

## COURSE CONTENT

<b>Course Code</b>	DF3009
<b>Course Title</b>	Film Directing
<b>Pre-requisites</b>	DF2000 and DF2005
<b>No of AUs</b>	4 AUs for BFA students admitted before AY2017;
<b>Contact Hours</b>	39 hours studio contact

### **Course Aims**

In this intermediate level film course you will receive an intensive introduction to practical film directing in fiction films. You will experience an in-depth knowledge of the director's craft, focusing on effective performance for the screen and how to improve your ability to make directorial choices to articulate a meaningful cinematic narrative. The learning in this course will directly inform and enhance any directing responsibilities in future film projects.

### **Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)**

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Communicate clearly with actors to direct and shape on-screen performance.
2. Analyse and breakdown a script identifying visual style, dramatic structure and narrative function.
3. Apply a cinematic style through effective shot sequencing and sound design.
4. Provide leadership and clear communication to manage a film crew.
5. Critique ideas and directorial techniques employed by peers in a constructive manner.

### **Course Content**

#### **A Director's Choices and Key Relationships**

In this course you will experience an overview of the role of the Film Director through pre-production, production and post-production on a film and key relationships with creative partners and crew. You will learn how to establish a director's vision and understand how a director conceptualises a film. Differences and similarities in story-telling and audio-visual narratives will be covered.

#### **Script Analysis and Interpretation**

In this phase you will examine how a director works from script to screen. You will explore dramatic situations, narrative perspectives and character design, as you break down a scene, developing character backstory and motivation, understanding themes, beats, subtext, turning points and story throughlines / spines. Through casting you will explore character choices.

#### **Shaping On-Screen Performance**

On-screen performance is about developing layered, lively and truthful performances. You will work with playable action-oriented objectives, listening and reacting, direct gesture and body language to build an engaging and effective dramatic scene. Techniques explored include staging and blocking, timing of camera and actors, hitting marks and staying in the frame, utilising the physical environment and situation. You will design opportunities for layered

characterization in the moment.

### **Visual and Audio Conceptualisation**

Visual and audio conceptualisation supports the director's vision through frame design, shot sequencing, coverage and other audio and visual narratives. You will practise with a variety of useful camera exercises to capture and shape performance – simple walk and talk shots, over the shoulder matching shots, table coverage, tracking action on static camera and with moving camera. Communication mechanisms include moodboards, storyboards, camera plans, shot-lists and photo-series.

### **Casting, Rehearsals and Pre-production**

This phase includes preparation for shooting, including casting, location scouting and audio-visual conceptualisation. You will be introduced to casting practices and how this critical choice affects the essential story. Techniques covered include table read, actors rehearsal and technical rehearsal.

### **Post-production Design**

In post-production design you will examine the role of the director, including editing and montage, sound design and mixing, scoring and visual effects.

### **Class assignments**

- 1) Scene Analysis - You will analyse the visual style, dramatic structure and narrative function of a 3-5-minute dramatic scene from a feature film of your choice. Submit a short 1-page paper in hard copy.
- 2) Short Screenplay – You will write an original or adapted short screenplay (3-5 pages) that you will also analyse and breakdown (script analysis) in class.
- 3) Pre-production Presentation (Casting and Conceptualisation) – You will cast and create visualisation / conceptualisation boards to convey the authorial choices you have made.
- 4) Class Rehearsal and Shoot – You will explain the key points of your script analysis and rehearse the scene with your actors.

### **Final Project**

You will direct, shoot and present a completed short film of 3-5min. The steps include developing an idea, writing a 3-5-minute script, conceptualising, directing, shooting, editing, sound-designing and mixing. The finished film will be screened in the final class for a group critique with a guest advisor, and the final digital file will be uploaded to the film server.

