FIL4973 Thesis Film Production

Term Year

Faculty Contact Information
Instructor: Your Name
Email/Phone: Contact info you wish to share with students
Office Location/Office Hours: Office hour info for the semester

Class Meeting Time/Place
Time/Days

Pre-Requisites
Major Status

Course Description
This practicum course focuses on all creative aspects of BFA thesis production. Students will work in a variety of creative roles on thesis projects, which may include directing, producing, cinematography, production design, below-the-line crew, editing, visual effects and/or animation. Students will build upon their technical, aesthetic, and professional skill sets in the art of filmmaking, engaging in research, planning, director preps, principal photography, picture editing, asset construction, shot production, and other tasks as needed.

Course Objectives
At the end of the course, the student will be able to:
• Demonstrate expertise in filmmaking craft throughout the production process to enhance the quality of short films;
• Defend how creative choices enhance the communication of a short film's driving idea or theme;
• Perform a variety of crew roles with a high degree of professionalism and attention to the specific creative, technical, and administrative needs of a given film;
• Organize media in a professional manner and in adherence with the standards of the production pipeline;
• Deliver work in a professional manner, on schedule and to spec;
• Give constructive notes to peers in critiques and daily sessions targeting specific areas for improvement; and,
• Critically evaluate and apply notes received in critiques and dailies sessions.

Formative Experience
This course has been approved to meet FSU’s Liberal Studies Formative Experience requirement and is designed to help you use and develop knowledge by engaging in a hands-on experience outside of the classroom. One of the two required Scholarship in Practice courses may be fulfilled with a Formative Experience. In order to fulfill this requirement, the student must earn a “C-” or higher or an “S” in the course if taken on an “S/U” basis.

Course Schedule

Weeks 1-8: Principal Photography
Each live action show is allocated seven days of prep time, followed by three days of shooting for a “single” and six days of shooting for a “double.” During the prep week for a show, the ATL members will present and defend their plan for the shooting of the film in a Director’s Prep session. ATL members will also have individual meetings with faculty as needed. (Refer to the BTH Crew Grid for specific dates and crew responsibilities.)

Week 9: Midterm Review
Each student will be required to deliver a formal presentation to faculty about all of the work they have completed during Principal Photography. This presentation will include an assembly edit of all VFX plates for faculty review. (Plates must be screened during this presentation to be eligible for a VFX greenlight.)

Weeks 9-11: Picture Editing
There will be two cycles of picture editing, immediately following principal photography. Each director/editor pair will be assigned an edit suite for 11 days for cutting and delivering media. There will be two cut screenings for feedback from faculty and peers. Editors will assemble the first cut of the film. After the first cut screening, directors will be allowed in the editing room to direct a second cut of the film. (Refer to the BTH Crew Grid for details about when each show cuts, screens, and locks.)

Weeks 9-11: VFX Reference, Concept, and Post-Viz
Concurrent with picture editing, students will finalize reference materials, concept art, and post-viz for all visual effects shots. Students must acquire a greenlight on these materials before progressing on to the next phase of production.
Weeks 12-14: VFX Production

When the picture is locked, students will begin work on visual effects production. Students should refer to Shotgun for individual milestones and deadlines.

Week 15: Final Review

At the end of the semester, each student will be required to deliver a formal presentation to Faculty and classmates about all of the work he/she has completed during the semester. Each student will be asked to document their process and reflect on their progress.

Assignments & Grading

The table below specifies the weight of assignments in determining final course grades.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Final Grade (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bi-Weekly Production Grade (8 x 5%)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Review</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Review</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bi-Weekly Production Grade

Students will receive a bi-weekly grade for all production activities that were completed during those two weeks, including all crew positions, artist tasks, meetings, director’s preps, reviews, screenings, notes, and production management responsibilities.

Each bi-weekly production grade will assess proficiency levels in research, craft, critique, organization, and professionalism. (See the Assessment Rubric, below.)

During live production and picture editing, students are expected to come to all meetings, director’s preps, and cut screenings fully prepared, having completed all assigned tasks.

During VFX production, there will be a faculty review of dailies every Tuesday afternoon and every student will be required to show the full extent of the work they were scheduled to complete that week. The student must clearly illustrate what they were tasked with completing and what actually was completed by the review point.

During all activities, students are expected to be proactive and professional. It is expected that you will actively take initiative to get assistance from faculty and from peers. It is also expected that you will actively take detailed notes and that you will address those notes thoroughly.

