

Directing With Directors

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Course Description and Objectives

In this intro to directing course, we will study and practice the art of film/video directing. During the first half of the term we will study a selection of directors that have had an influence on the work of some contemporary directors. As the title of this course suggests, we will explore what we can learn by studying the work of these contemporary directors who have developed a style and methodology based on and often mimicking their role-model's films. How can we define style? How is style reproduced on page, stage, and screen? What is film language? What is Auteur Theory? By the first half of the semester you should be able to answer these questions. Upon completion of the course you will have had the opportunity to perform a close reading of a film, create a storyboard, and direct a scene.

Weekly Readings/Class Participation: The weekly readings are essential for this class and you will be expected to participate in class discussions on each week's readings. Reading assignments are due the week they are listed on the schedule.

Mid-Term Project - Shot-by-Shot Breakdown: In this assignment you will choose **one** scene from a list of films that will be handed out during Week Three. In this paper, you will catalogue each shot of the scene you choose, noting formal elements/characteristics of each shot. Format and more details about this assignment will be handed out in class.

Storyboard Project: During Week Four you will have the opportunity to pick an existing screenplay of your choice and form a crew of four students. Individually you will develop a storyboard for **one** scene written in the chosen screenplay. Group members will be encouraged to develop a storyboard using a scene that is not already used by a fellow group member.

Final Project: After agreeing upon which scene/storyboard from the Storyboard assignment your group wants to produce, your group will produce a single scene together on video. For this assignment you will be graded by your peers as well as given an overall group grade given by the rest of the class. This project is a group project and much like a professional production will depend on every member's contribution. In addition to the completed scene, each member will need to write a short summary of their contribution to the scene, what they learned from working with their group, what challenges were experienced and how any (if any) problems were overcome.

For this project you will have the option to either:

- a) Recreate the scene your group has chosen shot-by-shot with absolute accuracy to the original. Try to recreate the *mise-en-scène* of the original to the best of your abilities. Obviously some things will not be possible to replicate.
- b) Produce the scene your group has chosen in the style of another director of your choice. For example, recreating a scene from *Citizen Kane* in the style of Wong Kar Wai.

Grade Breakdown:

Class Participation 10%

Mid-Term Project (30%)

Storyboard Project (20%)

Final Project (40%)

Class Policies, Grading and Assignments

No late assignments or make-up exams or assignments. All assignments are due in class or during designated meeting times. No emailed assignments will be accepted for credit.

Required Text

Rabinger, Michael. *Directing: Film Techniques and Aesthetics*. 4th Edition. Focal Press: 2007

Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

Screening: *Lumière and Company* (1995)

Week 2: Theme

Clips from *Sullivan's Travels* (Sturges, 1942)

Clips from *O Brother Where Art Thou* (Cohen, 2000)

Reading: Rabiger p. 3-27

Week 3: Film Language

Clips from *In the Mood for Love* (Kar Wai, 2000)

Clips from *Heartbeats* (Dolan, 2010)

Reading: Rabiger p. 43-64

Mid-Term Film Options Handed Out

Week 4: Adaptation

Mid-Term-"Shot-By-Shot Breakdown" Due

Picking a Screenplay / Forming your crew

Readings from the *Book of Job*

Screening: *A Serious Man* (Cohen, 2009)

Reading: 119-155

Week 5: Auteur Theory

Clips from *Les Mistons* (Truffaut, 1957)

Clips from *Amelie* (Jeunet, 2001)

Reading: Rabiger p. 165-181

Week 4: Pre-Production

Clips from *The Night of the Hunter* (Laughton, 1955)

Reading: Rabiger p. 215-223 & 248-258

Week 6: Production

Storyboard Project Due

Reading: Rabiger p. 333-369

Week 8: Directing

In-Class Group Project

Reading: Rabiger p. 385-424

Week 7: Post Production

Clips from *Hot Fuzz* (Wright, 2007)

Reading: Scenes 1-3 of *Hot Fuzz* Screenplay

Week 8: Directing Non-Fiction/Non-Narrative Genres

Clips from *Sans Soleil* (Marker, 1983)

Clips from *God's Country* (Malle, 1986)

Reading: To Be Announced

Week 9: **Final Project Due**

In-Class Festival

