

CET Syllabus of Record



Program: Film Production in Prague

Course Title: Film Technology and Practice

Course Code: FP510

Recommended Credits: 9

Suggested Cross Listings: Film Studies

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites/Requirements: Required for all program students; Open in the fall and spring only

Description

This composite, time-intensive course includes regular mentoring and consultation with a team of expert faculty in the departments of Directing, Cinematography, Screenwriting, Acting and Editing. During production, students collaborate with a professional-level production manager, camera assistant, sound designer and color grader. Students also practice the art of talent selection by working with a casting agency that provides professional actors for their productions. Students work with the lab, select film stocks for greater cinematic control and practice lighting both interior and exterior productions. During the post-production process, emphasis is placed on the importance of color-grading and color-correction, graphics, special effects, sound mixing and design.

This core class is composed of five smaller classes, each of which is described in greater detail below:

1. Directing and Scriptwriting
2. Screenplay Writing
3. Cinematographer's Workshop and Lighting Exercise
4. Camera and Film Language Seminar; Color-Grading Workshop
5. Acting Studio

The course also includes a Master class throughout the semester in which students view the works of and meet with established local filmmakers. Additionally, the course includes Sound and Editing seminars at the beginning and end of the semester.

In total, this course includes approximately 185 contact hours per semester. CET recommends granting 9 semester hours of credit for this course.

1. Directing and Scriptwriting

Description: This workshop focuses on mastering the fundamentals of film language and its grammar. Students establish a theoretical knowledge of the craft by developing their own projects and discussing the process and results with the instructor and fellow students. Through their final projects, students practice and explore filmmaking in three organically overlapping parts: 1) Narrating a story—the role of the author 2) The fundamental elements of film production such as film narration, the creation of film time and space in the editing room, working with actors, mise en scene, blocking, etc. 3) The role of the director: visualizing and composing shots, staging dialogue sequences with two or more actors, mobile staging and frame depth.

CET Syllabus of Record

Instructor and students work together on the final project from the beginning of the process to the shooting of the film (idea, script, storyboard, shots, directing). The professor holds a weekly class and as well as individual consultations with the students about their projects.

Objectives: During this course section, students learn to recognize that directing is a complex and multifaceted craft that involves working with several factors, which, as a whole create meaning in drama and images. By approaching film through an analytical lens, students learn to ask, "How and why did a director do this? and why or why not was it successful?" Directing is more than following a script and instructing actors; through this course, students will realize why.

Topics Covered: Depth of Field and Framing, Movement of Camera and Subjectivity, Montage, Editing and Rhythm, Acting Structure of Narration, Metaphorical Expression, Point of View, Length and Size of Image.

2. Screenplay Writing

Description: One purpose of this course is to study films from a dramaturgical perspective; to demonstrate diverse narrative techniques, dramatic structures and genre forms; and to closely examine the craft of screenwriting. Each student group then writes a script for their individual films and has it analyzed by the class and instructor. The instructor also works with the students on their individual scripts for their final projects.

Objectives: Through the intensive analysis of films, the following principles are examined and explained: three act story structure, plot points, turning points, the function of exposition, the catalyst, rising action, crisis, climax, culmination, resolution, main tension, theme, as well as scenes and sequences, sub-plots, double-plots, multi-plots and internal scene structure. Analysis also covers the role of the protagonist, the creation of empathy, the journey of protagonist (spine), active and passive characters, supporting characters, "string characters", character arcs and character motivation, the role of the antagonist, as well as the use of conflict and obstacles, and a comparison of objective vs. subjective conflict, and action vs. activity.

The course also explores interpretations of film as a temporal-spatial art by examining pacing, rhythm, accelerating action, and the handling of time and space, montage, transitions, sound, and music. Dialogue, the dramatic use of props and costumes, staging and the creation of atmosphere as employed in the screenplay are also covered. Students are expected to recognize these dramatic and narrative elements.

3. Cinematographer's Workshop and Lighting Exercise

Description: This workshop provides a comprehensive study into the tools and the craft of cinematography. Each week, students meet with their mentor/professor to analyze various aspects of cinematography in relation to a specific field project. The field project explores the tools of the cinematographer (i.e. camera equipment, lighting, exponometry, etc.) while at the same time providing students the necessary theory and experience to develop an individual style and poetic. By the end of the semester, students have the groundwork to conceive and photograph their final project. The professor also works with the students during the process of making of the final film.

