

## FILM 404 Digital Cinema Production

**Trimester 1 2016**

29 February to 29 June 2016

**30 Points**



Drive (2011) Dir. Nicolas Winding Refn

### IMPORTANT DATES

Teaching dates: 29 February to 5 June 2016

Easter break: 24 to 30 March 2016

Mid-trimester break: 25 April to 1 May 2016

Last assessment item due: 10 June 2016

Refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds). If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats).

### CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Tuesdays 12:10 - 15:00 85 Fairlie Tce FT85 Rm108

Thursdays 14:10 - 17:00 83 Fairlie Tce FT83 Rm102

## NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Course Coordinator:

Dr Paul Wolffram email: [Paul.Wolffram@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Paul.Wolffram@vuw.ac.nz) 85 Fairlie Terrace Room 105 Phone: 463 6823

Office hours Thurs. 1 - 2pm

Film Technician:

Bernard Blackburn email: [Bernard.blackburn@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Bernard.blackburn@vuw.ac.nz) 85 Fairlie Terrace Room 106 Phone: 463 9760

Office hours Mon - Fri. 9.30 – 11.30 am

## COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information will be communicated at the start of each workshop; posted on Blackboard; notice boards in 85FT; and via email.

If you are not going to use the Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

## PRESCRIPTION

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). Students enrolling for FILM 404 will normally have completed an undergraduate course in film production or have independently gained suitable film production experience.

## COURSE CONTENT

In this course students will study, evaluate, experiment with, and apply the key visual techniques which are at the heart of cinematic storytelling. The 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 films as a means of extending and developing their own visual vocabulary. 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.

During the course, students will each conceptualise, script, design, perform a role in a production crew, and contribute to the post-production of a short film. During production, each student 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.

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

### COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CLOS)

After completing FILM 404, students should:

1. Develop an understanding of the visual and structural elements of narrative storytelling
2. A firm grasp of film's key visual tools; their evolution, their applications and their power
3. An understanding of how every aspect of filmmaking, from rough concept to finished cut, must be driven by a chosen visual language
4. A practical knowledge of how all these visual techniques are applied in telling a compelling film story
5. Demonstrate their ability to work collaboratively

### TEACHING FORMAT

Course delivery will comprise a mixture of seminars, technical workshops, practical exercises and discussions of student work. You are expected to take active part in all practical work and discussion.

### MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

- Submit a credible attempt at 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 attended and fulfilled the requirements of the **Health and Safety briefing**. The Health and Safety briefing is arranged by appointment between production groups and the course coordinator in week eight.
- Attend at least 85% (20 classes) of all classes and workshops. The collaborative nature of the course and film production requires that students attend lectures and workshops to train and work as production crews. If one member of a 5-person crew is absent the production tasks are difficult to complete in class time. Essential equipment training cannot be conducted outside of class session and health and safety issues may arise if all members of a crew have not undertaken supervised training on heavy production equipment. Relates to CLO 5.

Any student who is concerned that they have been (or might be) unable to meet any of the MCRs because of **exceptional personal circumstances**, should contact the course coordinator as soon as possible.

**WORKLOAD**

The expected workload for a 30 point course is 300 hours over the trimester or 20 hours per teaching week. Over a week 6 hours will be spent in class, 4 hours should be spent on researching and training with equipment outside of class, 3 hours spent on recommended readings and 7 hours on reviewing notes and working towards class assignments as individuals or in assigned groups. The course is highly practical, and the demands on your time will 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 additional technical workshops/tutorials on the use of equipment.

**ASSESSMENT**

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	<b>STORY PITCH</b> (5 mins)	10%	1, 2	15 March
2	<b>SHORT FILM SCRIPT</b> (12 Pages)	20%	1,3	22 March & 5 April
3	<b>PRE-PRODUCTION PRESENTATION</b> (15 -20mins)	10%	3,4,5	3 May
4	<b>SHORT FILM</b> (12 Mins max)	50%	1,2,3,4,5	2 June
5	<b>PRODUCTION WORKBOOK</b> (1500 – 2000 words)	10%	2,3,4	10 June

**Assignment 1**

-STORY PITCH- Due 15 March (10%) 5 mins.

In this individually assessed assignment you are expected to present an idea for a film in five minutes. The pitch should introduce characters and key plot points, dramatic tension, and reveal the story resolution in a compelling way. REMEMBER: You are not telling the story. The pitch, story, concept and delivery should be designed and presented in a way that will appeal to your audience. You are trying to “sell” your idea and convince your classmates and teachers that your film is worthy of being translated into a short film. The pitch must be your own original work. The criteria for assessment will be emotional impact of the pitch, clarity of the idea, marketability (i.e how relevant to its target audience?), and strength of delivery.

Marking Criteria:

1. Fulfilling the set task in a direct, relevant and complete manner.
2. Clear evidence that you have engaged in the pitching process in a creative way that expresses your own original ideas.
3. Demonstrating your engagement with the ideas and materials discussed and in FILM 404.
4. Evidence of preparation for the pitch.