Midterm and Final Reviews

At the midterm and end of the semester, each student will be required to deliver a formal presentation to faculty about all of the work they have completed during the semester. By
showing the progression of their work from initial moments in the creation process all the way through to completion, each student will illustrate their growth and show a knowledge of documentation of process. Each student will describe the challenges they faced, how those challenges were overcome, and the lessons that were learned.

To prepare for these reviews, students are expected to maintain a running documentation of their process throughout the semester. In other words, each students should maintain a system for archiving iterations of their work, so that those iterations can be presented and discussed as part of the midterm and final reviews.

**College of Motion Picture Arts Attendance Policy**

Attendance is mandatory and roll will be taken at the start of each class. Each late appearance will result in the loss of third a letter grade from the student’s final grade for the course (A becomes A-, B+ becomes B, etc.). Failing to attend class, or arriving more than 30 minutes late, will be counted as an absence. Unexcused absences will result in the loss of a full letter grade from the student’s final grade (A becomes B, B becomes C, etc.).

Missing class is acceptable only if permission to miss class is approved by the instructor prior to the absence or if the excused absence is covered by the University Attendance Policy (see below). Students are responsible for making up all work that is missed due to absence, and for contacting the professor to determine appropriate make-up assignments or activities; failure to do this will result in the absence being considered as unexcused.

**Grade Scale**

The following scale is used to determine course grades:

- A 94-100%
- A- 90-93.99%
- B+ 87-89.99%
- B 84-86.99%
- B- 80-83.99%
- C+ 77-79.99%
- C 74-76.99%
- C- 70-73.99%
- D 60-69.99%
- F 0-59.99%

**University Policies**

**University Attendance Policy**

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.
Academic Honor Policy

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and...[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy)

Americans With Disabilities Act

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from the Student Disability Resource Center has been provided. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the: Student Disability Resource Center 874 Traditions Way 108 Student Services Building Florida State University Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167 (850) 644-9566 (voice) (850) 644-8504 (TDD) sdrc@admin.fsu.edu http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu

