
DIRECTING FICTION in Fall 2018 (FM3039)

Course Code	FM3039	Professor(s)	Marie Regan
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	GL20
Class Schedule	W: 15:20-18:15 in G-L21	Office Hours	Tues 3:00-4:30 appointment is best
Credits	4	Email	mregan@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2018	Office Tel. Ext.	621 (best to email)

Course Description

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Directing Fiction takes a narrative focus as it deepens the skills and conceptual ideas developed in Principles of Video Production and applies them to the craft of directing a narrative/fiction video project. The goal of this course is the complete a personal short film, y expressive short film pro course will help you in developing 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 will also create a poster, press materials and discuss festival 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.

Course Learning Outcomes

Recognize key directors by the questions they ask and how they use cinema to ask those questions.

Create and write a short, cinematically expressive film story. Create film language that suits and is expressive of your film's ideas.

Understand and break down dramatic beats.

Demonstrate ability to use staging, lighting and time to illustrate beats of meaning in the scene.

Master the principles of traditional continuity editing to build performance and articulate space.

Use mise-en-scene to build on your ideas

Record clean, expressive sound. Create a range of sound textures to backup your script's ideas.

Audition and direct actors across a range of emotional expression.

Manage your shooting schedule and communicate your vision to your crew.

Compile a director's notebook of idea development, skill, research and preproduction materials

General Education

Course Outline

September

Week 1 - Wed Sept 12th

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 - Wed Sept 19th

TOPICS: DIRECTORIAL VOICE + SHOTS AND MOVEMENT FOR MEANING + TOOLS (FLOOR PLANS + PHOTO BOARDS) *Peel* by Jane Campion. Also work on locations, actors and casting database.

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.

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 - Wed Sept 26th

TOPICS: YOUR SCRIPT AND THE STORY BEATS (DIRECTOR'S BEATS, ACTING BEATS)

CLASS TIME: Tone and movement articulated through the tools of cinema. Working with actors.

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 - Wed Oct 3rd

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:

- 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.
- Choose 'sides' for your casting session and write brief character breakdown for casting.

Week 5 – Wed Oct 10th

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).**
- 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.
- Set tentative shooting schedule, bring to class next week, incl footage of best auditions coordinate with classmates.

Week 6 – Mon October 15th Tues October 16th and Wed October 17th

TOPICS: SCRIPTS, PICTURE BOARDS, LINED SCRIPTS * **CASTING SESSION WEEKEND this weekend***

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.

- 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).
- **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.**

Week 7 – Wed October 25th - - 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.

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

ASSIGNMENTS: Log and capture all your footage before next class, paying attention to 'truest' moments and clean sound. Put up URL of your rough assemble to our Google Doc by Wednesday 10am before next class (Nov 7th)

Week 8 – Wed October 31h – FALL BREAK FILM SHOOTS WEEK TWO (no class)

You are finishing shooting your films this week and beginning to assemble your best footage into a rough cut to be finished before next class meeting.

Week 9 - Wed November 7th ROUGH ASSEMBLY (short small 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.

Week 11 - Wed Nov14th IN CLASS ASSEMBLE EDITS + 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.

Finish your refined expanded ROUGH CUT and upload your URL for **3:1 meetings by 10am on Tuesday** November 20th (see class for which date and time your meeting is)

Week 12 – Tues Nov 20th and Wed Nov 21th 3:1 ROUGH CUT CRITIQUES

CLASS TIME: Solutions and adjustments, letting the story develop in your cut.

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

Week 13 –Wed Nov 28th FINAL SHOOT CONSULTATIONS – short class time, longer meetings

TOPICS: COLOR CORRECTION, SOUND DESIGN

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

Upload your FINE CUT of the film by Wed 10am before next class.

Week 14 – Wed December 5th long class from 3:30 pm-8pm * FINE CUTS CRITIQUE *

TOPICS: CRITIQUING THE FINE CUT

CLASS TIME: Press and pitching your film, solutions to editorial problems, pace.

ASSIGNMENTS: Work to solve the edit, shoot any additional material, gather additional sound, make poster and press materials.

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

Bring posters, press pitch for the film to class.

Week 14 – Wed December 12th LAST DAY OF CLASSES * PRESS MATERIALS PITCH * plus poster and private edit meetings

TOPICS: PITCHING YOUR FILM INTO THE WORLD, LEARNING FROM WATCHING

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Final film URL uploaded to our class space by Monday 17th December at 5pm.
- Everyone watch and write notes on each of the student films on the final URL before our final exam.
- Bring small film poster printed in color to class.
- Bring final notes on class films to class.

FINAL EXAM: WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 19TH, 3:30pm- 5pm (Distribution plans, final

critiques based on viewing notes, posters)

Textbooks

Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Required
Producing and Directing the Short Film and Video, 5th Edition	Peter Rea and David K. Irving	Focal Press 5 edition (March 25, 2015)	97880415732550	Yes

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.

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.

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

Director's notebook (15%) due at midterm***

Attendance & engaged participation in workshop (20%)

Weekly Assignments done on time (25%)

Final project (40%) including multiple revisions

*** The 'Midterm' is a constant ongoing assignment done every week it will aid your development as a director and help you develop your understanding. It is DUE on midterm day but can only be completed every week step by step. The completeness of the work determines the grade.***

A- to A 90 -100 *Exceptional*

B- to B 80 - 89 *Good to Very Good*

C - to C+ 70 - 79 *Adequate*

D- to D+ 60 - 69 *Poor*

Failure below 60 or 3+ missed classes.

Other

CLASS CONDUCT

Filmmaking is a collaborative art form so we'll treat our class as serious and supportive creative workshop. Your involvement your classmates' work and critique cycle is essential to the creation of a vital, committed and productive workshop. Our conversations will help you grow as a director so it is essential that you bring your finished work and full attention to each class.

Just as on a professional film set, lateness, cell phone use, 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 is not acceptable. I know this sounds tough, but this is the only way to work in production.