

# **EMF 221 Principles of Film and Video Production Spring 2018 Syllabus w/ In Class Exercises**

Class meets on MON/WED: 11am – 12:15pm  
Media Center Room 108

**Instructor: Dr. David Reiss**

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Office Hours:

MON, WED & THUR 12:30-2p  
and by Appointment

**Course website:** [www.davidreiss.com/EMF221.html](http://www.davidreiss.com/EMF221.html)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course covers the basic techniques, principles and aesthetics of film, video and audio production.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Students in this class will:

1. Demonstrate their understanding of the terminology of film production and film analysis.
2. Master strategies for audio-visual storytelling.
3. Demonstrate their understanding of the elements of mise-en-scene including camera placement, composition and design.
4. Demonstrate their understanding of the basics of audio production and the aesthetics of sound design.
5. Demonstrate their understanding of the main principles of editing and montage.
6. Examine the impact of the digital revolution and new media on film, video and audio.
7. Explore and examine job opportunities in film, video and audio.

**REQUIRED TEXT:** Roberts-Breslin, Jan. *Making Media: Foundations of Sound and Image Production*. Amsterdam/Boston: Focal Press, 2003. Additional articles will be available via Blackboard.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES CELL PHONES are NOT Permitted to be used at ANY time in my class. PERIOD. If you a text in my class you will be asked to leave the classroom.

If you must use your laptop for NOTE TAKING, be advised that any activity OTHER than note taking is not tolerated – PERIOD. We'll be

screening work in class and the laptops screens are a distraction for OTHER students. During screenings laptops must be closed.

EVERYONE needs to be FOCUSED on the FRONT of the class. Recent research findings indicate that some college students who multitask during class perform at the same level as those who NEVER came to the class, and my doctoral research

<http://www.cjlt.ca/index.php/cjlt/article/view/164/154> has shown LEARNING requires a SINGULAR FOCUS for remembering information.

Emergency Text Alerts: All students must sign up for the Campus Emergency Alert Text Message Notification System. Go to following link for instructions to do so:

<http://www.towson.edu/adminfinance/facilities/police/campusemergency/> and watch the emergency preparedness video and print out the pocket guide by clicking on this link:

<http://www.towson.edu/adminfinance/facilities/police/campusafety/emergencyprep.asp>

ASSIGNMENTS: Students are expected to complete assigned exercises before class on the due dates listed in syllabus or as announced in class.

LATE WORK is NOT accepted without prior arrangement w/ instructor.

PARTICIPATION: Students are expected to participate in class critiques, discussions and exercises with undivided attention. Excessive talking in class or during workshops while instruction is going on will be considered negative participation.

DISABILITY POLICY This class adheres the Towson University Disabilities Policy. If you have a documented disability, please see me right away after the first class privately, so we discuss how to best accommodate your specific needs.

PLAGARISM The EMF department has a published statement on Plagiarism, and Towson University has statements on both Academic Dishonesty and Student Academic Integrity, all of which pertains to your work in this course. ALL WORK must be newly created for THIS COURSE with students in this class section ONLY.

OWNERSHIP & USE: The client will retain the rights and use of the final version of their video. Students will retain the footage from each project on media drives. Please be aware that the instructor may keep copies of ANY student work for future teaching purposes only. Students will retain the right to use footage or video for demo reel or portfolio purposes.

CIVILITY CODE: All EMF students, staff, and faculty are committed to collegial and academic citizenship demonstrating high standards of humane, ethical, professional, and civil behavior in all interactions.

EMF places a priority on learning. We value the inherent worth and dignity of every person, thereby fostering a community of mutual respect. Students have the right to a learning environment free of disruptive behaviors. Faculty have the right to define appropriate behavioral expectations in the classroom and expect students to abide by them. Faculty have the responsibility to manage and address classroom disruption. Staff have the right and responsibility to define appropriate behaviors necessary to conduct any university activity free of disruption or obstruction.

The use of offensive, threatening or abusive language, writing, or behavior will not be tolerated and can lead to academic dismissal. Further information about civility can be found in Appendix F of the university catalog.

