

COMM 338 – Narrative Production Spring 2024

Wednesday 7:00 - 9:45 p.m. Sullivan Center – Room 253

Professor Miguel Silveira

Office Hours: By Appointment

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Course Description & Objectives Applying the media production and narrative filmmaking skills acquired in previous courses, students work as production teams to create short-subject narrative films, taking their projects from pre-production to exhibition. At the conclusion of the course, students will:

1. Understand and experience the five phases of the narrative production process: development, pre-production, production, post-production and exhibition.
2. Experience working as a part of a film production crew and be exposed to a variety of production jobs.
3. Produce polished, original, short-subject films and arrange for their exhibition.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

Although this class is not officially a “thesis” class, for some of you the work you will develop and produce this semester will function as an unofficial “thesis” that can be used in your professional portfolio as an introduction to your work, it is what some in the industry refer to as a “**calling card.**” A “calling card” in our context is a student film that demonstrates a level of professional or semi-professional quality, from the script to post-production, that will allow you to showcase your talent and to compete with other great films vying for spots at the most prestigious film festivals in the world – and remember: festivals are important but they are not everything! Your calling card will be used in grant applications, job applications, grad school applications, you name it.

The class will provide you with the opportunity to seek out experienced actors and crew to help bringing your vision and your films to life. Scheduling properly (and sticking to your schedule) will be paramount to your success this semester.

Each student will create a final film project. Multiple exercises will help you develop your vision and accurately plan your pre-production, production, post-production, and distribution. Get ready to schedule (!) and be prepared to collaborate with your peers and friends.

I will try my best to organize guest visits to our classroom. I want to introduce you to young DPs, editors, production designers (etc), who live and work in the city. Get ready to meet filmmakers you may collaborate with!

No film will run longer than 10 (ten) minutes. Get ready to be challenged to tell a story in 10 minutes. We will spend the entire semester workshoping your scripts and developing your stories until they are production ready. Final projects will be due on the last day of class. The films must be finished (Sound designed and color corrected) by May 1st, and each student must screen it in order to receive the full grade for their finals.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE:

No screenplays written by AI will be accepted. If caught, you will receive an automatic zero for the assignment. School policy will be taken in consideration should you create screenplays using AI. The use of this technology is not forbidden in this class, in fact, it is encouraged, except in the development of screenplays. Let's definitely talk about AI as a tool. If you need to use it, please check with me first, you will need my authorization.

READINGS:

Multiple texts will be suggested to students throughout the semester. All required materials will be made available to students via Sakai under the resources tab or via email links.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- Access to Premiere pro.
- At least two External Hard Drives no smaller than 1TB – please check specifications before buying the HDs.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Your final grade will be calculated using the following formula (Points – out of 100):

10 FILM REPORTS = 10%
FILM EXERCISE 1 = 10%
FILM EXERCISE 2 = 15%
SCRIPT DRAFT AND REVISION = 15%
SHOOTING SCRIPT AND PRE-PRO FOR FINAL FILM = 15%
FINAL PROJECT or “CALLING CARD” = 25%
PARTICIPATION = 10%

NOTE: assignment materials should be submitted electronically via sakai, email or similar before the beginning of class on the assigned due date. Late assignments will be docked one point per day. No assignment will be accepted more than 1-week after its initial due date.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION:

10 Film Reports – Due every week until week 10:

For the first 10 weeks, you will watch a featured film that relates to your “Calling Card” project in some way. The connection may be related to the “Visuals” to the “Story”, to the “Mood,” to the “Theme” of your project, or something else. You will then write a 1-page assessment of the film you watched and explain it to the class why you pick that particular film. This is part of the preparation for your final assignment. Each one of the 10 reports is worth 1% of your grade.

Film Exercise #1 – Due February 7:

The film should run anywhere between 3-5 minutes long. Not a second less, not a second more. This project will require meticulous pre-production that includes the script itself, the creation of a schedule, the preparation of a mood board, casting, etc. The film, which can be self-contained, should also be related to the world of your “Calling Card.” Making this film is your chance to

investigate an aspect of filmmaking you would like to develop as you create your final film at the end of the semester. The Film Exercise # 1 is worth 10% of your final grade.

