
DIRECTING & PRODUCING THE SHORT FICTION FILM in Fall 2019 (FM3039)

Course Code	FM3039	Professor(s)	Marie Regan
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	GL20
Class Schedule	W: 13:45-16:40 in G-L21	Office Hours	Tues 3:00-4:30 appointment is best
Credits	4	Email	mregan@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2019	Office Tel. Ext.	621 (best to email)

Course Description

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The course will help you learn to direct and produce complex, personally expressive short fictions films. We'll do this through incremental exercises designed to help you explore storytelling structures, staging, expressive frames, working with actors, sound design, crew negotiation and editing. We'll also learn essentials of producing, press and distribution. Conducted from the director/producer viewpoint, the course challenges students to create a film that matches form with content and develops production skills through all stages of the process. The class is also an immersive creative workshop, incubating everyone's ideas with support from the group. Directing students will direct their own films; producing students will produce other students' short films in lieu of directing their own film. For best results, it is advised that you have already taken Principles and at least one Film Studies course.

Course Learning Outcomes

Create and write, direct and edit a short, cinematically expressive film.
Understand and create film language (including attention to dramatic beats, story development, staging, lighting and duration, and sound) that is expressive of and explores your film's ideas.
Master the principles of long single takes and continuity shooting to build performance and articulate space.
Record clean, expressive sound and create sound ambiance to back up your script's ideas.
Audition and direct actors across a range of emotion in your film.
Communicate your vision to your crew, manage your shooting schedule and deliver work on time at each stage of pre- and post-production.
Compile a director's notebook of idea development, class notes, research and pre-production materials.
Recognize directors by the questions they ask and how they use cinematic tools to ask those questions.
(Pending) Local and Global Perspectives (LO1): Students will enhance their intercultural

understanding of languages, cultures, and histories of local societies and the global issues to which these relate. (GLACC LO1)

Aesthetic Inquiry and Creative Expression (LO2): Students will engage with artistic or creative objects (e.g., visual art, theatrical works, film) in different media and from a range of cultural traditions. (GLACC LO2)

General Education

INTEGRATIVE INQUIRY

- Aesthetic Inquiry and Creative Expression (LO2): Students will engage with artistic or creative objects (e.g., visual art, theatrical works, film) in different media and from a range of cultural traditions. (GLACC LO2)
- (pending) Local and Global Perspectives (LO1): Students will enhance their intercultural understanding of languages, cultures, and histories of local societies and the global issues to which these relate. (GLACC LO1)

Course Outline

This syllabus may change in response to class needs. Please seek the current syllabus on Blackboard.

Week 1 - Wednesday, 4 September 2019

TOPICS: THE DIRECTOR'S VOICE AND TOOLS + DIRECTOR'S BIOS+ SCRIPT IDEAS

CLASS TIME: Class introduction, the role of the director, looking at AUP shorts for director decisions, making meaning, writing a story that is a prism for a larger idea.

READINGS: Rea and King, Introduction – 33 (Introduction + Script chapter). Take notes of five key points from each section for Director's Notebook.

WATCH AND BREAKDOWN: *Gasman* by Lynne Ramsay (online link) as directed take notes on most expressive images, what elements of the arc of the story do you think work best? See handout.

WRITE TWO SHORT SCRIPTS: Write two short scripts based on writing that came up this week - make sure they are small moment/event focused. Just write scene summaries for each

scene. Each scene should have a location, time of day and what happens. The locations should provoke or amplify the tensions of the piece. Each script should have: 1) An opening that raises the core ideas in some way (like *Gasman* does), 2) A scene that raises a problem, 3) A scene that complicates that problem, 4) A scene where something new is learned and earned, 5) A scene where a new understanding is begun. Work on both scripts this week and bring your favorite to class next week.

WRITE: Refine and deepen your director's bio from ten years out. Bring to class to share..

Week 2 - Wednesday, 11 September 2019

TOPICS: DRAMATIC BEATS/SHOTS AND MOVEMENT FOR MEANING – *Gasman*. TOOLS (DRAMATIC BEATS, ACTOR BEATS, FLOOR PLANS + PHOTO BOARDS) - YOUR INITIAL SCRIPT PITCHES CRITIQUE

CLASS TIME: Story development using images and sounds.

READ: Camera Chapter in Rea and King, (p 171-222) Note at least five key points of all the reading for your Director's Notebook.

IN CLASS:

1. Floor plan the scene inside the restaurant in *The Lunch Date*
2. Shot list the scene inside the restaurant in *The Lunch Date*

Use template on Blackboard as your model. Number the camera set ups on your floor plan.

3. Line the script of *The Lunch Date* for the scene inside the restaurant.

WRITE: Build your first full outline of your best short script idea. Know how your scenes build and raise the question differently. Write in a way so that the physical world and aural world help tell and complicate the story. Print out a version and bring to class next week.