### **Assessment (includes both continuous and summative assessment)**

<b>Component</b>	<b>ILO Tested</b>	<b>Programme LO</b>	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Team/ Individual</b>
<b>Continuous Assessment</b>		--		Individual
1) Scene Analysis	2, 5		20%	
2) 3-5-page Screenplay	2,3,5		20%	
3) Casting, Storyboard, Moodboards and Scene Breakdown	1,2,3,4,5		10%	

<b>Final Project:</b>		--		
4) In-class Rehearsal and Shoot	1,2,3,4,5		10%	Individual
5) Final picture-locked project with clean mixed dialogue and sound design	1,2,3,4,5		20%	
<b>Continuous Assessment: Participation</b>	5	--	20%	Individual
Total			100%	

### Reading and References

1. Adler, Stella, *The technique of Acting*, Bantam, 1990
2. Kagan, Jeremy, *Directors Close-Up* Focal Press, 2000
3. Katz, Steven Douglas. *Film directing shot by shot: visualizing from concept to screen*. Gulf Professional Publishing, 1991.
4. Kingdon, Tom, *Total Directing: Integrating Camera and Performance in Film and Television*, Silman-James, 2004
5. Meisner, Sanford, *Sanford Meisner on Acting*, Vintage Book, 1987
6. Murch, Walter. *In the blink of an eye: A perspective on film editing*. Silman-James Press, 2001.
7. Rabinger, Michael and Hurbis-Carrier, Mick, *Directing: Film Techniques and Aesthetics*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Focal Press, 2013
8. Stanislavski, Constantin, *An Actor Prepares*, Theatre Arts, 1989
9. Stanislavski, Constantin, *Building a Character*, Theatre Arts, 1989

### Course Policies and Student Responsibilities

#### (1) General

You are expected to complete all assigned readings, activities, assignments, attend all classes punctually and complete all scheduled assignments by due dates. You are expected to take responsibility to follow up with assignments and course related announcements. You are expected to participate in all project critiques, class discussions and activities.

#### (2) Punctuality

You are expected to be punctual for all classes. If you are more than 15 minutes late, you will be deemed as absent and will not be able to sign on the attendance register.

#### (3) Absenteeism

In-class activities make up a significant portion of your course grade. Absence from class without a valid reason will affect your participation grade. Valid reasons include falling sick supported by a medical certificate and participation in NTU's approved activities supported by an excuse letter from the relevant bodies. There will be no make-up opportunities for in-class activities.

### Academic Integrity

Good academic work depends on honesty and ethical behaviour. The quality of your work as a student relies on adhering to the principles of academic integrity and to the NTU Honour Code, a set of values shared by the whole university community. Truth, Trust and Justice are at the core of NTU's shared values.

As a student, it is important that you recognize your responsibilities in understanding and applying the principles of academic integrity in all the work you do at NTU. Not knowing what is involved in maintaining academic integrity does not excuse academic dishonesty. You need to actively equip yourself with strategies to avoid all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, academic fraud, collusion and cheating. If you are uncertain of the definitions of any of these terms, you should go to the [academic integrity website](#) for more information. Consult your instructor(s) if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.

### Planned Weekly Schedule\*

\*Subjected to adjustment by instructor according to students' progress, public holidays and unforeseeable circumstances.

Week	Topic	Course LO	Readings/ Activities
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>A Director's Choices and Key Relationships</b></li> </ul> <p>Overview of the role of the Film Director through pre-production, production and post-production on a film and key relationships with creative partners and crew. Understanding authorial style, finding the director's vision and understanding how a director conceptualises a film. Differences and similarities in story-telling and audio-visual narratives.</p>	1,2, 3, 5	<p><b>Introductory Lecture</b></p> <p><b>In-class Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the role of the director and key relationships</li> <li>understanding authorial choices and cinematic styles</li> </ul> <p><b>In-class Workshop</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understanding truthful moments in performance</li> </ul> <p><b>Assign Project 1:</b> Scene Analysis (analysing a short scene from a film).</p>
2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Script Analysis and Interpretation</b></li> </ul> <p>How a director works from script to screen. Understanding dramatic situations, narrative perspectives and character design. Breaking down a scene, developing character backstory and motivation, understanding themes, beats, subtext, turning points and story throughlines / spines. Character choices through casting.</p>	1,2, 3, 5	<p><b>Lectures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>working from script to screen</li> <li>understanding beats, turning points, throughlines, subtext and dramatic structure</li> <li>developing character detail, backstory, motivations, spines and intention</li> </ul> <p><b>In-class Workshop</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>table read</li> <li>script analysis and breaking down a scene</li> </ul>

