COMM 4485: Directing for Film & Video Production  
CRN 13257  Spring 2019  W (5:30pm – 8:00pm)  ANTHRO G-15

University of West Georgia  
College of Social Sciences  
Department of Mass Communications  
1601 Maple Street  
Carrolton, Georgia 30118

Instructor: Robyn Hicks  
Office: Humanities 216  
Hours: M (1pm-5pm) & by appt.  
rhicks@westga.edu  
678-839-4935

Course Detail & Objective:
Welcome to Directing! In this course students will learn to develop a visually compelling cinematic language. Students will learn how to break down a script and/or concept into dramatic beats and then organize those into visual moments. Students will build the vocabulary and conceptual framework necessary to analyze and discuss shot progression, camera movement, and production practices. Students will develop their visual voice by dissecting scenes, exploring the director’s language, and participating in camera workshops. Outside film exercises are required.

Course Learning Outcomes:
This course leads students through the steps of visualization, interpreting and preparing a script for production, and executing a director's vision through production and post-production while examining topics of the director's role, working with actors and discussing theoretical principals involved in directing motion pictures.

Upon completion of this course, students and will demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

- Analyze a story for structural, character, and thematic concerns, and express those ideas cinematically through visualization techniques.
- Execute a visualized plan on-set through clear communication and collaboration with cast and crew.
- Critique and edit their own work in regards to directing choices, thus strengthening cinematic voice.
- Apply industry-driven terms, professional conduct and etiquette.

Mass Communications Department Learning Outcomes:
1. **Awareness:** Students will demonstrate awareness of mass communications scholarship, i.e., theory/research; paramount economic, ethical, legal/policy, social, and technological issues; and the role of principle personalities and stakeholders within the context of freedom of speech, freedom of press, media competition, media convergence, diversity, and/or social responsibility. ACEJMC defines awareness as familiarity with facts, concepts, theories, laws and regulations, processes and effects.
2. **Understanding:** Students will demonstrate understanding of mass communications scholarship, i.e., theory/research; paramount economic, ethical, legal/policy, social, and technological issues; and the role of principle personalities and stakeholders within the context of freedom of speech, freedom of press, media competition, media convergence, diversity, and/or social responsibility. ACEJMC defines understanding as assimilation and comprehension of information, concepts, theories and ideas.

3. **Application:** Students will demonstrate effective application of mass communications scholarship, i.e., relate and/or apply concepts, theory/research, and professional principles to analyze and synthesize information, create, develop, produce, and/or write for converging digital, multi-media, and traditional media. ACEJMC defines application as competence in relating and applying skills, information, concepts, theories and ideas to the accomplishment of tasks.

**Required Book(s):**

**Required Materials:**
USB Drive or SD Card for delivery of films and SD Card for shooting
SD Card Reader
1 TB External Hard Drive
Final Draft, Celtx, or other industry acceptable screenwriting software
Adobe Premiere or other industry acceptable video editing software (available in lab)

**Recommended Video:** Out-of-class viewing may be required for this class.

**Method of Instruction:** Lecture, discussion, readings, writing, screenings, hands-on work.

**Course Schedule:**

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class:</th>
<th>Assignment:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1/9</td>
<td>Introduction + Overview</td>
<td>Lumet, Preface + Ch. 1</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>What’s your favorite movie / director?</td>
<td>Katz, Intro + Part 1 (1 -3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discuss Three Act Structure</td>
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<td>Discuss Silent Film Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1/16</td>
<td>The Role of the Director + Storyboards</td>
<td>Katz, Part 1 (4 &amp; 5) + Part 2</td>
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<td><strong>1 Min Short Film Table Read</strong></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1/23</td>
<td>-The Art of Visual Storytelling + Composition</td>
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<td>- What is a Look Book</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1/30</td>
<td>- Where do I put the camera?</td>
<td>DUE: 1 Min Silent Film</td>
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<td>- Lenses + Coverage + Movement</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Due</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 W 2/6</td>
<td>1 Min Silent Film Screening</td>
<td>Lumet, Ch. 2: Katz, Part 3 (8-10)</td>
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<td>6 W 2/13</td>
<td>Directing in Style + The Auteur Theory Auteur Theory Project Assigned</td>
<td>Lumet, Ch. 3: Katz, Part 3 (11-14)</td>
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<td>7 W 2/20</td>
<td>Script Breakdown, Analysis + Beats</td>
<td>DUE: Auteur Theory Project; Katz, Part 3 (15 &amp; 16)</td>
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<td>8 W 2/27</td>
<td>Auteur Theory Project Screening</td>
<td>SHOOT + EDIT</td>
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<td>9 W 3/6</td>
<td>Short Film Screenplays Due / Table Reads</td>
<td>DUE: Look Book; Complete 3-5min Screenplay</td>
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<td>10 W 3/13</td>
<td>The Art of the Audition + How to Work with Actors LOOKBOOK PRESENTATIONS DUE</td>
<td>Lumet, Ch. 4: Katz, Part 4 (17–19)</td>
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<td>11 W 3/20</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
<td>DUE: Audition Footage; Lumet, Ch. 5 &amp; 6</td>
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<td>12 W 3/27</td>
<td>Audition Footage Screening Acting Workshop Cont. + Production Design</td>
<td>DUE: In Class Scene Rehearsal; Lumet, Ch. 7; Katz, Part 4 (20-23)</td>
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<td>13 W 4/3</td>
<td>In Class Scene Rehearsal</td>
<td>Lumet, Ch. 8</td>
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<td>14 W 4/10</td>
<td>In Class Scene Rehearsal</td>
<td>DUE: Rough Cuts; Lumet, Ch. 9</td>
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<td>15 W 4/17</td>
<td>Rough Cut Screening</td>
<td>Final Cut</td>
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<td>16 W 4/24</td>
<td>3-5 min FINAL NARRATIVE SHORT FILM PRESENTATIONS</td>
<td>Final Cut</td>
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<td>17 W 5/1</td>
<td>FINALS WEEK – NO CLASS</td>
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**Assignment Breakdowns:**

(2) **Pop Book Quizzes** (5% each = 10%) - A total of 2 pop quizzes will be given during class time at any time over the duration of the semester. The quizzes will cover important keywords and material covered in our textbook, thus it is imperative to stay up to date on reading assignments.
1 Minute Silent Film (10%) – Each student must direct and deliver a 1 minute silent film with a story exhibiting Three Act Structure + well thought out directing choices including dynamic compositions, coverage, as well as creative visual artistry + technique.

