

**SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY  
COMM 4330 Cinematography**

FALL 2023  
Mon/Weds  
2:00pm – 3:15pm  
Motion Capture Soundstage, plus others  
as required.

Bret Scott, Assoc. Professor  
Office: FAB 208  
432/837-8794  
[bscott@sulross.edu](mailto:bscott@sulross.edu)  
Regular Office Hours:  
TBD, walk-in basis  
All others by appointment

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

---

Cinematography is the art of painting with light to create an image that makes the shot, scene, and sequence *speak visually*. While the cinematographer is certainly there to make sure that the performance of the actors is captured, that's a passive activity. The creation of the final image is the active work of the director of photography.

This course is an advanced exploration of light, lighting, composition, camera operations, aesthetic choice-making, and – maybe more important than anything else in this list – working as a team. A cinematographer is only as good as his or her team, and the team relies on three things: good communication, a smart plan, and adaptability. Film sets move fast. Changes and unexpected challenges are the norm, not the exception. The difference between a great cinematographer and a good one is usually found in leadership and creativity under trying circumstances. To that end, you will all work as DPs, Gaffers, Sparkys, and Grips.

Every job on a film set is important, and you will rotate through these different positions over the course of the semester. Set operations work as a system. The order of operations are determined by the objective of each shot, and change is constant. This means that you must be present and fully-engaged. Unlike a lecture class or lab, you are not merely responsible for yourself. Your whole crew – and the final outcome of the film – depends on you.

Production is time and labor-intensive. You are expected to participate in weekend work, and you will have late nights in the editing lab. You will be warned of deadlines well in advance. Plan your schedule accordingly.

### **THEATRE PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

---

This course is designed to meet one or more of the student learning outcomes applied to all Theatre majors. The graduating theatre student will demonstrate:

1. A knowledge of the eras and contributions made throughout Theatre History and Musical Theatre History.

Additionally the graduating student with a concentration in Acting/Directing will demonstrate:

2. The ability to express themselves creatively through appropriate theatrical performance.
3. The ability to analyze script.
4. The ability to work creatively with actors and technicians in mounting a

laboratory theatrical production.

5. The ability to apply standard requirements to all aspects of technical production. Additionally the graduating student with a concentration in technical/design will demonstrate:

6. The ability to apply all approaches to theatrical design and rendering of the design.
7. The ability to address all technical aspects of a theatrical production.

## **PREREQUISITES**

---

Basic and Advanced Video with a C or better, or instructor permission

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

---

By the end of this class, students will:

- Demonstrate a working vocabulary of filmmaking terminology
- Understand and implement the three-act structure and basic character motivation
- Develop the skills of visual storytelling
- Identify and justify strategies for camera placement
- Demonstrate beginning mastery of Apple's Final Cut Pro X
- Demonstrate advanced mastery of studio lighting technique
- Articulate the function of and need for a moving camera.
- Evaluate and critique merit and functionality of various kinds of visual storytelling on a case-by-case basis.

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

---

- 1) Scene deconstructions
- 2) Munsell student color boards
- 3) Short film 1
- 4) Short film 2
- 5) Full participation in class discussion / critique

## **Required Textbooks for this class:**

---

- *Cinematography: Theory and Practice*
- **Publisher:** Taylor & Francis
- **ISBN:** 9780367373467
- **ISBN10:** 0367373467

New Munsell Student Color Set

- **ISBN:** 9781501327520
- **ISBN10:** 1501327526

**Materials Required:**

---

Minimum 32gb flash drive, formatted for Macintosh

**CLASS DATES: Assignments and Deadlines**

---

*Note that these dates and the details of each class are subject to change at the instructor's discretion*

Date	Topics and Assignments	Location
Aug 28	Introduction. Review Syllabus, Assignments, and Assign <i>Short Film 1</i>	
Aug 31- Sep 19	Conceptuals – Contrast and Affinity of: shape, line, tone, color, movement, rhythm, space. Principles of light. How lenses and sensors work	
Sep 19- Oct 3	Preproduction, <i>Short Film 1</i> .  <i>Scene Deconstructions</i> . You will present a deconstructed scene from your favorite movie, complete with cut list, overhead diagrams, and an analysis of how the look was achieved. One student will present each week over course of the semester.	
Oct 4- Oct 30	Production and post production of <i>Short Film 1</i>	
Nov 2	<i>Short Film 1</i> Due – Screen in MOCAP.  Assign <i>Short Film 2</i>	
Nov 3 – Dec 6	Preproduction, production, and post production of <i>Short Film 2</i>	
Dec 12 3pm	FINAL SCREENING 3pm-5pm in MOCAP	

**GRADING**

---

Assignments are valued as follows:

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1) Deconstructions                                | 10% |
| 2) Munsell Color Boards                           | 10% |
| 3) Short film 1                                   | 30% |
| 4) Short film 2                                   | 40% |
| 5) Attendance / participation in class discussion | 10% |

## Grading Criteria:

A = Exceptional. Demonstrates mastery of material beyond expectation. Professional quality of work. Highest level of scholarship.

B = Above average. Demonstrates mastery of material. Work is of better-than-expected quality, but not quite professional. High level of scholarship.

C = Average. Demonstrates proficiency with material. Work is of amateur quality. Ordinary level of scholarship.

D = Below Average. Less than proficient with material. Work shows errors, careless mistakes, or is just plain wrong. Poor scholarship.

F – Failure. Material incomplete. Work grossly negligent or incomplete. No evidence of scholarship present.

## LATE PAPERS

Deadlines are an inescapable part of responsible, professional, adult life. Late papers will lose a letter grade for each day that the paper is late.

If you discover, *a week or more in advance*, that you have multiple deadlines converging on the same day, you may request a change in deadline> Such a change may be granted at the instructor’s discretion. Once the deadline has passed, it’s too late to ask for exceptions. Manage your time and deadlines wisely.

## TARDINESS / ABSENCE POLICY

---

Attendance is 10% of your grade. That’s the difference between an “A” and a “B”...or an “F” and a “D.”

## TARDINESS

Class BEGINS EXACTLY AT THE APPOINTED TIME. It is your responsibility to be prepared to begin BEFORE the class starts.

Three instances of tardiness is equivalent to one absence. See below for the class absence policy.

THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DENY ENTRY TO STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT PRESENT AT THE START OF CLASS\* – ON THE HOUR. **PLAN ACCORDINGLY. ON-TIME is EARLY!**

\*Exceptions will be made only for those with classes located in RAS whose end time makes on-time arrival impossible.

Punctuality is essential in this business. Tardiness will not be tolerated.

Absence Policy, from the Sul Ross State University 2012-2014 Course Catalogue:

## **CLASS ATTENDANCE**

Regular class attendance is important to the attainment of the educational objectives of the University. Each instructor will keep class attendance records, and the instructor's policy on class attendance will be explained at the beginning of the semester or term.

The instructors will drop a student from a course when the student has a total of nine absences. A student will be dropped for excessive absences in remedial courses after nine absences.

An absence is defined as non-attendance in fifty minutes of class; for example, non-attendance in a one and one-half hour class will constitute one and one-half absences and non-attendance in a three hour class will constitute three absences. An absence because of participation in an official University activity is considered to be an authorized absence.

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

---

*Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-171, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Telephone: 432-837-8203.*