated Concept Meeting.

Assignment 3: Concept Meeting Participation (in-class); Dept. Breakdown Prep

Module 04: DEPT. PREP MEETINGS

23-Apr Simulated department specific meetings including (but not limited to)
Locations, Props, Stunts, Casting, Hair & Makeup, SPFX, VFX

Assignment 4: Dept. Prep Meeting Participation (in-class)

Module 05: STORYBOARDING, SHOTLISTING, & WORKING WITH YOUR DP

30-Apr Storyboarding, Shotlisting, and Camera Blocking Diagram strategies.
How to work with the DP and Camera Operators.
Looking ahead to the Tone Meeting.

Assignment 5: Scene Storyboards, Shotlists, and Diagrams



Module 06: THE TONE MEETING

7-May Simulated Tone Meeting with Showrunner

Assignment 6: **Tone Meeting Participation (in-class)**

Module 07: PRODUCTION

14-May Shooting Schedule Breakdowns, How to plan for each day, and How to navigate the set.

Assignment 7: **Complete Schedule Breakdown and Revisions**

Module 08: WORKING WITH ACTORS

21-May Effective direction strategies, blocking exercises, and directing a scene.

Assignment 8: **Blocking and Directing Exercises Participation (in-class)**
Editor's Cut Review

Module 09: POST PRODUCTION

28-May Watching cuts, giving notes, and effective strategies for working with editors in post.

Assignment 9: **Director's Cut Notes**

Module 10: PROJECT REVIEW

4-Jun Final Episode viewing and Critical Discussion and Review

Assignment 10: **Course Review and Analysis (in-class)**