Auteur Theory Project (20%) – Auteur = A filmmaker whose personal influence and artistic control over a movie are so great that the filmmaker is regarded as the author of the movie. Each student will be assigned an auteur + given a script from which they must create a film in the vision and style of their given filmmaker.

Audition Footage (10%) – Students must conduct auditions outside of class in the casting process of their short film productions. Students must upload and present 4 unedited taped auditions.

In Class Scene Rehearsal (10%) – Each student will bring in actors during class time and direct them in a scene from their 3-5 minute short film.

Short Film Look Book (10%) – Students will develop and present a look book for their 3-5 minute short film production. A complete director’s look book will include: Synopsis, Script, Storyboards, Mood Boards, Cast and Crew Info + Production & Technical Plan.

3-5min Narrative Short Film (30%) - Outside of class and in collaboration with a crew, students must direct a 3-5 min short film. Whether or not the student writes/edits the short or collaborates with a writer/editor outside of class is dependent upon the student, however all assignments must be completed when they are due. Each short film will be graded on creativity, three-act structure, and visual artistry + technique.

*Collaboration in crew roles among students in this class and others is critical as students may be asked to evaluate each other.

Grading:
A= 90-100%
B=80-89%
C=70-79%
D=60-69%
F=0-59%

All quizzes, if given, will cover the material in reading assignments, required viewings and class lectures. Individual handouts/instruction will be presented as each assignment is distributed over the course of the semester with more detailed information and grading rubric criteria. Many assignments have multiple phases. You will not be able to get an A if you do not follow all the instructions and stick to all the deadlines provided. The more you put into the class, the more you will get out of it, and more likely than not, the higher your grade will be.
*Disclaimer:* This syllabus is a general course plan of action. Assignments and screening material are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

**Course Policies:**

**Attendance & Participation:** Students may miss no more than three (3) days over the course of the semester. Thereafter, the student may be docked three final grade points per missed class. For example, your 4th absence will result in the devaluation of your final grade and further absence will result in further action. Students are responsible for obtaining any missed course material from their fellow students. An absence may be excused if the student presents a doctor’s note or another acceptable form of documentation explaining absence.

Students must show up to class on time. Arriving to class later than 15 minutes after it has begun will result in an absence. Further, students must come prepared to work and learn. Performing tasks unrelated to the course during class-time (e.g. sleeping, emailing, surfing the web, not paying attention, etc) will also result in that student being asked to leave, therefore acquiring an absence.

I expect you to be physically, mentally, and emotionally present during our time together. Your participation is vital to both your success and that of this course.

**Usage:**

- No cell phones are permitted during class.
- No recording devices are permitted during class.
- No activities on computers other than class work are permitted during class.

**Classroom Etiquette:** In order to create a safe, valued and expressive academic environment where individual expression and social interchange are respected, please observe the following guidelines: (1) Students must address each other with respect, even when in debate; (2) Students must contribute to discussions, without dominating them; (3) Students must stay focused on the topic being discussed. Extraneous conversations and chatter will be prohibited.

**Make-up/Late Policy:** All assignments are due in accordance with the Class/Assignment Schedule. Unless arrangements are made prior to an assignment/test due day, no late assignments will be accepted or make-up work given, resulting in a failing grade. As the instructor, I reserve the right to not accept late assignments and have final word as to the necessity of make-up work. Arrangements will only be made to makeup the missed work if a student has a university-sponsored activity absence or a documented excuse for missing an assignment/test.

**Plagiarism:** Academic dishonest, cheating and/or Plagiarism within this class will result in a grade of F for the assignment. Submitting others’ writing or ideas as your own, without specific citations or references of any kind, is plagiarism and is directly prohibited by the UWG Student Code of Conduct. I consider it no different from property theft; plagiarism is, by definition, intellectual property theft. Therefore, I will respond to any instances of plagiarism.
with the following actions: the student will receive a zero for the assignment; the student will be removed from class for a day; and a Student Infraction Form will be filed with the Office of Student Development and Enrollment Management, where it will be reviewed and placed on file with the Dean of Students.

**Emailing:** Students *must* check their UWG email **EVERY DAY.** I frequently email documents and class-related updates – not checking your email is no excuse for incomplete work. Allow 24 hours for an email response from me. Allow 48 hours over the weekend. My official email for our correspondence, and the one I will check, is: rhicks@westga.edu

**Academic Advising:** Please take advantage of academic advising and correspond / meet with your advisor regularly or as needed as that you are on track with your academic success. https://www.westga.edu/advising/

**Equal Opportunity Statement:** No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age, or disability, be excluded from employment or participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by The University of West Georgia.

**Supplemental UWG Syllabus:** (PLEASE REVIEW – Includes information about Accessibility Services, Tutoring Opportunities, and the Counseling Center)

https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/common-language-course-syllabi.php

“*The directing of a picture involves coming out of your individual loneliness and taking a controlling part in putting together a small world. A picture is made. You put a frame around it and move on. And one day you die. That is all there is to it.*”  *John Huston*