ORGANIZE:

Start organizing and/or transcribing your Director's Notebook.

Begin researching and adding to database of casting resources for Anglophone actors in Paris willing to be in student shorts - including actors on campus and local acting and theater programs.

BRING: Your developed full script outline with summarized action and dialogue to class (5 copies for all) + Your revised director's bio.

ADD TO ACTORS DATABASE: Find, through research, calls, social media, friends, FIVE ACTORS to add with their headshot and experience to the database.

Image-Sound Hunt: Go around Paris and take photos of places that move you or you think hold some interesting possibility for filming, listen also for sounds (record on your phone), look for light (where is it, where might it be?).

Week 3 - Wednesday, 18 September 2019

TOPICS: YOUR SCRIPT AND THE STORY BEATS - REVIEW FP, SB, Lined Scripts - SCRIPT INTENSIVE

Peel Jane Campion, *Seule* by Lindsay Roche.

CLASS TIME: Tone and movement articulated through the tools of cinema. Actor motivations connected to deep idea in the film.

READINGS: Rea and King, 153-171 (Art Direction), Lenore DeKoven, *Changing Directions* (Take notes for your DN of at least top 5 points in each)

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Bring full rough draft of script to class next week, four copies each.
- Come up with life needs and scene needs for your main characters that connect to the ideas of the film.
- Re-write your script based on critique, your deep dramatic question and character needs (bring to class next week).
- Begin researching and adding to database of casting resources for Anglophone actors in Paris willing to be in student shorts - including actors on campus and local acting and theater programs.

Week 4 - Wednesday, 25 September 2019

TOPICS: DIRECTING ACTORS + CASTING + PRE-SCHEDULING YOUR SHOOT

CLASS TIME: Director inspiration handouts, presentations of final script, working with actors, script refinement.

READINGS: Rea and King, 65-81 (Scheduling), review Dekoven

ASSIGNMENTS:

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- Put out casting call through all channels for **Saturday October 13** with breakdowns. Contact and schedule time windows. All students must be present for all audition sessions.
 - Bring in a complete draft + an outline version of your short script to class with the life needs and acting verbs that would be useful in expressing the ideas in play in your script.
 - Fill out expressive sound chart for your film.
 - Bring in key frames this week.
 - Fill out final director's expression worksheets – core idea being explored, props, locations, sounds, possible practical costumes, color, lighting and sound strategies to express this.
 - Choose 'sides' for your casting session and write brief character breakdown for casting.

Week 5 – Wednesday, 2 October 2019

TOPICS: CASTING AS DIRECTORIAL EXPRESSION, SOUND DESIGN

CLASS TIME: Critique screening of key scenes for beats, performance, tone, script refinement.

READING: Rea and King, 223- 236 (Sound), and 311-335 (Sound Post Production), Randy Thom reading on Blackboard.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- **Finalize casting sessions for next week and weekend. Plan to crew for each other with sides, call times, camera etc. Prepare your sides and dates to tell them when the shoot will be exactly (with some flexibility).**
- Picture boards for each scene in your film in real or approximate locations
- Set tentative shooting schedule, bring to class next week, incl footage of best auditions coordinate with classmates.
- Conduct casting session for your own film and support your classmates' session – this will take up to 8 hours this weekend so bring work with you to maximize this time.
- Lock down schedules, back up cast, solidify locations, reserve equipment.
- Shoot stills of your storyboards for your full film – put on a google doc or pdf and upload link to them before next class (must all be within one layed out document).
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Week 6 – Wed 9 October 2019

TOPICS: SCRIPTS, PICTURE BOARDS, LINED SCRIPTS *

CLASS TIME: Director's Presentations, production binders, final script sides and director's beats, acting beats.

READINGS: Rea and King, 243-273 (Directing on set)

ASSIGNMENTS: Conduct casting session for your own film and support your classmates' session – this will take up to 8 hours this weekend so bring work with you to maximize this time.

- **Midterm Director's Notebook (as a complete PDF with picture boards too) due next week uploaded with schedule plan, class notes readings, syllabus, notes on readings, idea development, picture boards and lined script. Due in class Wed Oct 25th as pdf**

Week 7 – Wed 16 October 2019- - SHOOTING BEGINS AS EARLY AS OCT 20th

TOPICS: SMALL GROUP LINED SCRIPT, PICTURE BOARDS, SCHEDULE

CLASS TIME: Final director presentations, reviewing shooting so far and plan + Director's NB due.

ASSIGNMENTS: Revise your pre-production materials and SHOOT deeply centered, true to your prep.

Week 8 -- Wednesday, 23 October 2019 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING – FOR THE NEXT THIRTEEN DAYS YOU WILL BE EXPECTED TO SHOOT AND CREATE A ROUGH ASSEMBLE CUT OF YOUR FILM and refine for ROUGH CUT meetings (see handouts and text).