Objectives: In the course section, students learn to understand and apply:

- Lighting: terminology, basic rules, intensity, color temperature, filters

CET Syllabus of Record

- Exponometry, setting exposure, the variables affecting exposure
- Incident light measuring technology
- Spotmeter measuring technology
- Cameras and equipment that may be used
 - Aaton 16mm – XTR, LTR, Production
 - ARRI SR 3 16 mm
- Studio lighting theory
- Photographic methods
- Postproduction technology: laboratory and grading
- Telecine transfer technology
- Video production: TV technology
 - TV cameraman's role in the process of video production
 - Pre-shooting camera and sound preparation (white balancing, etc.)

Topics Covered: Introduction to the Workshop, Analysis and Discussion of Project, Introduction to Lighting, Analysis and Discussion of Lighting Project.

4. Camera and Film Language Seminar; Color-Grading Workshop

Course Description: The Camera and Film Language seminar focuses on the role of the camera in cinematography. Elements such as shot size, axis rules, angles of view, etc. (technical tools that serve a dramatic purpose in film) are examined in-depth. Several styles of cinematography are considered in order to understand how to develop a story and cultivate a style using film language. "Movement" as a fundamental tool of cinematography is emphasized. The professor works with the students on the final film and advises on camera techniques during the shooting process.

The Color-Grading Workshop focuses on working with the postproduction grading system Final Cut Pro Color Corrector. This computer program contains functions for improving and/or radically changing the appearance of your film project. To complement the technical elements of the class, the professor shares his recent experiences using different technologies to make 35mm feature films. The professor also helps the students with the final color-grading of their films.

Required reading for this course section is as follows: Daniel Arijon, *Grammar of The Film Language*; Steven D. Katz, *Shot by Shot*; Kris Malkiewicz, *Cinematography*.

Seminar Topics Covered:

- Introduction + Shot sizes, Angles and Axis rules. Cinematographer as collaborator of storyboards, collaborator of storytelling.
- Movement as basic means of expression of film. Historical experience projection. Movement of objects in front of camera. Movement of lights. Movement of camera. 3D feeling. Using plans.
- Movement exercise. 30m reversal B&W film: study of Movement. Projection.
- Basic rules of picture composition and framing. Composition styles in painting. Le nombre d'or + Golden section rules.
- Theory of backgrounds. Parameters of shooting locations.
- Theory and practice of Depth of Field.
- Color theory. RGB + CMY + K. Color wheel. Color grading in film and video.
- Lighting theory. Cinematography styles. Historical overview.

CET Syllabus of Record

- Storyboard consultations for main film exercise.
- Additional time for individual consultations with the professor for preparations, shooting and editing of Final Film Exercise.

Workshop Schedule:

- Introduction. Basics of color systems, basics of TV grading, basics of film grading, discussion of how color styles serve dramatic function in film.
- Practical workshop on computer Macintosh G4(5) with Final Cut Pro – basics of Final Cut Pro. Professor shows examples from scenes.
- Practical workshop on computer with Final Cut Pro. Every student does a short correcting exercise.
- Projection of tests, touching upon problematics of grading film prints (Kodak prints, Premiere, Fuji), 16mm blow ups, DV/35mm tests, HDTV/35mm tests. Comparison of the advantages/disadvantages of the systems.
- Time for personal consultations or possible design of color correction for student projects.

5. Acting Studio

Course Description: This a practical course for directors, producers, scriptwriters, cinematographers or editors so that they may understand the actor's craft. The course proceeds from exercises and various improvisations to a given text, a dialogue and finally a monologue. At the end of each section, students perform a piece in front of the camera, directing each other and then assessing their work together. The actor is the director's creative partner and in order to understand his/her process, directors need to try the same themselves. The professor consults with the students when they are choosing and directing actors in their final projects.

Students direct and film each other in scenes for a final grade. They are encouraged to bring to class their own texts of interest: screenplays, dramas or their own work. Part of this workshop is home preparation, including full knowledge of a given text.

It is recommended that students read the following Stanislavski translations:

- An Actor's Work on Himself, Parts One and Two, 1990-2
- An Actor Prepares, 1936
- Building a Character, 1950
- Creating a Part, 1961
- Jean Benedetti: Stanislavski and the Actor, G. B.1998

Objectives: The primary objective of this course section is to learn the basis of the actor's craft so that as directors, students know how to work with him or her. Students learn:

- The basis of the actor's craft: "the thought process" that shapes the action from "game to drama"
- Exercises that expand creativity
- How to devise work on a particular text – "an actor prepares"
- To shape their own film through workshopping scripts with actors
- Touch of casting through their own experiences