

COMF 473: Electronic Cinematography

Spring 2012

Dr. Cameron A. Pace, Professor

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This three-credit hour course introduces the student to the processes of motion picture production in both film and digital video. Film directing and production will be covered through lecture and text materials. This includes an overview of cinematic production with some attention given to the art of filmmaking. The student will also be introduced to film production techniques with special attention given to directing for lighting and photography. Finally, this course investigates how to best tell a story using cinematic techniques and allows the student to work on a significant film project.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will have an understanding of basic and advanced film and video editing procedures and will be able to perform these using computer-based editing systems.
2. Students will be able to prepare and produce various cinematographic productions such as commercials, dramas, and music videos.
3. Students will develop their creative potential by providing a wide variety of acceptable responses within the structures of the different individual and group assignments produced in this course.
4. Students will be knowledgeable of various film directorial techniques in relation to both acting and camera direction.
5. Students will gain practical skills in motion picture film and video production.
6. Students will be familiar with the role of director of photography and the techniques used in this position.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Frost, J. B. (2009). *Cinematography for Directors*. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions.

Rabiger, M. (2008). *Directing: Film Techniques & Aesthetics. 4th Ed.* Boston: Focal Press.

RECOMMENDED READING

Student Filmmakers Magazine – information found at <http://www.studentfilmmakers.com/>

Mascelli, Joseph. *The Five C's of Cinematography*. Hollywood: Grafic Publications, 1966.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS (Most assignments are clarified further on assignment sheets posted on the professor's Website. These sheets are considered appendices to the syllabus.)

1. Students are required to **attend class** and read assigned text materials as listed in the Course Outline.
2. **Dramatic Commercial Project*** – Students will work in groups of two (maybe three) to produce a 60-second dramatic commercial on HD digital video and submitted on DVD-R. The spot must have a dramatic conflict with actors portraying real people to promote an approved product. Video is to be recorded in widescreen, color, with appropriate sound. The spot should end with a product or logo shot with possible narration. All content must be original with music from production CDs. This project must be edited using AVID editing software. Final video will be exported with H.264 using 720p settings. Place file on the disc for playback (data disc).
3. **Music Video Film Project*** - Each student will work in a small group to produce a three to four-minute, 16mm music video on film and transferred to video for computer and sound editing. The video must have a dramatic element (concept), but may use musicians and vocalists, if desired. The concept vs. musician footage should be 2 to 1 on final edit. These projects will be evaluated for proper exposure, technical expertise, color, creativity, and application of style relating to genre. Project will be shot on 16mm film, processed, and returned to the student on digital video for editing. The final product will be on DVD-R for class playback and evaluation. Students are also required to shoot their project in digital video as a backup to the film. More points will be given to those projects where film footage was used more. Export same as commercial settings on data disc.
4. **Movie Script Proposal** - Each student will create a written proposal of an idea for a 7 to 10 minute, wide-screen, color movie. This proposal should include a narrative treatment, a scene breakdown, and a script. This document should be 9 to 12 pages in length (script takes up most of this). Each student will present his/her proposal to the class as a logline. Proposals will be evaluated for creativity, workability, and completeness. Make sure that the idea of the film presents a clear dramatic conflict, interesting characters, and a theme that is reflective of a Christian worldview (no zombies/vampires, graphic violence, or sexuality). All scripts will be considered by the professor for later production. Four to five scripts will be selected for the group film projects.
5. **Group Film Production*** - Students will work in groups to produce a 7 to 10 minute wide-screen, color digital film in high definition. Students will act as director, photographer, producer/writer, lighting director, and audio engineer during production, then share the duties of editing the film equally. Students will be using an HD digital video camera for production. Films must be shot in 16:9 aspect ratio and have a complete soundtrack (no copyrighted music – no Freeplay music). These films must be narrative and dramatic/comedic. Appropriate graphics such as opening titles and ending credits must be added to the final production. A production script must be turned in for approval prior to the production phase. Each group will record their final edited program on to DVD (same settings as above projects) for playing to the class on the due date. An 1080p HD version of the film will be used for film night. All documents related to the production are due at that time. The EU Films Showcase is April 27.
6. **Exams and pre-quizzes** - There will be two exams scheduled during the semester over reading and notes. The mid-term exam will cover all material presented prior to the test. The final exam will

cover all material presented since the mid-term exam. Study guides will be posted on this page a few days before each test. Pre-quizzes will be administered and posted via Angel.

