**Comm 6891/4891: Producing and Directing for Film/Video**

The goal of this course is to acquaint the student with the overall film/video making process - how to take a film or tape idea from conception to completion - how a director prepares a script, works with actors, and collaborates with the cinematographer/ videographer, music composer, art director, etc. We will also examine the world of the producer (whose role so often overlaps that of the director) as s/he budgets, schedules, assembles a crew, deals with the lab, and markets his/her film/tape.

Texts:

Required: **Producing and Directing the Short Film and Video** by Peter Rea and David Irving (Fourth Edition); also, *The MPE Motion Picture, TV, and Theatre Directory for Services and Products* (free, courtesy of your instructor)

Required for graduate students: **On Directing Film** by David Mamet

Recommended for all: **On Directing Film** by David Mamet**: Film and Video Budgets** (latest Ed) by Michael Wiese and Deke Simon

Required Additional readings on Overnight Reserve in Equipment Room or on line at <https://umdrive.memphis.edu/xythoswfs/webui/sjross/film2> (see schedule below for due dates):

* Notebook by Elia Kazan for A Streetcar Named Desire (pgs 364-379, from the book **Directors on Directing**, edited by Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy;
* excerpts from the book **On Directing** by Harold Clurman, pgs 74-86 ('The Director's Workscript") and pages 268-273 (Workscript for the play "Waltz of the Toreadors");
* "This Other England" (profile of Mike Leigh) by John Lahr, reprinted from The New Yorker Magazine

**DVDS on Reserve in Equipment Room:**

A Streetcar Named Desire

**Grade: (**Note that final grades for this class will deploy the university’s plus/minus system.) Quizzes 50%

Directing Exercise Prep pack 25%

Proposal or research paper: 25%

{Note: **Graduate students** will have a **paper** due at the beginning of the Final Exam Period. It will be worth **25%** of their grade. The quizzes will constitute **25%** of their grade.}

Your **final grade** as computed above may be **raised** or **lowered** up to **10** percentage points based on the quality, timeliness, and consistency of such "ungraded" class work as:

your participation in class discussion;

your proposal project script summary

your assigned budget items report;

your preliminary proposal;

and the quality of your oral presentation of proposal.

Note that missing class, arriving late, or leaving early all tend to diminish the quality of one's class participation. Please note further that missed crew assignments or lackadaisical fulfillment of crew assignment responsibilities will very quickly lower one's final grade the full 10 points. Such behavior will also result in your peers treating you as an outcast. While on some **lecture** days I hope to dismiss you prior to 5:10 pm, please never assume that will be the case; and during directing exercise days any class member arriving after 2:40. or leaving prior to 5:10 for whatever reason, no matter how valid, will have failed his/her classroom responsibilities (as well as the needs of his/her fellow students) for that day .

The only reason laptops should be used during class is if you have bought the text on line and I ask you to refer to it during lectures. If you have a special need to take notes on your laptop, see me tonight for special permission to do so. The only reason you should be checking your phone during class is if there is some current emergency requiring you to do so. You must notify me the day of such an emergency either by email or in person before class begins. Failure to comply with these policies will result in a poor evaluation of your class participation, and thus lower your overall grade in the class.

Class schedule and assignments are subject -***and likely*** -to change at the discretion of the professor. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of all such changes as announced in class, even if the student should be absent on the day such announcements are made. Students are also expected to check their university email on a daily basis for any communications I may need to make to the class outside of our regular meetings.

In addition to the reading assignments listed below, students should expect a few additional assignments from sources outside their text.

### 2014 Class Schedule

1/22: Introduction; Screening: **The Old Forest, Truman, Lunch Date (**Note that all students are assigned to view Elia Kazan's 1951 film of **A Streetcar Named Desire (**the Marlon Brando-Vivien Leigh version) before reading the Kazan and Clurman readings due on January 30.

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1/27: THE PROPOSAL AND THE SCRIPT

Readings Due: Text: Intro, Preface, Timeline, & Chapters 1 and 2 and Appendices A, B, and C; Text Web site: View on your own time: **A Nick in Time;** **Citizen; Crazy Glue**

In class hand outs: "A Game of Catch"(master scene script vs. shooting script excerpts)

Screening: **Ray for the NBA, Mirror, Mirror**

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1/29 SCRIPT BREAKDOWN

Readings Due:

Text: Pre- Production Intro (pgs 37-45) and Chapter 3 Breakdowns)

Reserve Readings:

* Notebook by Elia Kazan for A Streetcar Named Desire (pgs 364-379 from the book Directors on Directing, edited by Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy;
* from the book On Directingby Harold Clurman, pgs 77-86('The Director's Workscript") and pages 267-280 (Workscript for the play "Waltz of the Toreadors");
* ***Directing Exercise Prep Pack Assignment Made and Discussed***

Screening: Excerpts from two **Streetcar Named Desire** films;\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2/03 Readings Due: Text: Chapters 4 (schedule) and 9(location) *screening* **Project Greenlight**

2/05 Text: Chaps 5 (Budget), 6 (Crew),), 8(Art Direction)*:***Project Greenlight {QUIZ 1}**