5. Quality, fluency and coherency of expression.

## Assignment 2

-SHORT FILM SCRIPT- Due 22 March /5 April (20%) 12 pages.

Please note this individually assessed assignment is in two parts. Both parts are marked and assessed. You are required to hand in a “1<sup>st</sup> draft” based on the pitch delivered in assignment 1. The script is then returned to you with comments and suggestions. The second part of the assignment requires a “final script” that shows further development of the idea in the “1<sup>st</sup> draft” and evidence of addressing the suggestions and feedback given. The “final script” will be assessed on the criteria outlined below and on the development and progress evident in the script.

Marking Criteria:

1. Fulfilling the set task in a direct, relevant and complete manner.
2. Clear evidence of engagement with ideas and materials discussed in FILM 404.
3. The originality and quality of the script including the ability to develop and express your own ideas.
4. Evidence of the capacity of the script to be successfully transformed into a short film suitable for shooting as part of FILM 404.
5. Understanding and correct use of scriptwriting format, terms and concepts.

## Assignment 3

-PRE-PRODUCTION PRESENTATION – Due 3 May (10%) 15 – 20mins.

In your key creative role as: director, producer, cinematographer, editor, or sound you will prepare for your film project by presenting a creative pitch to the class. This group presentation is delivered as a production group but the assessment and grade will be based on your individual contribution to the presentation, and your alignment with the overall group presentation. The group must communicate a cohesive stylistic vision for their film. Directors should demonstrate their overall directorial vision for all aspects of visuals, sound, and cutting. However, each member of the group must outline how their role will specifically contribute to the realization of that vision. This will involve researching the nature of your particular role and demonstrate understanding of that role. As part of this assignment, your group will present a storyboard (or shooting plan) of a number of shots from one sequence from the film. This will help prepare you for your actual shoot. This assignment will develop your creativity, enhance your understanding of key creative roles in filmmaking, improve your ability to work as part of a team, and develop your organizational and oral communication skills.

Marking Criteria:

1. Fulfilling the set task in a direct, relevant and complete manner.

2. Clear evidence that you understand and have researched your key creative role.
3. Clear evidence that you have engaged with the pre-production process in a creative way that expresses your own original ideas as well as complementing the script, if you are not the director you should also complement the directorial vision.
4. Evidence of preparation and research for presentation.
5. Quality, fluency and coherency of expression.

#### Assignment 4

-SHORT FILM- Due 2 June (50%) 12 mins max.

Completion of a **short film**, from the preliminaries of location selection, casting, art direction and wardrobe, through shooting, recording and on through final editing and post-production. In this group assignment you will be given an individual mark that reflects the overall accomplishment of the group and your own achievement in your assigned production role. There will be up to two production groups (one-half of the class in each). Delivery of finished films will be as a file on the server drop box (details will be provided).

Marking Criteria:

1. Fulfilling the set task within the production group in a direct, relevant and complete manner.
2. Clear evidence that you understand and have researched your key creative role.
3. Clear evidence that you have engaged with the production process in a creative way that expresses your own original ideas as well as complementing the script. If you are not the director you should also complement the directorial vision.
4. Evidence of preparation and research for the filming.
5. Quality, fluency and coherency of expression in your assigned production role.

#### Assignment 5

-PRODUCTION WORKBOOK – Due 10 June (10%) 1500 – 2,000 words. Handed into reception 83 Fairlie Terrace.

In this individual assignment you must complete an image and concept **workbook**, collecting and assessing images and ideas used in preparing for the film. Much of the material in this workbook will have formed the basis for assignment 3 PRE-PRODUCTION PRESENTATIONS. In addition to the materials suggested below (applied on their suitability to your assigned role) you should include a short reflective essay on your role within the production and the production as a whole (1200 -2000 words). The visual materials and research on your role should include written materials, images, clippings, graphics, key words, storyboards totalling approximately 20 pages. Whereever images and cuttings have been used they should be accompanied by short written descriptions of their meaning in the context of your film and production role.

These shall contain graphic and visual materials, both found and created, which the student used in devising the visual treatment of the 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 based on the care with which the student has analysed the, visual, audio, or production needs of the film, and on how much diligence and care has been given to finding and interpreting source material.

Marking Criteria:

1. Fulfilling the set task in a direct, relevant and complete manner.
2. Clear evidence that you understand and have researched your key creative role.
3. Clear evidence that you have engaged with the production process in a creative way that expresses your own original ideas as well as complementing the script.
4. Evidence of preparation and research for the filming.
5. Quality, fluency and coherency of expression through the workbook as a whole.

**Please note:** Marks for Honours level assignments and final course grades are not finalised until feedback from the external examiner has been considered. Honours grades gained in individual courses remain provisional until the overall final classification made by the Honours programme examination committee.

## SUBMISSION AND RETURN OF WORK

Hardcopy assignments are submitted in class to the course coordinator. Assignments will be marked and returned within 10 days. Assignment 5 should be submitted to the administration office in 83 Fairlie Terrace.