VML: A newly updated VML guide will be issued and reviewed on the proper procedures for checking out equipment and using the VML Final Cut Pro editing workstations.

Borrowing privileges will be suspended for students who fail to follow the VML Guide regulations and they may be subject to fines. This rule will include the entire production crew. Late equipment returns will suffer fines and penalties. Any problems teams or students have with the equipment room by late returns or not responding to the EQ room manager will negatively impact your grade! Return gear late to a rental house and you get charged for another day. Return gear and broken and don't tell them – you get charges AND blocked from renting again.

## **ASSIGNMENTS:**

1. Quizzes (2)
2. Four Major Projects (Log-line/Treatment, Image Analysis, Production Bible, 3-5 Minute Narrative)
3. Comprehensive Final Exam
4. Active participation in class assessments (unannounced) and guided learning activities.
5. Extra Credit: Attend one COFAC event and submit a reflection essay

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Week 1: Course Orientation, Stages of Production and Storytelling (Chapter 1)

Trailer analysis (in class)

Log-line activity (in class)

Week 2: Composing the Frame/Mise-en-Scene (Chapter 2)

Log-Line and Treatment Due

Semiotic analysis assignment (in class)

Mis-en-Scene staging assignment (homework)

Week 3: Reproducing the Frame (Chapter 3)

Class Instagram gallery assignment (in class)

Week 4: Depth and Movement in the Frame (Chapter 4)

Figure Photo Assignment (in class)

Image Analysis Due

Week 5: Lighting and Color (Chapter 5)

Lighting mood set up exercise (in class)

Color theory magazine exercise (in class)

Quiz #1

Week 6: Sound (Chapter 6)

Campus Soundscape (in class)

Week 7: Sound and Image (Chapter 7)

Scene foley activity (in class)

Week 8: Understanding Time (Chapter 8)

Production Bible Due

Week 9: Editing (Linear) (Chapter 9)

Panel Storyboarding (in class)

Run Lola Run Editing Analysis (in class)

Week 10: Editing (Nonlinear) (Chapter 10/11)

Video Game Story Activity (in class)

Start Activities for Final Projects

Week 11: Convergence in Production/ Distribution/Exhibition (Chapter 12)

\*Week 12: Choosing the Right Approach

In Class Viewing and Discussion: TBD

\*Week 13: Becoming a Responsible Media Maker  
Quiz #2

\*Week 14 & 15: Final Project Presentations  
Final Exam

*\*not in the textbook\**

Grading Breakdown:

Assignment	Due Date	Points Values (1000)
Log-Line and Treatment		125
Image Analysis (Paper)		100
Quiz #1		100
Production Bible		125
Quiz #2		100
Final Project (3-5 min sound/image narrative)		150
Final Exam		200
Participation/In Class Exercises		100
COFAC Event Attendance and Reflection Sheet		10

## **In Class Exercise Descriptions**

### **WEEK ONE**

Course Orientation, Stages of Production and Storytelling

In Class Exercise: Trailer Analysis

- Watch the trailer for Man of Steel
- List all the camera shots that you can and explain why they have been used.
- Take into account other micro features

Pre-production/Storytelling

In Class Exercise: Logline Pitch

- In groups, write a logline for this list of films (Titanic, The Truman Show, Avengers, Nerve, Star Wars: The Force Awakens, Harry Potter, Sense8, Modern Family, Fast and Furious 1, Paranormal Activity)

### **WEEK TWO**

Composing the Frame/Mis-en-Scene/Semiotics

In Class Exercises: Mis-en-Scene

- Watch film clips (TBD) and identify the mis-en-scene.

Homework Assignment:

- Taking into account mis-en-scene and semiotics, students must stage a photograph that indicates an understanding of symbolism and set decoration to indicate a character's attitude or mood.
- Students must upload the photograph to the EMF 221 Instagram account.