Film Exercise #2 – Due February 21:

This is a continuation of what we started by making the first film (Exercise 1). This is a more advanced project where you will try to implement more complex ideas or further explore what you started with your previous exercise.

The film should run anywhere between 3-5 minutes long. Not a second less, not a second more. This project will require meticulous pre-production that includes the script itself, the creation of a schedule, the preparation of a mood board, casting, etc. The film, which can be self-contained, should also be related to the world of your “Calling Card.” Making this film is your chance to investigate an aspect of filmmaking you would like to develop as you create your final film at the end of the semester. The Film Exercise # 2 is worth 15% of your final grade.

Script Draft and Revision – Due February 28 (Part 1) and March 27 (Part 2):

The draft for your “Calling Card” film, which should be no shorter than 5 minutes and no longer than 10 minutes. I may accept a 12 minutes long film if this length supports the story. Anything longer than 12 minutes will not be accepted and your script draft must reflect that. The revised the script should have gone through multiple exercises and iterations, and must be read by actors as part of a table-read before you submit it for grade. Each part of this assignment is worth 7.5% of your final grade. The completed assignment is worth 15% of your final grade. Note: You will likely keep polishing your script until production, but the final delivery date is March 27, and we will read it in class.

Shooting Script and Pre-Production Materials for Final Project or “Calling Card”:

All files and documents related to your pre-production and production must be compiled and shared with me prior to your production dates. This assignment is worth 15% of your grade.

Calling Card - Due in stages, final presentation is on May 1:

This is the culmination of our entire semester. The film should be completed and screened in class. A festival strategy must be in place and a Film Freeway page must be part of the delivery of your final. This assignment is worth 25% of your grade.

Participation:

10% of your grade will be assigned based on your “participation” in class. I will measure participation based on the number of unexcused absences, on lateness, on the timely delivery of assignments, and on your commitment to the films you will produce in class. If you fail to deliver a project on time, this will affect your participation grade negatively. If you help one of your peers, this will affect your grade positively. The aesthetic quality of your film will have no bearing on your participation grade. The amount of effort and dedication to your projects and your peers’ projects will count as “participation.”

LETTER GRADE SCALE:

100-95% = A
94.99- 90% = A-
89.99-87% = B+
86.99-83% = B
82.99-80% = B-
79.99-77% = C+
76.99-74% = C
73.99-70% = C-
69.99-67% = D+
66.99-65% = D
64.99%- and Below = F

The instructor reserves the right to modify and update this syllabus.

Week 1

January 17

(I) Introduction to class. (II) Introduction to student-filmmakers. (III) Definition of roles. (IV) Overview of the five phases of the narrative production process. (V) Review of expectations. (VI) Short films screening. (VII) Five Stages of Filmmaking (VIII) Homework assignment explanation:

Due Week 2:

- Scripts.
- Film Report #1

Week 2

January 24

(I) Table read of all projects. (II) Film Report Discussion. (III) Short Films analysis and film directing lecture. (IV) Potential guest visit – depending on availability. (V) The Five Stages of filmmaking Discussion continues. (VI) Homework Assignment Explanation – Exercise 1.

Due Week 3:

- Full Pre-production plan for film Exercise #1 including New Draft of Script, Schedule Breakdown (All Departments), Vision Board, Cast Ideas, Shot List, Google Drive Document, etc.
- Film Report # 2

Week 3

January 31

(I) Presentation of Film Exercise#1 Materials: 10 minutes per student, plus 5 minutes for comments.

Due Week 4:

- Film Exercise 1
- Film Report#3
- Exercise#2 Pitch

Week 4

February 7

(I) Screening of Film Exercise # 1. (II) Lecture on the Five Stages of Film Production. (III) Exercise # 2 Pitches.

Due Week 5:

- Script for Film Exercise #2
- Film Report # 4

Week 5

February 14

(I) Table Read of Exercise # 2 Scripts. (II) Lecture (III) Potential Guest – depending on availability.

Due Week 6:

- Full Pre-production plan for film Exercise #2 including New Draft of Script, Schedule Breakdown (All Departments), Vision Board, Cast Ideas, Shot List, Google Drive Document, etc.
- Film Report # 5

Week 6

February 21

(I) Screening of Film Exercise # 2 Materials: 10 minutes per student, plus 5 minutes for comments. (II) Lecture. (III) Scene Analysis. (IV) Potential Guest.

