FLM 101: Introduction to Filmmaking: Visual Storytelling
Prof: David Schultz - david.j.schultz@stonybrook.edu

Fall 2018
FLM 101 S02 (55141)
T/Th 5:30-6:50pm
Location: SOCBEH N106
Office Hours: T/Th 4:00-5:00pm (Suite N3017 Melville Library)

Catalog Description: A hands-on introduction to the art of narrative filmmaking. Students will become familiar with the ideas, materials and technical skills needed for creative expression in this medium. Participants will learn how to use images in conjunction with sound, text and narrative structure as a basis for communicating ideas on film. Specific visual communication skills include: clarifying a subject, defining a goal, defining an audience, exploring the tools and resources available, and crafting ideas into short films using Smartphones or comparable devices.

DEC: D
SBC: ARTS
3 credits

Course Description: Ever have the burning desire to make a movie but didn’t know where to start? With all the tools we have at our disposal, there’s no better time to learn how to do it than now. This course is designed to introduce you to the world of narrative filmmaking through a combination of survey, lecture, discussion, reflection and hands-on experience. During our class, we will be exploring the basic elemental language of cinema to see how classic and contemporary filmmakers from all over the world speak this universal language. By dissecting their work, we will examine which tools and techniques they use to communicate their ideas as effectively as possible and apply that knowledge to our collaborative group exercises where you get to make your own films. By combining theory and practice, students will learn about the choices a filmmaker has to make, which include everything from camera angles and lighting, to sound design and editing. By the end of it all, you’ll be able to go into the world with nothing more than your smartphone, laptop and brain and be the best visual storyteller you can be!

Course Goals:
- To get comfortable with the form and function of films: to understand the basic building blocks of the cinematic language and WHY, WHEN, and HOW they are used.
- Try out various technical and creative positions (director, actor, editor) with your group to come out of the class with 3 short films that you had a hand in creating.
- Become acquainted with the powerful technology at your disposal: the iPhone (equipped with the application FiLMiC Pro) and the basic editing software on any Apple device - iMovie.
- Develop a deeper understanding and fondness for films and how they are crafted, hopefully sparking a long-lasting desire to create in YOU!!!

Course Requirements:
- **Watch films!** If you’re going to make films, you need to watch them. Most weeks, you will be assigned ONE film to watch outside of class. The following class, you will hand in a journal reflection on said film designed to help you examine the formal elements of the work.
- Do the homework.
- **Participate!** Contribute to in-class discussions, get active and engaged in group work. Film is a collaborative medium, let’s help each other understand it and make some movies together.
- Pass **two** short exams at the middle and end of the semester to make sure you’re retaining key information about film’s various tools, techniques, theories and figures.
- **Complete short films** with your group throughout the semester. You each will rotate through the various positions. You **must** be present and involved in the production of these films.

Required Watching:
Every student will be responsible for watching the assigned films on their own time. **All films will chosen from Stony Brook’s free streaming service Kanopy, which you have access to here:**

https://stonybrook-kanopystreaming-com.proxy.library.stonybrook.edu

Required Equipment/Software:
- Access to a smartphone (either iPhone or Android)
- FiLMiC Pro video application ($14.99 for both iPhone and Android)
- iMovie for editing (available on any Apple device)

Required Reading:
- “Understanding Movies” - Louis Giannetti

Recommended Reading:
- “Hitchcock/Truffaut” - Francois Truffaut
- “Filmish: A Graphic Journey Through Film” - Edward Ross

Grading:
- Completed Films: 50%
- Attendance, Participation and Weekly Journals: 30%
- Two Exams (Midterm And Final): 20%
Course Schedule:

**Week 1A (8/28): Introductions**
Let’s get to know each other, the course and what’s expected of you during the semester. We can talk about our favorite films, go over the syllabus, and break up into our groups that we’ll be making films with the rest of the semester.

**Week 1B (8/30): Overview**
Before we jump in, let’s get a very broad overview of two things: the early history of filmmaking and the fundamentals of how the camera works. At the end of class, we’ll break out our iPhone’s and see what principles carry over to our new tools.

*Homework:* Keep exploring the app

**Week 2A (9/4): How to Read an Image/Mise-en-scene, Part I**
Let’s learn the very basics of visual grammar. How do the human eye and brain work together to interpret images, and how do we as image makers exploit those reactions? We’ll start to break down the concepts of Mise-en-scene, or the “arrangement of everything before the camera and its placement”, and why they are used.

