

FILM 404 Digital Video Production Project

Trimesters 1 + 2 2011

28 February to 12 November 2011

30 Points



TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates:	28 February to 14 October 2011
Mid-trimester break 1/3:	18 April to 1 May 2011
Mid-year break:	1 July to 10 July 2010
Mid-trimester break 2/3:	22 August to 4 September 2011
Last piece of assessment due:	On or before 12 October 2011

WITHDRAWAL DATES

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Course coordinator:

Alex Funke, ASC. Room 107, 85 Fairlie Terrace, 04 463 6520

Email: alex.funke@vuw.ac.nz

Office Hours: These will be posted

Senior AV Technician:

Paul Wolfram, Room 105, 85 Fairlie Terrace, 04 463 6823

Email: Paul.Wolfram@vuw.ac.nz

Office Hours: These will be posted

Assistant AV Technician:

Bernard Blackburn, Room 106, 85 Fairlie Terrace, 04 463 9498

Email: Bernard.Blackburn@vuw.ac.nz

Office Hours: These will be posted

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Workshops

Trimester 1: Wednesday 10-12.50, Film Room 205, 77FT

Trimester 2: Friday 10 – 12.50 Film Room 205, 77FT

Tutorial times will be arranged during the first 3 weeks.

COURSE DELIVERY

FILM 404 will be arranged to encourage the maximum of visual thinking by the students, and to provide a wide range of technical proficiency in practical film-making skills. The main approaches to be used will include:

- Screening and close analysis of a large number of classical visual references---such as film clips, photographs, and paintings---and directed discussion of how the essential visual techniques are used. This class process will be termed "View-Dissect-Analyse."
- Class demonstration of central imaging concepts e.g. colour and perception, visual coding, composition theory, and the like. We have termed this class process "Principles and Theory."
- Practical work in "Applications Labs" to help explain and apply visual techniques that have been studied.
- Supervised and directed student work in "class practical exercises," in which various defined shooting problems will be worked out on video by the students and then analysed by class and instructor.
- "Equipment briefing" workshops to gain skill using equipment, and to develop a sense of how a filming team must work together to help realise the director's vision.
- Preparation of a detailed "project workbook" which will collect and evaluate visual ideas and concepts that may be used in creating the final film project.
- Conceptualising, writing, designing, and presenting for class critique, a film concept (script, storyboards, reference imagery, and the like) for later production.
- From this concept, directing a five minute film and completing it through all post-production steps.
- Working on production crews in technical positions, to apply directly what has been studied in the abstract.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

At the start of each workshop; posted on Blackboard; notice boards in 85FT; and via email.

COURSE CONTENT

This is a practical course in which students perform some of the key roles involved in the production of dramatic works on video. The emphasis of the course is on the shaping and refinement of creative ideas and their conversion into compelling works of screen art. Topics such as production management, lighting, camerawork, design, *mise-en-scene*, screen performance, sound recording and mixing, and film music will be explored in workshops (with industry professionals where possible).

The theme for FILM 404 may be described as "Mastering the Compelling Image." In this course, the students will study, evaluate, experiment with, and apply the key visual techniques which are at the heart of cinematic storytelling. These major themes are: Camera placement, Composition, Movement, Lighting and colour, and Editing.

In class, students will screen, dissect, and discuss scene clips from a number of seminal films; for example, *Red Desert*, *Breathless*, *I Am Cuba*, and *Stalker*, as a means of extending and developing their own visual vocabulary. Further explorations will be made among the works of painters such as Dinnerstein and Hopper, and great photographers such as Sander, Plowden, and Strand.

Through in-class demonstrations, practical lab exercises, and hands-on workshops, the students will try out various cinematic techniques, and adapt them to their own personal style. Part of this process will involve working with methods of visual planning, such as storyboarding and animatics.

During the course, students will each conceptualise, script, design, shoot and edit a five-minute film, applying and expanding their grasp of visual storytelling. During shooting, each film maker will work with a small crew composed of students from the class. All students will thereby gain hands-on experience in the main technical positions, as well as learning much from watching their fellow film makers working out their storylines.

Because in the outside world films must be made not only to a budget but also to a precise length, the set five-minute length (including credits) for student film projects will be a requirement. Films shorter than five minutes will be acceptable, but the expectation is that as the film grows shorter, the craftsmanship and visual excellence must increase proportionately!

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing FILM 404, students should have attained the following:

- A good basis for "filmic seeing" --the skill which defines successful storytelling on the screen.
- A firm grasp of film's key visual tools; their evolution, their applications and their power.
- A grasp of how every aspect of filmmaking, from rough concept to finished cut, must be driven by a chosen visual language.
- A personal visual style developed via observation, study, and reflection.
- A practical knowledge of how all these visual techniques are applied in telling a compelling film story.

