

Course Syllabus University of North Texas  
 DIRECTING NARRATIVE MEDIA RTVF 4810/ RTVF 5702  
 Meeting in Room RTFP 180H  
 Mon 2-4:50pm

Fall 2011

Prerequisite(s): RTVF major status and RTVF 3220, 3230, and consent of instructor.

Assistant Prof. Eugene Martin  
 Office location: RTVF Building Rm. 180c  
 Office Hours: Monday 12:30pm-2pm and Wed 9:30am to 11am and by appointment  
 Email: [Eugene.martin@unt.edu](mailto:Eugene.martin@unt.edu)

**Course Description:** The class will explore in detail the role of the film director. It will be examined and presented in depth through a series of short video projects, acting exercises and lessons in scene analysis. The instructor will lead the students through the progression of the creative process and role of the film director. The course will have a mid-term exam. During class you are required to participate in group acting projects and to crew for fellow classmates on their video assignments. The instructor will explain this in detail in class.

**Course Objectives:**

There are three main areas of learning that will be covered in the course.

**A) Knowledge:**

- 1) the art and craft of the role of the film director
- 2) how a director works collaboratively to achieve his/her vision in storytelling
- 3) the impact of digital tools and how they apply to directing actors
- 4) the distinctive roles of crew members and how the pieces fit together
- 5) the role of the assistant director (AD)
- 6) the rehearsal process before filming begins
- 7) techniques to develop character; exploring subtext

**B) Skills:**

- 1) working with actors to arc performances for camera
- 2) directing techniques for working with a moving camera
- 3) editing techniques for capturing matched action
- 4) story structure, narrative storytelling techniques
- 5) scene study and scene analysis
- 7) breaking down a script to prepare for filming –how to create a shot list and follow continuity as it applies to matched action and time.
- 8) location scouting and walk through of locations with department heads
- 9) preparing to shoot your projects on time and on budget
- 10) learning the casting process and the role of the casting director
- 11) overview of film stocks, exposure, grain, and color palettes for film
- 12) introduction to the business of filmmaking
- 13) working with producers

- 14) working with your editor and how to use dailies to build quality of performances
- 15) how to “edit” while you shoot

**C) Attitudes/Personal development:**

- 1) working collaboratively and developing clear communication skills
- 2) brainstorming, reflective, and problem solving skills
- 3) managing emotional responses to complex and demanding environments
- 4) tolerance for complexity and ambiguity
- 5) ethics of authorship, intention, and the relationship to audiences
- 6) learning to critique peers constructively
- 7) gain an understanding as to how to enter the motion picture and TV industries
- 8) learning to work responsibly, respectfully, and safely

**Course Organization and Projects:**

**Assignments:**

**First Project:** Act and Direct a short scene from a play. Students work in small groups and perform in a three to five minute scene from either: Streetcar Named Desire (Williams, Tennessee) Waiting for Godot (Beckett, Samuel), or American Buffalo (Mamet, David).

**Second Project:** Narrative directing project. Students direct a three-minute scene for camera based on existing material from a play or film. Shot on small format video, edited on Avid or Final Cut. The scene is shot two ways – first, as a continuous long take, and second, as an edited scene broken up into individual shots.

**Final Project:** Each student directs a 5-minute short for his or her final project, shot on small format video. Master to DVD for final grading.

**Required Text:**

Hagen, Utah, Respect for Acting 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition  
Available at the UNT Bookstore.

**Evaluation:**

Grading:

First Project, acting	50 pts.
Second Assignment, 3 min Narrative scene (50 pts. Each)	100 pts.
Final Project, 5 minutes	150 pts.
Mid term paper	150 pts.
Participation/attendance:	50 pts.

**Total** **500 pts.**

---

**Grading Criteria:** You must have excellent attendance and participation to receive an “A” in the class. We will have a sign in sheet. Three unexcused absences will equal one whole letter grade drop. If you are always late and let your team members down, or you

prove to be difficult to communicate with then your grade will reflect this behavior. It is the instructors' expectation that you will not use a netbook, computer, iPhone or cell phone (unless this is a specific accommodation that you arrange with the instructor) during class. Please ask the instructor to clarify this request. Late Assignments: For every week an assignment is late, one letter grade will be deducted from the final grade for that assignment.

Equipment and Editing Systems: See RTVF lab door for editing and equipment room hours. Provided by Mark Dobson (Media Services Coordinator) and Daryn Williams (Equipment Room Supervisor.) Students must supply their own *headphones* for use during shooting and in the editing facility. Please note that the lab/equipment room will not be open for use during the Thanksgiving Break or Winter/Christmas Break. Any checkout of location equipment must be coordinated in advance. We will be using the Avid Nitrous system for some of our group projects this term that we do in collaboration with the Acting for Camera class.

You are financially and legally responsible for any equipment you check out from either Department. A copy of the Department of Radio, Television and Film's policy on the loss of checkout privileges for late equipment return is available for you to look at.

Safety: This course may involve potentially hazardous activities, the nature of which include working with and exposure to electronically powered equipment. Accordingly, the Department of Radio, Television and Film has slated this course within Category 2 (courses in which students are exposed to some significant hazards but are not likely to suffer bodily harm.)

### **Fall 2010 Calendar:**

Week 1 – Intro to acting styles. The actors' process. Divide into acting groups. Respect for Acting: Chapters 1 to 4. Screen section of *I Knew It Was You*.

Week 2 – Labor Day, no class. Acting groups to meet and rehearse scenes out of class. Readings: Respect for Acting: Chapters 5 to 10. Screen section of *My Dinner With Andre*.

Week 3 – The rehearsal process. In class demonstrations of how to create rehearsal tools. Groups work together on scene preparations. Readings: Respect for Acting: Chapters 11 to 15.

Week 4 – Perform Scenes in class. Intro to the peers from the Acting for Camera class. Readings: Respect for Acting: Chapters 16 to 20

Week 5 – Perform Scenes in class. Running the Casting session – how to discover and nurture talent. Casting session and actor monologues in collaboration with the Acting for Camera class. Record the “auditions” for later screening.

Week 6 – Screen Directing Conventions. Screenings: Clips from *Raging Bull* – Analyze casting “auditions”. Readings: Respect for Acting: Chapters 21 to 26

Week 7 – Directing with editing in mind. Coverage described in detail. Screen clips from City of God. Readings: Respect for Acting: Chapters 27 to 31.

Week 8 – Mid term paper – The paper will cover book chapters and lecture notes up to this point.

Week 9 -- Long take projects due. Screen in class.

Week 10 – The business of directing. How making a film is like running a small company; hiring personnel, creating budgets, scheduling, and delivery of films.

Week 11 – Edited scene projects due. Screen in class.

Week 12 - Scene analysis techniques.

The French method of production (Truffaut) vs. American methods of production (Altman and Scorsese).

Week 13 - Directing the edit – working with your editorial team. The role of the First A.D. and Second A.D. The DGA training program described.

Week 14 - Working with producers, developing material for the screen. How to become a “franchise player”.

Week 15 – Screen Final projects.

Disability Accommodation:

The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 – The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.