Each assignment is submitted in two formats:

- A hardcopy to the course coordinator in class. Attach an assignment cover sheet or extension form to your assignment, found on Blackboard or outside the administration office.
- Email your assignment as a MS Word file to [film@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:film@vuw.ac.nz)

Your marked assignment will be handed back by your supervisor. Any uncollected assignments can be picked up from the Programme Administrator after the last day of teaching. Assignments will be held in the administration office until the end of the following trimester. You need to show your student identification to collect marked assignment from the administration office.

## EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES

### Extensions

In exceptional and unforeseen circumstances an extension may be granted. To apply for an extension, email your Course Coordinator before the assignment is due. If granted, your Course Coordinator will

inform you of the new due date. Tutors cannot grant extensions. **No assignment with or without an extension will be accepted after Wednesday 29 June 2016.**

### Penalties

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.

## MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT AND/OR ADDITIONAL EXPENSES

Most of the equipment, media and resources required for this course can be loaned from the Film Programme through either Paul Wolfram or Bernard Blackburn during the loaning and receiving hours of Monday to Friday, 9.30 – 11.30am. There will be some costs involved in the production of films as students are expected to supply their own consumable materials such as gaffer tape, lighting gels, transportation costs etc. 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 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, loaning times 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 9760 or 021 234 0814.

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 Programme. Printed copies of The Fat Book will be distributed during the first class.

## RECOMMENDED READING

There is no assigned text for FILM 404. A list of useful references will be discussed during classes and posted on Blackboard.



## CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:

## STUDENT FEEDBACK

The results of previous years student feedback were positive.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at

[www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback\\_display.php](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php).

In week six or seven of the trimester your class representative will be invited to a meeting with the Programme staff. In week five your class representative will ask the class for any feedback on this course to discuss at this meeting.

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism)
- Academic Progress: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress) (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates)
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: [www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin)
- Grades: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades)
- Special passes: refer to the *Assessment Handbook*, at [www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf)
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy)
- Student support: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support)
- Students with disabilities: [www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/disability](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability)
- Student Charter: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter)
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Terms and conditions: [www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract)
- Turnitin: [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin)
- University structure: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure)
- Victoria graduate profile: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile)
- VUWSA: [www.vuwsa.org.nz](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz)

**COURSE PROGRAMME**

Week 1	01 March	<b>Welcome and Administration Course outline.</b> <i>Assignment 1 set</i> Introduction to assignment 1 and 2: Screenwriting and Pitching.
	03 March	<b>Introduction to Camera:</b> C300 Basic operation
Week 2	08 March	<b>How to pitch.</b> Scriptwriting 2. Nuts and bolts: Formatting & Structure Telling visual stories: Clips focus on camera work. Camera Optics. Lenses and lens choice.
	10 March	<b>Camera Two:</b> Introduction to 35mm Optics
Week 3	15 March	<b>Pitching your idea: In class pitches</b> <i>Assignment 1 delivered in class.</i> Painting with Light: Clips focus on lighting. Producing a film: Roles in FILM 404 and crew expectations <i>Assignment 2 set.</i>
	17 March	<b>Introduction to location sound recording:</b> Learning to record and interact with the Camera.
Week 4	22 March	<b>Painting the moving canvas:</b> Clips focus on lighting and subject movement. <i>Assignment 2 part 1 Handed in during class</i> <b>Health and Safety outline</b>
Easter Break	Thursday 24 to Wednesday 30 March 2016	
Week 5	31 March	<b>Lighting 1:</b> Introduction to tungsten lights
Week 6	5 April	<b>Directing</b> – Onset workflow and blocking <i>Assignment 2 Part 2. Handed in during class.</i>
	7 April	<b>Alex Funke</b> guest cinematographer.

Week 7	12 April	<b>Moving Camera:</b> Motion camera tools. Production roles set.
	14 April	<b>Alex Funke</b> guest cinematographer.
Week 8	19 April	<b>Introduction to editing and FCP X/ Health &amp; Safety /Pre Production</b>
	21 April	<b>Sound mixing / Pre Production</b>
<b>Mid-tri Break:</b>		<b>Monday 25 April to Sunday 1 May</b>
Week 9	3 May	<b>Pre-Production Presentations</b> <i>Assignment 3 delivered in class</i>
	5 May	<b>Pre-Production</b>
Week 10	10 May	<b>Production</b>
	12 May	<b>Production</b>
Week 11	17 May	<b>Editing</b>
	19 May	<b>Editing</b>
Week 12	24 May	<b>Rough Cut Screening/ Editing</b>
	26 May	<b>Post Production</b>
Week 13	31 May	<b>Editing/Audio Post/Grading</b>
	2 June	<b>Completed Films Submitted</b>

**Possible Screening dates:** June 13, 14, 15

**Assignment 5. Due 10 June. 5pm**