Syllabus Change Policy

"Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice."
## Assessment Rubric for Bi-Weekly Production Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSESSMENT RUBRIC</th>
<th>High Proficiency</th>
<th>Proficiency</th>
<th>Limited Proficiency</th>
<th>Low Proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research</strong></td>
<td>The student’s research <strong>enhances</strong> the creative process. The student utilizes a rich array of relevant reference material for all tasks. The student is proactive in performing R&amp;D and tests. The student is thorough in following up on all research tasks assigned by faculty. All presented research is properly cited.</td>
<td>The student’s research <strong>supports</strong> the creative process. The student utilizes reference material for all tasks. The student regularly performs R&amp;D and tests. The student follows up on research tasks assigned by faculty. All presented research is properly cited.</td>
<td>The student’s research is <strong>inconsistent</strong>. The student utilizes insufficient reference material for some tasks. The student is inconsistent in performing R&amp;D and tests. The student is inconsistent in following up on research tasks assigned by faculty. Presented research is inconsistently cited.</td>
<td>The student’s research is <strong>underdeveloped</strong>. The student utilizes insufficient reference material for most tasks. The student performs inadequate R&amp;D and tests. The student does not follow up on research tasks assigned by faculty. Presented research is inadequately cited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Craft</strong></td>
<td>The student’s creative choices <strong>enhance</strong> the film. The aesthetics of the student’s work are exceptional and enhance the film’s story. New iterations of work advance significantly on previous iterations, and demonstrate a thorough and rigorous integration of notes. Work is technically superior and optimized for the production pipeline.</td>
<td>The student’s creative choices <strong>support</strong> the film. The aesthetics of the student’s work are appropriate for the film’s story. New iterations of work advance on previous iterations, and demonstrate an integration of notes. Work is technically sound and formatted correctly for the production pipeline.</td>
<td>The student’s creative choices are <strong>inconsistent</strong> for the film. The aesthetics of the student’s work are not always appropriate for the film’s story. New iterations of work often advance little on previous iterations, and notes are often ignored. Work is technically poor and formatted incorrectly for the production pipeline.</td>
<td>The student’s creative choices are <strong>underdeveloped</strong> for the film. The aesthetics of the student’s work are inconsistent and often formatted incorrectly for the production pipeline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critique</strong></td>
<td>The student’s ability to give notes <strong>enhances</strong> the professional experience. New work is delivered to spec and with a fine attention to detail. File management is excellent. All work (and relevant media) is well-organized and presented smoothly during faculty reviews – e.g., there are no delays in accessing media. The student’s ability to take and record notes <strong>enhances</strong> the professional experience through exceptionally clear, timely, detailed, and thorough notes that can be easily understood by the common layman. The student records all notes to their journal and transcribes all relevant notes to Shotgun immediately. The student’s ability to stay on or ahead of schedule <strong>enhances</strong> the professional experience. The student consistently meets all milestones and deadlines. Each workday, the student is rigorous with keeping all tasks and time-tracking up to date in Shotgun.</td>
<td>The student’s ability to give notes <strong>supports</strong> the professional experience by being constructive and respectful, and by being mindful of the needs of the story and the director’s vision. The student is able to defend how their creative choices <strong>support</strong> the film. The student is able to articulate why creative choices were made.</td>
<td>The student’s ability to give notes is <strong>inconsistent</strong> with a professional demeanor. Notes are often unhelpful, disrespectful, or fail to consider the needs of the story and the director’s vision. The student is inconsistent in defending how their creative choices support the film. The student is unable to articulate why creative choices were made.</td>
<td>The student’s ability to give notes is <strong>underdeveloped</strong>. Notes are unhelpful, disrespectful, or fail to consider the needs of the story and the director’s vision. The student delivers an underdeveloped defense of how their creative choices support the film.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>The student’s organization of work <strong>enhances</strong> the professional experience. All work is delivered to spec and with a fine attention to detail. File management is excellent. All work (and relevant media) is well-organized and presented smoothly during faculty reviews – e.g., there are no delays in accessing media. The student’s ability to take and record notes <strong>enhances</strong> the professional experience through exceptionally clear, timely, detailed, and thorough notes that can be easily understood by the common layman. The student records all notes to their journal and transcribes all relevant notes to Shotgun immediately. The student’s ability to stay on or ahead of schedule <strong>enhances</strong> the professional experience. The student consistently meets all milestones and deadlines. Each workday, the student keeps all tasks and time-tracking up to date in Shotgun.</td>
<td>The student’s organization of work <strong>supports</strong> the professional experience. All work is delivered to spec. File management is good. All work (and relevant media) is organized and presented efficiently during faculty reviews – e.g., there are minimal delays in accessing media. The student’s ability to take and record notes <strong>supports</strong> the professional experience through clear, timely, detailed, and thorough notes that can be easily understood by the common layman. The student records all notes to their journal and transcribes all relevant notes to Shotgun in a timely manner. The student’s ability to stay on schedule <strong>supports</strong> the professional experience. The student consistently meets most milestones and deadlines. Each workday, the student keeps all tasks and time-tracking up to date in Shotgun.</td>
<td>The student’s organization of work is <strong>inconsistent</strong> with a professional manner. Work is not always delivered to spec. File management is sometimes disorganized. Work (and relevant media) is often disorganized during faculty reviews – e.g., there are some delays in accessing media. The student’s ability to take and record notes is <strong>inconsistent</strong> with a professional demeanor. Notes are often not clear or detailed. The student often does not record notes to their journal and often fails to transcribe relevant notes to Shotgun in a timely manner. The student’s ability to stay on schedule is <strong>inconsistent</strong> with a professional manner. The student often falls behind on milestones. Each workday, the student is often unreliable with tracking tasks and time in Shotgun.</td>
<td>The student’s organization of work is <strong>underdeveloped</strong> for a professional setting. Work is not delivered to spec. File management is disorganized. Work (and relevant media) is disorganized during faculty reviews – e.g., there are consistent delays in accessing media. The student’s ability to take and record notes is <strong>underdeveloped</strong> for a professional setting. Notes are neither clear nor detailed. The student does not record notes to their journal and fails to transcribe relevant notes to Shotgun in a timely manner. The student’s ability to stay on schedule is <strong>underdeveloped</strong> for a professional setting. The student consistently falls behind on milestones and deadlines. The student is unreliable at tracking tasks and time in Shotgun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professionalism</strong></td>
<td>The student’s attention to collaboration, proactivity, courtesy, reliability, punctuality, and safety is <strong>consistently effective</strong> and <strong>enhances</strong> the work of fellow students and/or the effectiveness of instructors.</td>
<td>The student’s attention to collaboration, proactivity, courtesy, reliability, punctuality, and safety is <strong>generally effective</strong> and <strong>supports</strong> the work of fellow students and/or the effectiveness of instructors.</td>
<td>The student’s attention to collaboration, proactivity, courtesy, reliability, punctuality, and safety is <strong>inconsistently effective</strong> and <strong>sometimes detracts</strong> from the work of fellow students and/or the effectiveness of instructors.</td>
<td>The student’s attention to collaboration, proactivity, courtesy, reliability, punctuality, and safety is <strong>often ineffective and detracts</strong> from the work of fellow students and/or the effectiveness of instructors.</td>
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