COURSE OUTLINE (Reading assignments should be completed before the date indicated.)

1/12 - Intro to course/syllabus/materials/assignments

1/17 – On film and directing – shooting the commercial - Rabiger chaps. 1- 3, Frost chap. 1

1/19 - The Film Production Process –Frost chap. 2, Rabiger chap. 4

1/24 –Demonstration of traditional filmmaking – using film cameras – Frost chap. 8

1/26– Music video production techniques – notes – Frost chap. 4

1/31 – Film visualization and planning – Rabiger chaps. 5 & 6

2/2 – Commercials due today on DVD – class presentations - Film Production and cameras – Rabiger chap. 6, Frost chap. 7

2/7 – Scripts and Actors – working from text to realism – notes- Rabiger chaps. 7 - 9

2/9– Controlling light & exposure – being the DP – notes – Frost chap. 6

2/14 - Film scripting and pre-visualization - Rabiger chaps. 10 - 11

2/16 - Audio for film – notes **Exposed film reels due today – no exceptions**

2/21 - Movie Proposals Due - Film aesthetics & principles - Rabiger chaps. 12 - 16

2/23 – HD Cameras and shooting widescreen - Demonstration & video presentation - notes

2/28 – Working with actors - Rabiger chaps. 17 - 20 (Discuss group assignments)

3/1 - **MID-TERM EXAM (Covers Frost chaps. 1, 2, 4, 6 – 8 & Rabiger chaps. 1 - 20)**

3/5 - 3/9 - Spring Break

3/13 - Production Process - Rabiger chaps. 28 - 32, Frost chaps. 3 & 10

3/15 - Film Festival of 16MM Music Video Film Projects (play videos in class) Rabiger chaps. 33 - 37

3/20 - Film post-production process - Rabiger chaps. 38 – 40, Frost chap. 5

3/22 - Film labs and video transfers - Frost chap. 9

3/27 - Advanced editing – demonstration and video presentation

3/29 - Troubleshooting - non-linear editing for film and digital video - Rabiger chaps. 41 - 44

4/3 – Non-linear film editing – class exercise in Lab 315. – notes

4/5 – Non-linear film editing – class exercise in Lab 315 – notes

4/10 – Shooting in 3D – stereoscopic filmmaking – notes - demonstration

4/12 - Distribution and marketing of films - notes

4/17 – NAB/BEA Convention (no class – work on film projects)

4/19 – NAB/BEA Convention (no class – work on film projects)

4/24 – Careers in filmmaking – how to get a job. Rabiger chaps. 45 - 47

4/26 - World Premieres - **FILM FESTIVAL - GROUP PROJECTS DUE!**

April 27 – Movie Night! (films shown with Film Workshop feature)

FINAL EXAM - Tuesday, May 1 at 10:00 AM – test over material since mid-terms.

ABSENCES

Students are encouraged to attend all class meetings to receive the full benefit of the course. Students who are absent more than 25% of class meetings will be dropped from the course with an F. This averages to a **maximum of seven (7)** absences allowed. Make-up work will be allowed only for excused absences. The nature of the make-up work is at the discretion of the professor. Students should make every effort to be in class and on time. No incompletes will be given for this course except in the case of emergency situations with approval from the professor. Please notify the professor if there is a need to leave class early. However, **leaving class for bathroom, cell phone, or other unnecessary breaks is not allowed.** Class participation points will be deducted for coming and going during class time.

LATE POLICY

Due to the nature of the film projects required in this course, **no late projects can be accepted (those marked with *)**. It takes nearly two weeks to have movie film developed at the lab including shipping. This allows very little time for editing or evaluating projects during the semester. Therefore, do not turn in film reels late under any circumstances. They may not be developed in time to receive credit. All non-film/video assignments may receive a late penalty of up to 40% if not turned in on time at the beginning of class. If the project is more than three days late, the project will receive a zero. All projects must be completed to pass this course. Extended illness or family emergencies will be dealt with on an individual basis.

MATERIALS AND SCHOOL EQUIPMENT

Facilities in the TV Studio will be available during the semester for checking out equipment and editing/viewing film. Film cameras and tripods are available to be checked out in the TV Studio. Lighting and sound equipment will also be available should you need it. Film equipment is to be reserved and checked out in the same manner as video equipment currently is at the TV Studio. A demonstration on film camera operation will be given during class. This is a 400 level class. Do not expect the workstudies to know how to do your projects. You must become your own technical support at this level. You may always ask for help from the professor. The TV Studio engineer (Gabe Mays) will be available for questions, but not to work on your project for you.