### **WEEK THREE**

Reproducing the Frame

In Class Exercise: Class Instagram Gallery

- In groups of 5-6, students must use a cellular phone to complete a shot list and upload images to Instagram.
- Students must: Use the same phone for all of the images. Make sure all group members have had a turn operating the "camera" and directing. Upload images to the EMF 221 Instagram account
- Shot List:
  - Medium Shot (MS) with lead room
  - Close Up (CU) with headroom
  - Over the shoulder (OTS) shot
  - Shot showing rule of thirds
  - Shot showing negative space
  - Shot using surface division

### **WEEK FOUR**

Depth and Movement in the Frame

In Class Exercise: Figure Photo Assignment

- Using available figures/dolls/mini-sculptures, students must create a three image story panel that illustrates the following concepts:
  - deep depth of focus
  - shallow depth of focus
  - background, middleground, foreground
  - triangular composition

- Students must upload images to the EMF 221 Instagram account

## WEEK FIVE

### Lighting and Color

#### In Class Exercise: Lighting Mood

- Students must capture 3 different lighting schemes (diffused, specular, hard, soft, shadows) with their phones or cameras.
- Upload images to the EMF 221 Instagram account
- Make sure you label your images with your name and the lighting scheme you believe you have identified.

#### In Class Exercise: Color Theory

- In groups of 8, identify one image from a magazine and determine the color palette it uses.
- Answer the following questions:  
What mood is the scene trying to present?  
What elements of the mis-en-scene contribute to the overall mood?
- As a team, attempt to recreate this effect with a provided light kit and gels.

## WEEK SIX

### Sound

#### In Class Exercise: Campus Soundscape

- Go to a location on campus and record all the distinctive sounds you hear in that environment. Where are those sounds coming from? How do they compare? Report back in 20 minutes.

## WEEK SEVEN

### Sound and Image

#### In Class Exercise: Scene Foley Activity

- Separate into 4 teams
- Each team must create sounds to accompany their segment of a story.
- Utilize the foley tools provided as well as other objects that may contribute to the scene.
- Use the foley planning sheet to log your scene enhancements.
- Perform in class.

## WEEK EIGHT

### Understanding Time

#### In Class Exercise: Run Lola Run

- Watch Run Lola Run and identify what techniques are used to illustrate time and structure. Keep a running list of techniques related to continuity, transitions, 180 degree lines, inductive or deductive reasoning, etc. How is it manipulated? What is the director trying to suggest with each action?

## WEEK NINE

### Editing (Linear)

#### In Class Exercise: Panel Storyboarding

- In groups of 4, take a selection of graphic novel or comic book panels and make them into a storyboard.
- Attach the panel images to the storyboard template.
- After the sequence has been created, develop a sound and image description for each panel.

- Present to Class.

## WEEK TEN/ELEVEN

### Editing (Non Linear)

#### In Class Exercise: Turn Your Story Into a Video Game

- In groups, develop a sample flowchart for one of your stories to illustrate how the user would navigate the tale in a nonlinear, interactive fashion.  
Questions to consider:  
What interactive components will your story entail?  
What will the user first experience and what will they experience last?  
What part of the story will use audio clips? Why?  
What part of the story will rely on photographs? Why?  
What part of the story should rely on language/reading? Why?
- Present to class

## WEEK TWELVE

### Convergence in Production/Distribution/Exhibition

#### In Class Viewing: *Filming A Movie On An iPhone - Lessons from TANGERINE*

- Viewing Questions:  
What do you believe are the advantages of shooting on an iPhone?  
Does the iPhone lend itself to the story or detract from it?  
What unique lighting setups can you identify?  
What audio considerations come to mind when watching?

### Course Bibliography:

Ascher Steven. & Pincus E. (1999) *The Filmmaker's Handbook : A Comprehensive Guide for the Digital Age, Completely Revised and Updated*. Plume.

Millerson, G. (2001) *Video Production Handbook, Third Edition*. Focal Press.  
Musburger, R. (2005) *Single-Camera Video Production*. Focal Press.

Rabiger, Michael. *Directing the Documentary 2nd ed.*, Focal Press, 1992.  
Rose, J. (2002) *Producing Great Sound for Digital Video*. CMP Books.

Barry, A. M. S. (1997). Visual intelligence: Perception, image and manipulation in visual communication. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Mayer, R. E., & Anderson, R. B. (1991). Animations need narrations: An experimental test of a dual coding hypothesis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 83(4), 484-490.

Mayer, R. E. (2001). *Multi-media learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press