READINGS: Walter Murch reading on Blackboard; Rea and King, 277-300 (Editing)

ASSIGNMENTS: Create assemble edit using to 'truest' moments and clean sound. Put up URL of your rough assemble to our Google Doc in advance of your small group meeting, Tuesday 5 Nov and Wed 6 Nov for small group review meetings (see schedule)

30 October – Fall Break.

Week 9 -- Wed 6 November 2019 ROUGH ASSEMBLY (meeting and assemble cut reviews in

meetings)

TOPICS: FINDING AND SHAPING 'TRUTH' AND THE NEW FILM FOUND IN THE EDIT

ASSIGNMENTS: Assemble best footage for the dramatic beats of the film and over all story truth, sparseness and development. Pay attention to best work and arc of dramatic beats.

ASSIGNMENTS: Everyone create a finer rough cut based on notes and reshoots. Upload your film by Wednesday 13 November 10am (there is no class on Tuesday the 12th which will help with this).

Week 10 -- Wed 13 November 2019 IN CLASS CUT REVIEWS with Prof Regan + Class meets this WEEKEND instead at CF – American Fringe) Continue to shoot and refine your cut for next week's three on one private meetings).

TOPICS: DIGEST - ROUGH ASSEMBLY CRITIQUE MEETINGS + required panel + one screening at American Fringe this weekend at CF

ASSIGNMENTS: Attend the panel + one screening of weekend AMERICAN FRINGE at the Cinematheque Française and ask at least one question.

Week 11 – Wed Nov 20th CREATING THE FINE CUT

CLASS TIME: FINE CUT techniques and deep story and sound revision.

ASSIGNMENTS: Final polish of film, sound design, color correction, titles.

Week 12 – Wed Nov 27th TBA

ASSIGNMENTS: Final reshoots, sound, color, titles, festival approach.

Upload your FINE CUT of the film by Tuesday 5pm before next class!!!! Watch everyone's film and take notes.

Week 13 – Wed Dec 4

TOPICS: CRITIQUING THE FINE CUT

CLASS TIME: Press and pitching your film to festivals, solutions to editorial problems, pace, SOUND and COLOR CORRECTION fine cutting tips.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Work on your fine cut, taking all story arc and development notes in mind.

Bring first draft of b/w regular sized posters, festival log lines for the film to class. Next week will be split in four groups 10am, 11am, 3pm, 4pm.

- **Final film URL uploaded to our class space by Thursday 12th December at 5pm.**
- Everyone must write notes on each of the student films before our final exam.
- Bring small film COLOR revised poster to class.
- Bring final festival blurb for your film to class.
- Bring final notes on class films to class.

FINAL EXAM: WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 19TH, 3:30pm- 5pm (responses to final critiques based on viewing notes, festival blurbs, posters)

Textbooks

Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Required
Cinematic Storytelling: The 100 Most Powerful Film Conventions Every Filmmaker Must Know	Jennifer Van Sijll	Michael Wiese Productions 2nd Edition edition	978-1932907056	Yes
Directing and Producing the Short Film and Video	Peter Rea	Routledge 5 edition	9780415732550	Yes

Attendance Policy

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is

the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory. This is a double period class – any missed class counts for two missed classes and we move quickly. Your work is due every week no matter the state it is in you must DO it so that you can move to the next stage. Three un-excused absences warrant failure in the Film department.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Your directing projects are due when assigned. A director has to meet deadlines and you must too. Plan ahead.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and *especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods*.

Grading Policy

GRADING:

Director's notebook (15%) due at midterm*** <i>Exceptional</i>	A- to A	90 -100	
Attendance & <u>engaged</u> participation in workshop (20%) <i>Very Good</i>	B- to B	80 - 89	<i>Good to</i>
Weekly Assignments done on time (25%) <i>Adequate</i>	C - to C+	70 - 79	
Final project (40%) including multiple revisions	D- to D+	60 - 69	<i>Poor</i>

Failure below 60 or 3+ missed classes.

*** The 'Notebook'/Midterm is a constant, ongoing assignment done every week. It will aid your development as a director. It is DUE early morning of our midterm day. Must be completed step by step. Completeness is key._

Other

CLASS CONDUCT

Filmmaking is a collaborative art form so we'll treat our class as a serious and supportive creative workshop. Our conversations will help you grow as a director, so it is essential that you bring your finished work and full attention to class every week. Just as on a professional film set, lateness, cell phone, texting and internet use will not be tolerated and will lower your participation score. Each unexcused absence will lower your course grade by ½ grade, lateness will also take away from your participation score. Because of the cumulative nature of the workshop, late work won't work and is not acceptable. This sounds tough, but this is the only way to work in production where deadlines and limits also provoke creative solutions.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS:

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