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

The University anticipates that you should be able to devote 300 hours or about ten hours per week to a two-trimester, 30-point course. On average, you should expect to spend at least seven hours outside of the class periods, becoming familiar with equipment, writing brief critical essays, designing and writing shooting scripts, and shooting and editing your films. The course is highly practical, and the demands on your time will probably increase as you move into the production phases of your project.

In addition to the time spent in class, students will be expected to attend various technical workshop/tutorials on the use of equipment. Some of these will be presented by the Alex Funke, and some by Paul Wolfram. Attendance at all sessions is necessary, both as a prerequisite for checking out equipment, and also for students to develop needed skills in the various crew positions.

GROUP WORK

Students will undertake a range of formal and informal group activities during the course. During workshops, the team aspect of film making will be stressed, and each student will be expected to contribute ideas and effort to helping demonstrate the material being evaluated.

Each student will design and direct a five minute film, assisted by an assigned crew made up of other class members. In addition to on-set production crews, it is anticipated that students will involve themselves in pre- and post-production activities, such as wardrobe construction, location scouting, casting support, set logistics, and editorial and sound mixing assistance.

The in-class screenings, lectures and demonstrations are intended to be interactive, and will require a high level of attention and participation. When students present the concept work for their films, the class as a whole will act as a critique team to help fine-tune the project.

READINGS

There is no assigned text for FILM 404. A list of useful references will be given out during the first class meeting.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

Students will be responsible for obtaining video and audio recording media necessary for their projects. Some additional materials such as storyboard supplies may also be required. Advice and suggestions on materials and sources will be given in class.

Depending on the nature of the individual film projects, other costs such as location charges, wardrobe rental or construction, transportation rental and so on may also be encountered.

Video cameras, support equipment, lighting, and audio equipment are issued on loan from SEFTMS. Facilities for sound recording, mixing, and editing will be made available by reservation. School equipment must be treated with the utmost care and respect. The student is in exactly the same relationship to the SEFTMS as he or she will be in the outside world renting equipment from a supplier. Learning to bring the gear back on time, and better than you received it, is a hard and valuable lesson!

It will be a prerequisite to checking out equipment that the student has gone through the safety, operation, and troubleshooting workshop for that piece of equipment. These sessions will be held early in the course, so that all students will be able to work with the gear for the maximum time.

Equipment bookings must be made with the proper lead time, must be strictly adhered to, and returns must be made on time; otherwise fellow students will be inconvenienced and their shooting schedules disrupted. Any gear damage, malfunction, or failure must be reported at once to the Senior Technical Officer at 04 463 6823 or 027 4563 6823.

To avoid disappointing incompatibilities among various video standards, only certain specified video recording formats and media may be used. These will be discussed in detail on the first class day.

You are required to read *The Fat Book*, which is Film and Theatre's protocol handbook. This will help you understand the ground rules, and help you know what services, equipment, and facilities are available within the Department. Printed copies of *The Fat Book* will be distributed during the first class.

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

Each student in Film 404 must fulfil each of the following six requirements:

1. A **draft** of his or her proposed 5 page script. **Due 30 March** (15%)

Marking Criteria: Development of visual language, effective use of film as a graphic medium, story flow and story arc. As these are drafts, the expectation is that a visual theme will have been established.

2. A polished **shooting version** of a 5 page script. **Due 6 April** (15%)

Marking Criteria: These will be evaluated upon the evolution of visual and story language from the earlier drafts. Attention will be paid to precise definition of the visuals to be used, clear and linear story path and the degree to which the student has worked out the "shootability" of the script.

3. A detailed image and concept **workbook**, collecting and assessing images and ideas used in preparing for the film. **Production Group I due 25 May; Production Group II due 1 June** (20%)

Marking Criteria: These shall contain graphic and visual materials, both found and created, which the student intends to use in devising the visual treatment in his film. Materials may include (but of course are not limited to) clippings, print images, drawn graphics, storyboards, clips extracted from films, found objects, textures, typefaces, models and maquettes, animatics and so on. The evaluation of the workbooks will be on the care with which the student has analysed the visual needs of his film and how much diligence and care has been given to finding and interpreting source material.

4. Complete a briefing class on **Production Health and Safety** (required, but no class credit). To be scheduled with staff, but must be completed before the start of shooting.

Marking Criteria: is a mandatory meeting and briefing with Staff, in addition to the scheduled class discussion on 15/7. The requirement bears no credit, but is required for all students.

5. Completion of a **five minute film**, from the preliminaries of location selection, casting, art direction and wardrobe, through shooting, recording and post scoring, and on through final editing and post-production.