Due Week 7:

- Film Report # 6
- Treatment for Final Film and Breakdown of Key Department Needs (Production Design, Wardrobe, Camera Department, etc).

Week 7

February 28

(I) Informal discussion about the status of “Calling Card” film. (II) Lecture. (III) Potential Guest. (IV) Potential Field Trip. (V) Should you use your Spring Break to prepare your final film?

Due Week 8:

- Film Reports # 7 & 8
- First Draft of Script for “Calling Card” film.

March 6 (SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS)

Week 8

March 13 (One on one meetings)

Due Week 9:

- Film Report # 9
- Full production Breakdown for “Calling Card” Film – Including Locked Production Schedule.

Week 9

March 20

(I) Table Read of “Calling Card” Scripts and Pre-Production updates Presentation. (II) Lecture (III) Potential Guest – depending on availability.

Due Week 10:

- Film Report # 10
- Full Pre-production plan for “Calling Card” including New Draft of Script, Schedule Breakdown (All Departments), Vision Board, Cast Ideas, Shot List, Google Drive Document, etc.
- **Start Shooting!**

Week 10

March 27

(I) Discussing your post-production plan and strategies. (II) Discussing Distribution. (III) Checking on the status of your “Calling Card” project.

Due on Week 11:

- Calling Card materials.
- TBD.
- **Calling Cards Footage.**

Week 11

April 3

Continued...

(I) Discussing your post-production plan and strategies. (II) Discussing Distribution. (III) Checking on the status of your “Calling Card” project.

Due on Week 12:

- **Calling Cards Footage.**
- **TBD**

Week 12

April 10

(I) Calling Cards EDITS will start coming in at this point. (II) TBD.

Due on Week 13:

- Rough Cuts:

Week 13

April 17

(I)Comments on Cuts. (II) TBD.

Due on Week 14:

- Fine Cuts.

Week 14

April 24

(I) Watch Fine Cuts. Notes. Troubleshoot for final. (II) Festival Strategies Discussed for each project. (III) Deliverables Discussion. (IV) TBD.

Due on Week 15:

- Final Project completed. Sound Design Completed. Color Correction Completed. Titles Completed. Project exported and tested PRIOR to screening. Contracts in Place. Receipts uploaded to the drive.

Week 15

May 1

**SCREENING OF COMPLETED CALLING CARD FILMS prior to the
“ILLUMINATION 2024” SCREENING.**

The instructor reserves the right to modify and update this syllabus.

RULES, GUIDELINES, and ETHICS:

ATTENDANCE Regular and on time attendance is essential for the educational process to work. Loyola University expects all students to attend every scheduled class on time. Exceptions may be made for University sponsored or work related activities, illness, or valid emergency situations. You should make every effort to inform me ASAP of any absence. If you know of a conflict with a school program outside this class, please don't wait to inform me at the last minute. You will not be allowed to make up any in-class work on a day you are absent unless it is an excused absence. Remember, we are in the School of Communication...so please make an effort to communicate. More than two unexcused absences will automatically result in a lower attendance grade.

LOYOLA'S POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY The basic commitment of a university is to search for and to communicate the truth, as it is honestly perceived. The university could not accomplish its purpose in the absence of this demanding standard. To the extent that this standard is respected, a genuine learning community can exist. Students of this university are called upon to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty. Plagiarism is a serious form of violation of this standard. Plagiarism is the appropriation for gain of ideas, language, or work of another without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the deliberate taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources. The faculty

and administration of Loyola University Chicago wish to make it clear that the following acts are regarded as serious violations of personal honesty and the academic ideal that binds the university into a learning community: Submitting as one's own: • Material copied from a published source: print, Internet, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc. • Another person's unpublished work or examination material. • Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper, shoot or edit a video for one's own benefit. • Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper or video story. The critical issue is to give proper recognition to other sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. Plagiarism on the part of a student in academic work or dishonest examination behavior will result minimally in the instructor assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. In addition, all instances of academic dishonesty must be reported to the chairperson of the department involved. The chairperson may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending upon the seriousness of the misconduct.