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2/10 Text: chaps 14(set procedures), 11(camera); Appendix E (Safety Issues), *Discussion of preliminary proposal Assignment*; Screening: **Safety on the set Project Greenlight**

2/12 Text: chaps 12(sound), 13(art on set);***Proposal Project Script Summary Due (this assignment consists of: a one paragraph summary of the script****;* ***the number of script pages; the number of speaking roles; and the number of locations****) Screening:* **Project Greenlight (cont) {QUIZ 2}**

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2/17 THE ACTOR

Readings due: (For Grad Students) On Directing Film by David Mamet

Text: Chaps 7 (Casting), 10 (Rehearsals), 15 (The Actor)

On Reserve:

* This Other England" (profile of Mike Leigh) by John Lahr, reprinted from The New Yorker Magazine;
* Excerpts from Directing by Michael Rabiger

Screening: **Michael Caine on Film Acting**

2/19 POST PRODUCTION Readings Due: Text chaps 16 (Picture Post, 17 (Sound Post), ***\*\*\* QUIZ 3 \*\*\****

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2/24 Readings Due: Text: 18 (Lab/On-Line*),* Appendix F (Music Clearance and Insurance), and G (Film Commissions) Appendix D (legal)

2/26 **{QUIZ 4}**; **\*\*Directing Exercise Prep Packs Due\*\*;** Sched indiv. Meetings; ***Assign Budget Research Items***

***Guest Producer speaks to class***

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3/03: Indiv. Meetings review of Directing Prep Packs

3/05 Indiv Meetings review of Directing Prep Packs; \*\*\***Preliminary Proposals Due\*\*\***

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***3/10 & 3/12 SPRING BREAK***

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*3/17* *Indiv Meetings re Preliminary Proposals*

3/19 ***Student presentations of assigned budget research items*** (have copies ready to distribute to your fellow class members); *Directing Exercise Schedule Assigned*

3/24 Equipment Demonstration/Review in preparation of commencement of Directing

Exercises

3/26 Directing Exercise

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3/31 Directing Exercise

4/02 Directing Exercise

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4/07 To Be Determined

4/09 Directors Edit Session

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4/14 Directing exercises

4/16 Directing exercises

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4/21 Directing exercises

4/23 Directors edit session

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4/28 view directing exercises  **Final Proposals /research projects due;** *first round presenters assigned*

4/30 Proposal Presentations begin (appropriate attire required)

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***5/07***  **1:00 – 3:00 PM** Proposal Presentations (appropriate attire required) during final exam Session as scheduled by the university *(note:* ***mandatory attendance by all students****)* ***Graduate Papers Due***

***There are two major assignments required for this class.***

**\_1.Directing Prep Packs and Exercises:**

Prep packs are required major assignments for all students, and working as crew on the directing scenes is also required. However, as a director you are not graded on the finished scene. In fact, directing the scene you have worked on in your prep pack is a ***privilege*** to be accorded only to graduate students and those undergraduate authors of the best prep packs submitted this semester.

**2.Proposal Assignment**:

Each student will create a proposal for a short film. (feature length proposals are possible, but see me before proceeding.) It is your job to find a script. You can use a script of your own, but note that this is not a screenwriting class. There are many web sites for short scripts. In any case you must hand in your proposal project script summary (requirements detailed on 2/12 entry above) on **February 12**.

The finished proposal, due on **4/28**, must include the following:

• a two page introduction to the project that gives a brief treatment of the story, describes the style and tone of the proposed film and sells its potential appeal to specific audiences and/or its commercial viability

• a complete script

• if using a script written by someone other than yourself, a discussion of any changes you will make in the script

• a detailed line-item budget (assume you are paying for everything)

* thorough, complete breakdown sheets for every scene

• precise location lists and the names of the people from whom you would need location clearances

• a detailed pre-production, production, and post-production schedule. (further details of these and any additional requirements for this proposal will be made in class)

Since this is not a class in screenwriting, and there is only a semester to develop your proposal, I do not recommend that you start from scratch on a project you have not yet written or thought about a great deal.

**Note that two students may choose to work on a proposal together**. If you plan to do so, you must make an appointment to discuss your plan of work with me no later than **February 5**.

If your proposed project is non-fiction in nature, see me for adjustments to the above requirements.

Further Note on Proposal Budget: Note that while you may use books to *guide* you in your budgeting, you are expected to get actual figures from real-world, current sources. To some extent, you will be helped in this endeavor by the work shared with you in class by your fellow students, who will be responsible for tracking down two quotes for two specific budget categories (for a total of four quotes) as assigned by me.

Also note that even equipment, services, or items that are being donated (by this university or any other entity) or performed gratis must be accounted for with appropriate line item budget figures.

**Alternate Assignment to Proposals**:

If you do not have a film you hope to either produce or direct in the near future, you may find it more useful to do extensive research in a particular area of production in which you hope to find employment upon graduation. This could be editing, sound design and mixing, production design, wardrobe, props, casting, etc. If you wish to pursue this alternative, you should put together a proposal for a plan of work and make an appointment to discuss it with me no later than **February 5.** Moreover, when preliminary proposals are submitted, you will be expected to submit an outline and bibliography, as well as a plan to interview people in the field you have chosen. Note that this assignment, like the proposals, will include an oral class presentation as well as a major written component.