WARNING!!!

FILM STOCK IS VERY VULNERABLE TO LIGHT EXPOSURE. NO ALLOWANCES FOR CARELESS HANDLING OF FILM WILL BE GIVEN IN THE EVALUATION OF FILM PROJECTS. ALSO, DEVELOPED FILM CAN BE

DAMAGED BY POOR HANDLING. SCRATCHES, TEARS, AND FINGERPRINTS WILL CAUSE DIFFICULTY IN CLEAN, PROPER IMAGING LATER. LOAD AND UNLOAD THE CAMERA CAREFULLY AND FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS.

BROADCAST RIGHTS

As with all productions, student or otherwise, produced at ECTV, your film may be selected to be aired over the ECTV cable access channels in whole or in part. Each show is to be considered an ECTV Presentation with copyrights belonging to ECTV. Do not use copyrighted material for your film projects. The music video project is an exception as it is a classroom project, not used by ECTV.

EXERCISES & ASSIGNMENTS

These projects are completed using the equipment at the TV Studio. Start working on these assignments early to avoid the rush which occurs just before the deadline. Equipment non-availability is not an excuse for late assignments. Equipment breakdown is also not an excuse for late work. Start early, practice your skills, and pay attention to assignment details – these will help you to be successful.

POLICY ON INCOMPLETE WORK

All assignments given during this course must be completed by the end of the course. Once the semester ends, a student will receive an F if any major assignment is missing. Assignments due on Final Exam day will not be accepted more than two days late. Late assignments (those that are allowed to be turned in late) may be penalized up to 40% off the grade the assignment has earned. Students receiving an F due to incomplete work should repeat the course. Extended illness and other legitimate reasons for late work will be considered on an individual basis.

TESTS

Students who are absent the day of a test may only be excused because of sickness (with doctor or nurse signature), family emergency, or administrative permission. Taking a test at any other time than the scheduled exam time will result in a 5% penalty unless required to be absent by the institution.

GRADING

Class exercises & participation	10%
Commercial spot	10%
Music Video Film Project	15%
Movie Script Proposal	10%
Group Film Project	30%
Exams/quizzes	<u>25%</u>
Total	100%

Students who have questions concerning any particular grade or their semester grade should make an appointment to see me before the end of the semester or as soon as a question arises.

VIDEOTAPES AND EQUIPMENT

The TV Studio does not provide students with videotapes or SDHC cards for personal use such as class projects. Students must use their own media for field recording, editing, etc. Students needing to check out cameras or other equipment from TV Studio must first be competent to use the equipment. Please see Gabe Mays or TV Studio employees for additional information. Film will be supplied for the music video film project. Mastering discs will be given for the group film projects. The lab fee in this course is used to cover the cost of film stock and processing. Any funds left over will be used to provide additional supplies to the TV Studio for use by all groups. There are no "budgets" for any project per se.

TV STUDIO FACILITIES

Evangel University does not charge a lab fee for using the TV Studio facility itself. Students are given the privilege to use school equipment for the purpose of completing assignments in Communication coursework. Misuse, neglect, or carelessness by a student while using school equipment may be cause for privileges to be withdrawn or restricted. TV Studio equipment is to be used for Evangel Communication coursework only and not for other courses offered at Evangel or elsewhere.

CELL PHONES & LAPTOPS

Students should silence or shut off cell phones during class. Cell phone calls or texts should be made before class. **Laptops may not be used during class time.** Any other electronics such as PDAs, Blackberries, Gameboys, etc. should not be used during class. Failure to follow these directions will negatively affect the student's participation grade.

PACE'S ACAMANIA WEB SITE

This Web site is a place to find help for Dr. Pace's classes by providing syllabi, forms, handouts, and assignments anytime, 24/7. Any computer with Internet access can connect to it. Type in the browser address window the following URL:

<http://www.doctorpace.net>

To email Dr. Pace: pacec@evangel.edu

ANGEL SYSTEM AND ONLINE REQUIREMENTS

This course requires students to use the Angel system for quizzes and related assignments. Please make sure you are using a reliable computer with proper Internet access before beginning to take any quiz. Questions about technical problems should be first sent to Dr. Pace via email, then the helpdesk on campus.