			<p><b>Presentation of Project 1 (scene analysis).</b> Critique and feedback</p> <p><b>Assign Project 2:</b> Write a short screenplay (3-5pages), original or adapted</p>
4-5	<p>• <b>Shaping On-Screen Performance</b> Developing layered, lively and truthful performances. Working with playable action-oriented objectives, listening and reacting, gesture and body language, to build an engaging and effective dramatic scene. Blocking and focusing physical action to clarify dramatic tension and beats, hitting marks and staying in the frame, utilising the physical environment and situation. Designing opportunities for layered characterization in the moment.</p>	1, 2, 3, 5	<p><b>Lectures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• brief history of performance</li> <li>• how an actor prepares</li> <li>• playable action-oriented direction</li> <li>• character design through backstory, motivation and intention</li> <li>• situation-based performance, listening and reacting, gesture and body language</li> </ul> <p><b>In-class Workshops</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the rehearsal process (table-reads, static and blocking rehearsals)</li> <li>• practical work with beats, objectives and as-ifs</li> <li>• physical gesture, body language and situation</li> </ul>
6	<p><b>Designing opportunities for layered characterization in the moment.</b></p>	1, 2, 3, 5	<p><b>Presentation of Project 2 (short screenplay)</b> <b>Critique and feedback</b> <b>Individual Project Consultation</b> <b>Screenplay</b></p> <p><b>Assign Project 3</b> Cast for your short film (final project) and begin pre-production (locations, crew) in preparation for your shoot.</p>

7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Visual and Audio Conceptualisation</b> Supporting the director's vision through frame design, shot sequencing, coverage and other audio and visual narratives. Practise with a variety of useful camera exercises to capture and shape performance – simple walk and talk shots, over the shoulder matching shots, table coverage, tracking action on static camera and with moving camera. Communication mechanisms include moodboards, storyboards, camera plans, shot-lists and photo-series.</li> </ul>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	<p><b>Lectures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• frame design, coverage and sequencing</li> <li>• movement design and blocking for character and camera</li> <li>• communication tools (moodboards, shot-lists, storyboards etc)</li> </ul> <p><b>In-class Workshops</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• camera exercises for coverage and sequencing</li> <li>• moving camera exercises</li> </ul> <p><b>Presentation of Projects 3 (casting and conceptualisation)</b> Present cast and pre-production boards</p> <p><b>Individual Project Consultation</b> Pre-production boards</p> <p><b>Assign Project 4 and 5</b> Shoot your script</p>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pre-production, Casting and Rehearsals</b> Preparation for Shooting, including casting, location scouting and audio-visual conceptualisation.</li> </ul>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	<p><b>Lectures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical logistics of production</li> <li>• communication with crew, order of the day</li> </ul> <p><b>In-class Workshop / Project 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rehearsal and Shoot</li> </ul>
10-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Production</b> No class – production period</li> </ul>	3, 4, 5	<p><b>In-class Workshop / Project 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rehearsal and Shoot</li> </ul>
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Post-Production Design</b> Role of the director in post-production, including editing and montage, sound design and mixing, scoring and visual effects.</li> </ul>	3, 4, 5	<p><b>Lectures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• editing for character and performance logistics of production</li> <li>• guest lecture on sound design and mixing</li> </ul>
13	<p><b>Presentation</b></p>	3, 4, 5	<p><b>Presentation of Final Project</b> <b>Present finished film. Final critique with guest.</b></p>