

**CTVA 357—ADVANCED CINEMATOGRAPHY COURSE SYLLABUS Fall 2009**

California State University at Northridge

Instructor: Prof. Richard Ollis

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Class Meetings: Tues-Thurs. 7:00–9:45pm, MZ 170

Office Hours: Thurs. 6:00–7:00pm. MZ 323 x4087

**Course Objectives**

In film, the communication of both information and emotion to the audience is significantly enhanced through the interpretive uses of visual imagery. For the purposes of this class, visual imagery is defined not only as *what* the camera sees, but also *how it sees it*. It is this difference of non-verbal communication that so effectively separates cinema from the theatrical stage and makes film our most popular and powerful art form.

In addition to solving the many technical problems and challenges of stage and location motion picture photography, the cinematographer must also achieve the artistic requirements necessary to reveal the vision of both the screenwriter and the director, and thereby enhance the storytelling process and intensify the subjective experience of the viewing audience. A thorough knowledge of both theoretical concepts and practical motion picture experience is essential to attain this goal.

This course will explore the nature and relationships of photographic imagery and how its use as a communicative device contributes to the artistic expression of story narrative, content, mood and emotion. Through both still and motion picture photography, students will develop these concepts by demonstrating their uses in a series of practical exercises and graded production assignments.

**Course Format**

Class meetings will consist of lectures and discussions of technical, practical and esthetic topics, hands-on operation of motion picture cameras, lighting and stage equipment, and screenings of selected films and student assignments. Working in groups, students will produce photographic assignments which develop course concepts into personal work and complete a final 16mm film project designed to demonstrate a clear understanding of both practical and esthetic course concepts.

In addition, a comprehensive written final exam will be given which will cover technical and esthetic information and production techniques. Students must produce all assigned projects and participate actively in class discussions and practical exercises.

## **Course Requirements**

Successful completion of CTVA 355 is a pre-requisite. Completion of all production assignments (50% course grade), final exam (25% course grade) and final film project (25% course grade). Grading of assignments will reflect the effective application of technical concepts to the solution of creative problems. All assignments must be completed on time. There will be a one-week grace period for each regular production assignment—thereafter, late work will receive a one-point-per-week grade penalty.

Attendance, promptness and participation are mandatory.

## **Guidelines for Absences**

Excused absences are by doctor's note or at my discretion.

Four unexcused absences: lowers course grade one full point.

Six unexcused absences: lowers course grade two full points.

Six+ unexcused absences: automatic fail/request to withdraw.

## **Recommended Texts**

American Cinematographer Manual, 9<sup>th</sup>. Ed., ASC Press, 2005

Set Lighting Technician's Handbook, 3<sup>rd</sup>. Ed., Focal Press, 2004

Uva's Basic Grip Book, Focal Press, 2002

## **Course Schedule** (*subject to revision*)

Aug. 25 Introduction--Overview of course and assignments  
Class 1 Student/Instructor Introductions  
Screening/Discussion: "Visions of Light"

Aug. 27 Screening/Discussion: "Visions of Light" cont'd  
Class 2 History and Art of Cinematography  
*How Film Form Communicates Story Content*

Sep. 1 The Role of the Modern Cinematographer  
Class 3 Exposure Basics: Theory & Advanced Applications  
Hands-on exposure meters workshop

Sep. 3 Asn. 1: Film Clips Presentation & Analysis  
Class 4 Day Exterior Photography: Problems & Solutions  
Grip and Lighting Equipment Demonstration  
Asn. 2: Daylight Lighting, DUE: Sep. 17

**Sep. 8** *Meet unofficially to complete your groups and*  
**No class** *network with your fellow cinematographers!*

- Sep. 10 Asn. 1 Presentations  
Class 5 The Nature of Light & Light Sources  
Inverse Square Law concept & applications  
Studio Lighting Equipment Demonstration
- Sep. 15 Location Electrical Issues: Watts/Amps/Circuits  
Class 6 Three-Point Lighting Forms and Lighting Ratios  
Asn. 3: Portrait Lighting & Night DUE: Oct. 1
- Sep. 17 Asn. 1 Presentations  
Class 7 Composition, aspect ratios and visual space  
Motion picture camera functions and controls  
**DUE: Asn. 2 Daylight Lighting** critique
- Sep. 22 Location & Practical Lighting Techniques Demo  
Class 8 Asn. 4: Practical Lamp on Location DUE: Oct. 8  
The Camera Crew: positions & responsibilities
- Sep. 24 Asn. 1 Presentations  
Class 9 HMI lecture, demonstration and daylight balance  
Daylight lighting units workshop
- Sep. 29** *Go in groups to a museum--look at the use of*  
**No class** *light by the masters of Renaissance painting!*
- Oct. 1 Advanced Practical Lighting Techniques & Demo  
Class 10 Asn. 5: Candle Light Dinner Scene DUE: Oct. 22  
**DUE: Asn. 3: Portrait Lighting** critique
- Oct. 6 Asn. 1 Presentations  
Class 11 XDCAM Hi Def Technology: Sony EX3 demonstration  
Set Etiquette, Communication and Safety
- Oct. 8 Lenses: Optics, Focal Length, and Aperture  
Class 12 Depth-of-Field and Hyper-focal Distance  
**DUE: Asn. 4: Practical Lamp Scene** critique
- Oct. 13 Asn. 1 Presentations  
Class 13 Day-for-Night Photography Techniques  
Film Stocks: Characteristics Comparisons
- Oct. 15** *Go with your groups to see a film at a first-*  
**No class** *rate theater and discuss the cinematography!*
- Oct. 20 Lighting Demo: Practicals with Night Int.  
Class 14 Asn. 6: Practical Lamp & Moonlight DUE: Nov. 5  
Asn. 1 Presentations
- Oct. 22 Asn. 1 Presentations  
Class 15 Color Filtration for Light Sources  
Mired-shift theory and practical applications  
**DUE: Asn. 5 Candle Light Dinner Scene** critique



Student Learning Outcomes:

In CTVA 357, students will have learned the following:

- How to visually analyze narrative structure by observing uses of lighting, camera placement & movement and composition choices
- How to safely and effectively operate camera, lighting, grip and electrical equipment
- The basic language, esthetics and terminology of cinematography
- Technical, esthetical and practical problem solving on the set

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