*Homework:*
Read Understanding Movies pg. 1-25

**Week 2B (9/6): Mise-en-scene, Part 2**
We’ll continue our discussion and analysis of Mise-en-scene, as it’s a long discussion.

*Homework:*
Watch Assigned Film - write your first Journal Reflection

*Reflection Prompt:* Write a reflection on how the film utilizes the elements of Mise-en-scene that we’ve been discussing. Pick 3 images from the film and describe them: What is the composition like? How wide or close is the shot? What does the image add to the story?

**Week 3A (9/11): No Class**

**Week 3B (9/13): Mise-en-Scene Workshop**
The same discussion, continued. Then, we’ll take a case study, get up and see how to actually shoot a scene. What are our options? What are the realities of filming with actual people in actual space in relation to the theories that we learned.

*Homework:*
Read Understanding Movies Pg. 49-101

**Week 4A (9/18): Movement Pt. 1**
We’ve talked about images, now let’s add the crucial ingredient that gives a movie its name: movement! We’re going to look at HOW, WHY, and WHEN the camera moves.

**Homework:**
Break down an Assigned Scene shot-by-shot to try and understand what the Movement is doing at different moments. How, why, and when the camera moves through space. How does that affect our mood? How does it reinforce and enhance the moment?

**Week 4B (9/20): Movement Pt. 2 + FIRST EXERCISE - THE “ONER”**
First, we’ll take a look at how all the elements of Movement and Mise-en-scene we learned about are combined into ONE CONTINUOUS TAKE.

From there, we break into groups to plan our first exercise: to create a scene with a specific prompt (TBD) all in ONE CONTINUOUS TAKE! I want to see you employing elements of the visual language we’ve been discussing so far. In your groups, you’ll decide who is going to fill what position (which will rotate with each assignment), talk about how you’re going to execute your plan (both artistically and practically) and then, you’ll go out and achieve your vision!

**Week 5A (9/25): Screening/Critique/Editing Pt. 1**
Let’s grab some popcorn because it’s time to watch our creations. We’re to watch each film and break down all of the decisions, why they were made, if they worked or didn’t work, and how they can be improved.

From there, we’re going to talk about the history and theory of editing, how it affects us psychologically.

**Week 5B (9/27): Editing Pt. 2**
We’ll continue the discussion from last week about editing and go a little deeper into the different ways a scene can be put together.

**Homework:**
Read Understand Movies, pg. 147-198
Watch Assigned Film – write your third Journal Reflection

**Journal Prompt:** Write a reflection on how the placement and speed of editing enhances how you feel about a particular scene. How are faster scenes edited differently from more mundane scenes? Does the editing change throughout the film?

**Week 6A (10/2): Technical Workshop**
This week, we’ll go over to the lab and all take a look at how iMovie works. We’ll bring footage into the project and learn how to make basic cuts so our projects will come out polished.

**Week 6B (10/4): SECOND EXERCISE - THE “MONTAGE”**
We’re going to meet up in-class, look at some examples of scenes where editing is the real star. From there, you’ll break into your groups and devise a plan
based on the narrative prompts (TBD). You’ll decide who does what, pitch the plan to me and go off into the world to make your movies.

**Week 7A (10/9): BREAK**

**Week 7B (10/11): Screening/Critique/REVIEW**
Same as last time, let’s watch the work and break it down. From there, we’re gonna start reviewing everything we’ve been over this semester so far for the EXAM on Thursday.

**Weeks 8-15:**
From here, we’ll **re-group** and see how the class is going thus far: if we need to speed-up, slow-down, or do a major review of any concepts.
Topics left include:

*Acting*
*Story*
*Writing*

And a final CASE STUDY where we break down ONE film by every topic we’ve talked about thus far...

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**DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)**

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, room 128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT:**

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person’s work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at [http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/](http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/)

**CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT:**

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures.

**CAMPUS AND AFTER HOURS COUNSELING SERVICE:**

Students can now call CAPS and speak to a licensed mental health counselor anytime, day or night. To learn more, visit [http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/caps/clinical_services/capsafterhours.html](http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/caps/clinical_services/capsafterhours.html)