DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION  

COURSE NO. MC 451

COURSE TITLE: Film Directing

NEW COURSE

I. Catalog Description

Theory and practice of narrative film directing, with emphasis on script analysis, working with actors, and the production of a short film. (3 credit hours)

II. Prerequisite(s)

75 hours with 15 MC-prefix hours + MC 352 + MC 353

III. Objectives

A. To introduce students to techniques used by film directors to capture the visual and dramatic essence of a screenplay.

B. To help students develop the skills necessary to elicit memorable and believable performances from their actors.

C. To emphasize to students the importance of artistic collaboration among director, cast, and crew during the filmmaking process.

D. To encourage the creativity of students in their efforts to direct and produce compelling stories for the screen.

IV. Expectations of Students

A. To attend lectures and labs regularly

B. To read all text and supplemental assignments

C. To produce a well-crafted 5-8 minute short film

D. To participate in a number of video productions for classmates and the department

E. To complete all other class assignments

F. To demonstrate their knowledge of the fundamentals of film directing in at least two examinations
V. Course Content

A. Working with the Script 2 weeks
   1. Narrative and character spines
   2. Narrative and character beats
   3. Revealing character
   4. Scene Design
      a. Dramatic blocks
      b. Fulcrum within scene

B. Working with the Camera 2 weeks
   1. Objective vs. subjective camera
   2. Camera placement
   3. Perspective and lens choice
   4. Coverage and staging

C. Working with Actors 4 weeks
   1. Finding the right actor
      a. Auditions
      b. Read-throughs
      c. Rehearsals
   2. The acting process
      a. Basic acting theories
      b. Personalization
      c.Playable vs. unplayable direction
   3. Blocking
   4. On-set direction
      a. Technical instructions
      b. Emotional instructions
      c. Continuity of performance

D. Working with a Crew 1 week
   1. The producer
   2. The director of photography
   3. The assistant director
4. Other key crew members

E. Working with Editors 1 week
   1. Director’s assembly or “string-out”
   2. From rough cut to locked picture
   3. Sound design

F. Narrative Film Production 5 weeks
   1. Master-scene direction
   2. “Mise-en-scene” direction
   3. Montage direction

VI. Textbook


VIII. Basis for Student Evaluation

A. Thirty percent of the final grade will be based on the quality of a 5-8 minute short film. Quality is determined by the following factors:
   1. Effective and competent script analysis
   2. Effective and competent direction: visual storytelling, performance of cast, set management, and shot selection
   3. Effective and competent use of cinematic tools: camera, sound, and lighting.
   4. Effective and competent post-production techniques

B. Twenty percent will be determined by two objective exams

C. Fifteen percent will be based on a “mise-en-scene” directing assignment

D. Twenty-five percent will be based on other directing, editing, and writing assignments

E. Ten percent will be based on class participation