

DEVELOPING AND PREPRODUCING THE SHORT FILM

Cognitive Science 337
ASH AUD, M 6:30 – 9:30
Fall 2000

Instructors: Chris Perry and Eric Sanders

Office: ASH 215

Office Hours: Chris: W 3-4, TH 1:30-3:30, Eric: TBA

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Link to class web page can be found at: <http://helios.hampshire.edu/~chpCCS>

Course Catalog Description

This course is intended to provide structural background to the filmmaking process, from mining creative sources of “story” to the components of film narrative to the elements of visual composition. The first half of the course will concentrate specifically on screenwriting. By providing close readings of successful films, students will build the analytic tools they need to create their own narratives regardless of genre. These tools will be applied to the short film through lessons in dialogue, structure, and standard screenplay format. The second half of the course will focus on visual development. Storyboards will be the primary vehicle through which students will explore concepts such as staging and composition, shot continuity, readability, and eye trace to best illuminate their texts.

Weekly assignments in the first half of the course will evolve from concept pitches to treatments to a final written screenplay, followed in the second half with the creation of a visual treatment in the form of thumbnail sketches, storyboards, and possibly a story reel.

Class will meet once a week for three hours. Enrollment is limited to 15 by instructor permission. Students should have an interest in developing short films and **MUST** bring a half-page written essay expressing their interest in the course to the first class.

Enrollment

We will post a final list of the students in the class outside of ASH 215 and on the class web page by noon on Thursday, September 14th.

Supplies and Expenses

There may be a course packet this term which will contain all of the reading material. This shouldn't be too costly. Other small costs may be incurred during the course (purchasing/developing 35mm film, pads of paper, etc.). We will try to keep these small and will provide a list when the time comes.

**CS 337: Developing and Preproducing the Short Film
Expectations and Evaluations**

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Students will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Improvement. A student's improvement is more important than the overall success of their film. A student who shows they can make their film better by integrating the material from the course will receive a stronger evaluation than one who doesn't.

Participation and Teamwork. Every student is developing his or her own screenplay but they will not be doing it in a vacuum. One student's observations are very important and could lend insight to another student trying to solve a similar narrative problem. Building a supportive environment is critical to the success of the class and it will be every student's responsibility to try and do so.

Students will be assigned to groups to preproduce particular scripts in the second half of the class. Students who embrace the collaborative nature of the filmmaking process by working well with their teams will receive stronger evaluations than those who don't.

Regular attendance. There are only twelve classes. Roll will be taken at every class. Students that miss class are responsible for the material they missed and should follow-up with us or the other students to catch up. **A student with 2 or more absences will not receive an evaluation for the course.** Tardiness of over **15 minutes** will be considered an absence.

Preparation. Students must come to class with the assignment(s) for the class completed. Some assignments are due on the Thursday before class at 3:30pm in Chris Perry's mailbox in the CS office. Certain assignments, when turned in on time, will receive instructor comments. Comments may not be provided for assignments that come in late. **Any student that ever falls 2 assignments behind will not receive an evaluation for the course.**

Other. We reserve the right to assign something that we haven't included in this syllabus. To be fair, We intend to make it clear when these things come up exactly how much weight they will be given in the evaluations.