There will be two producing groups (one-half of the class in each). Delivery of finished films will be on NNN. **Production Group I screens 19 August; Production Group II screens 14 October**

(individual mark of 40%)

Marking Criteria: The films will be evaluated using the following main areas:

DIRECTION;

STORY-expression;

STORY-creation of story arc;

STYLE;

COMPOSITION and use of the Dynamic Frame;

MOVEMENT and visual vocabulary;

CASTING;

WARDROBE;

ART DIRECTION, USE OF LOCATIONS and EXPRESSIVE USE OF COLOUR;

EDITING and use of sound and dialog;

USE OF MUSIC and sound effects;

PRODUCTION value.

These areas will be evaluated jointly by the instructor and members of staff. The twelve areas are given equal weight.

6. Participation in assigned technical or management positions on at least two class films. (10%)

Marking Criteria: Each student will take an active role during the making of their classmates' films. The work may range from being cinematographer or sound recordist to location manager or producer. The evaluation will be based on degree of participation and attention to the needs of production.

ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEETS

Assignment cover sheets and extension forms can be found on Blackboard or outside the Programme office. Remember to fill in your lecturer's name.

PENALTIES AND EXTENSIONS

Extensions will be granted only in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. Issues of workload do not constitute exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. If you require an extension, you must complete an extension request form (available on your course Blackboard site) prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's certificate) where appropriate

Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible to gain a pass in this course you must:

- Submit the written and practical work specified for the course, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work)
- Have worked on a minimum of two production crews, helping other directors create their films.
- Have at least 75% attendance at all classes and workshops.

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

STATEMENT ON LEGIBILITY

You are expected to present work that meets appropriate standards. Work submitted during the course (i. e. work that is internally assessed) should be typed or prepared on a computer. Where work is deemed 'illegible', you will be given a photocopy of the work and asked to transcribe it to an acceptable standard (preferably typed) within a specified time frame.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

Material from books, journals or any other printed source

The work of other students or staff

Information from the internet

Software programs and other electronic material

Designs and ideas

The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study.

Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic.

COURSE PROGRAMME

Week 1	2 /3	Handout class outline, schedule and list of 'milestones'; Tech briefing on production project; handout 1st assignment. <i>Film clips/Movement</i>
Week 2	9/3	Concept work 'generating ideas' and 'idea to visual'; equipment overview; <i>Film clips/Composition</i>
Week 3	16/3	Turn in 1st draft script; class discussion. Lab: camera movement and action blocking. <i>Film clips/Frame dynamics</i>
Week 4	23/3	Concept work, development of proposed projects; Lab work on lighting technique. <i>Film clips/Lighting styles</i>
Week 5	30/3	Turn in 2nd draft script; class discussion. Theory and lab work: camera, optics, exposure, focus.
Week 6	6/4	Turn in final script polish; discuss production details. Theory and lab work: colour, lighting #2.
Week 7	13/4	Handout outlines of project expectations and grading criteria. Lab work: Camera #2 <i>Film clips/Camera technique</i>
Mid-trimester break		
Week 8	4/5	Lecture and practical work: location sound recording.
Week 9	11/5	Visualisation and presentation techniques. Lab: practical <u>mise-en-scene</u> and <u>mise -en -shot</u> . <i>Film clips/ Visualisation methods</i>
Week 10	18/5	Direction; scene creation; mood and style; consistency and continuity; handling actors.
Week 11	25/5	Group I turn in production workbooks; discussion. Lab: Sound recording #2
Week 12	1/6	Group II turn in production workbooks; discussion. Lab: Lenses, focus, on-set procedures.

Mid-year break

Week 13	15/7	Health and Safety briefing. Theory and practical work, art direction, design, colour. Film clips/ <i>Art direction, "key details"</i>
Week 14	22/7	Editing with Final Cut Pro. Colour correction and grading theory and practice; scene to scene balancing.
Week 15	29/7	Studio sound recording; sound effects, music, & Foley recording. Film clips/ <i>Realistic & imaginary sound in practice</i>
Week 16	5/8	Theory and lab: advanced camera movement. Film clips/ <i>visual motifs and style; Vorkapitch theory;</i> <i>editing dynamics</i>
Week 17	12/8	Production Group I screens <u>rough cut films</u> ; discussion Practical work: exterior light control
Week 18	19/8	Production Group I screens <u>completed films</u> .

Mid-trimester break

Week 19	9/9	Production and logistics; budgeting and scheduling. TBC visiting speaker from production.
Week 20	16/9	TBC Class visit to Park Road Post and working film set.
Week 21	23/9	Practical work: interior rigging, lighting, movement
Week 22	30/9	Practical work: challenging locations, mixed lighting, contrast and balancing
Week 23	7/10	Production Group II screens <u>rough cut films</u> ; discussion. Practical work: special problems
Week 24	14/10	Production Group II screens <u>completed films</u>