

UCLA *Film Online*

FILM TV 122M – Film and Television Directing – 4 units

Professor Rory Kelly
UCLA Department of Film, Television, and Digital Media

In this class we are going to explore the art and craft of directing. When we think of directors we tend to imagine them on set choosing shots and guiding actors, but a director's creative work begins during the script phase and continues through final postproduction. A director must be fluent in all crafts of filmmaking so as to supervise the work of all major collaborators on a project, from the writer(s) to the actors to the various department heads which include the cinematographer, production designer, costumer, editor, sound designer, composer, sound mixer etc. These multiple and intertwined collaborations are the subject of this class.

It will be assumed throughout the lectures that directors are tasked with guiding audience responses to their work. In the case of a Hollywood film or television show this largely means ensuring that the unfolding story is comprehensible, unified and emotionally resonant. Filmmakers working in other traditions may seek to produce different effects—uncertainty, ambiguity, disunity, emotional distance—but in every case the goal is the same: to control the viewer's experience of the work. Total control is, of course, impossible, but most skilled directors aim to impose their vision on viewers, and that process will be our focus.

Emphasis will be on feature film directing for the simple reason that feature directors still maintain a great deal of control over their work. Television remains largely a writers' medium where directors typically have a significantly diminished role in both preproduction and post. Moreover, TV and streaming services are distribution platforms, not unique mediums, and how episodic content is produced for those platforms differs mostly in degree, not kind, from how theatrical material is produced.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Deeper understanding of the practical/creative responsibilities of directors.
2. Familiarity with the creative process, particularly in collaborative environments.
3. Basic knowledge of the major crafts of filmmaking.
4. Enhanced vocabulary for discussing films and filmmaking.

How Class Works

Students view tri-weekly lectures via a web browser and read an instructional blog posted weeks

1 thru 5 by the TA. Reading assignments accompany many of the lectures and *The Apartment* (Billy Wilder, 1960) is required viewing for the course. The TA will also post four discussion prompts that you are required to respond to (weeks 1, 2, 4 and 6). There are three major assignments. Your final grade will be determined by the three assignments and by your participation on the discussion boards.

Readings

One book is required: *Making Movies* by Sidney Lumet. It is available from the UCLA bookstore and from [Amazon](#) and other online booksellers. Particular chapters are assigned for some of the lectures, but please read the entire book. Other *required* readings are listed in the course schedule. These will all be available for download from the class website.

Required Screenings

The Apartment is available for viewing via the course website. If it is also available on DVD, Blu-Ray and on several online streaming sites, including Amazon.

Assignments

1 – *Assignment 1*. Write a short 2-page script with no more than three scenes and three characters. Your script will be judged on how well it incorporates the narrative principles and techniques covered in lecture. It is also hoped that your script will demonstrate an awareness of and sensitivity to cultural and ideological factors that influence how characters, events and settings are represented in visual media.

2 – *Assignment 2*. Develop storyboards with accompanying shot lists for your script. Your TA will provide instruction on how to do this.

3 – *Assignment 3*. Using existing images and clips, create a look book for your script that shows how you, as the director, would creatively use casting, wardrobe, locations, production design, cinematography, lighting etc. to tell your story. Again, your TA will provide instruction on how to do this.

Submissions

As indicated in the course schedule below, and on the course website, each assignment is due on a specific date by a specific time. Late submissions will be marked down 5 pts. Submissions more than 24 hours late will be docked 10 pts. Assignments more than 48 hours late will **not** be accepted. If for personal reasons you will not be able to submit an assignment on time and need an extension, you must talk to your TA *prior* to the due date in order to set a new date for when you will submit the assignment. Extensions cannot be granted after the fact except in cases of documented emergencies.

Academic Integrity

As a student and member of the UCLA community you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors, including your work in this class. Accusations of academic dishonesty are investigated and adjudicated by the Office of the Dean of Students. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, multiple submissions or facilitating academic misconduct. If it is determined that you have engaged in academic dishonesty, you will receive zero credit for the assignment and may incur additional penalties as determined by the Dean of Students.

Final Grade Breakdown

Assignment 1 – 25%

Assignment 2 – 25%

Assignment 3 – 25%

Participation (discussion board) – 25%

Course schedule

Week One

Prompt: Discussion Board – introduce yourself – due no later than Friday 11:59pm PDT

Lecture 1: Action, Cut, Print – is that all there is? (1 hour 3 mins)

Reading: *Making Movies* Chap 1 “The Director: The Best Job in the World”

Lesson 2: Story – the basics (45 mins)

Screening: *The Apartment* (Billy Wilder, 1960)

Reading: *Making Movies* Chap 2 “Are Writers Necessary?”

Lesson 3: Act Structure – beginnings (37 mins)

Reading: “What is a Screenplay,” Syd Field (Read first)

“Modern Classicism,” Kristin Thompson (Read second)

Week Two

Prompt: Discussion Board – pitch your script idea – due no later than Friday 11:59pm PDT

Lesson 4: Act Structure – middles and the endings (50 mins)

Lesson 5: Performance – an introduction (48 mins)

Reading: *Making Movies* Chap 4 “Actors: Can an Actor Really Be Shy?”

(Week Two cont'd)

Lesson 6: Directing Actors – part 1 (50 mins)
 Reading: *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*: Chaps 1-3 & 6, Melissa Bruder et al

Week Three

Lesson 7: Directing Actors – part 2 (55 mins)

Assignment: Script due Tuesday by 11:59pm PDT

Lesson 8: Directing the Camera – part 1 (51 mins)
 Reading: “Cinematic Sequencing and Narration,” Noël Carroll

Lesson 9: Directing the Camera – part 2 (50 mins)

Week Four

Prompt: Discussion Board – shots/camera – due no later than Friday 11:59pm PDT

Lesson 10: Directing the Camera – part 3 (1 hour 7 mins)
 Screening: View clips available on course website

Lesson 11: Cinematography – what directors need to know (1 hour 27 mins)
 Reading: *Making Movies* Chap 5 “The Camera: Your Best Friend”

Lesson 12: Production Design and Costumes (1 hour 3 mins)
 Reading: *Making Movies* Chap 6 “Art Direction and Clothes”

Week Five

Lesson 13: Directing a Scene (1 hour 5 mins)
 Reading: Scene from *Sleep With Me* available on class website

Assignment: Storyboards and shot lists due Tuesday by 11:59pm PDT

Lesson 14: Editing – part 1 (38 mins)
 Reading: *Making Movies* Chap 6 “The Cutting Room: Alone at Last”

Lesson 15: Editing – part 2 (49 mins)
 Reading: *Making Movies* Chap 7 “The Sound of Music: The Sound of Sound”

Week Six

Prompt: Discussion Board – course wrap up – due no later than Friday 11:59pm PDT

Lesson 16: Finishing: Color and Sound (55 mins)

Screening: “Painting With Pixels” (DVD extra *O Brother Where Art Thou*) – available to view on course website

Assignment: Look book due Thursday by 11:59pm PDT