Academic cheating is another serious act that violates academic integrity. Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher; providing information to or obtaining information from another student during the examination; attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted; and falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences all are violations of the integrity and honesty standards of the examination process. In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty across departments, the academic dean of the student's college may convene a hearing board. Students retain the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the academic dean of the college in which they are registered. The decision of the dean is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT • Please turn off cell phones and other electronic devices such as iPods before entering class. • You will not need a personal laptop for this course, so please do not bring it to class. Once class has started, do not sign onto a classroom computer unless instructed to do so. Non-compliance will have a negative impact on your participation grade. • Be respectful of other people's opinion in discussions. We can disagree without disrespecting each other. • Do not take naps or fall asleep during class. It is disrespectful toward the other students and the instructor. If you sleep during class, you will be asked to leave and your participation grade will be negatively affected. • Do not leave class early. Do not come in to class to take a quiz and then leave. If you foresee that you will not be able to stay the whole class, let me know beforehand. • If you have any questions or concerns, let me know as soon as possible.

SPECIAL NEEDS Students are urged to contact me should they have questions concerning course materials and procedures. If you have a special circumstance that may have some impact on your course work and for which you may require accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so that arrangements can be made with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). Additional information about the services available at Loyola, including eligibility for services, is on the SSWD website: <http://www.luc.edu/sswd/index.shtml>

LIABILITY ISSUES Students will be instructed prior to their first assignment on the general nature of privacy and trespassing laws. From time to time students may find themselves in a position where someone may not approve of them capturing their image. In cases such as this, it is best to honor the wishes of this person. Even though

you may very well be within your rights to gather this information to include both audio and video, it would be best if students “walk away” from the situation before it escalates. In the event something does occur, please do the following: • Contact faculty advisor • This equipment passes through the hands of many students and in order to assure that the equipment remains in good working order, treat it like your own. You are financially responsible for all of the equipment you use and should treat it with great care. This kind of equipment is not indestructible and it is susceptible to various environmental situations such as a dirt, dust, rain, snow, water, and heat. • Caution should be taken when transporting all equipment as this equipment is fragile and can easily be damaged. Be aware of your environment and where you are at all times. This type of equipment is popular with thieves and can easily be pilfered if you are not paying attention. Do not rely on your lab partners to be the one responsible for “watching” the equipment. In the event something should happen, everyone in the group will be considered a responsible party. • Do not leave equipment in a parked vehicle • You may use your own equipment, but first clear this with me before any assignment. **YOU WILL ASSUME ALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEARNING PROPER USAGE AND COMPATIBILITY OF ANY EQUIPMENT BEYOND THE SPECIFIC EQUIPMENT COVERED IN THIS CLASS.**

FACILITY AND EQUIPMENT RULES • When individuals request use of the equipment outside of class time, the request should be made 5 working days in advance of the desired time. Do not assume equipment is reserved unless you have confirmation. Equipment and use of facilities are available on a first come first serve basis anytime they are not being used for classes. • Whenever possible, students should telephone well in advance of their scheduled equipment pick-up or facility appointment should they anticipate a problem in arriving at the scheduled meeting time. Anyone more than 15 minute late for equipment pick-up may forfeit the use of the equipment at that time. Students who are repeatedly delinquent may lose their equipment privileges. • Audio and video equipment is checked out on a 24-hour basis during the week and Friday to Monday on weekends. Equipment must be signed out with authorized personnel. Students will be responsible for returning equipment and materials within 24 hours and in their original condition. Students must report immediately any damage or theft of equipment. Failure to do so may result in a suspension or loss of equipment privileges. • Students may bring additional crew members, if needed, to the lab for production. • There is no smoking in any lab space. No eating or drinking at any work/edit station. • Students are responsible for careful handling of all equipment, and for abiding by all rules and regulations governing the use of the facility.

Suggestions for Success • Treat the class like a job • Show up on time • Come to class prepared • Pay attention • Do the work • Stay for the entire class period • Be fully engaged in class • Pay attention and take good notes • Don’t be afraid to ask for help • Be resourceful • Take the initiative to learn and succeed • Communicate • Make no excuses • Don’t wait until the last minute to do the assignment.