

INTRODUCTION TO STORYBOARDING AND CINEMATIC STORYTELLING

Instructor: Sean McComber

Course Syllabus

Introduction to Storyboarding and Cinematic Storytelling

Fall 2019

Thursday 1:00pm – 03:45pm

Professor Contact Information

Sean McComber

ATC 3.917

Sean.mccomber@utdallas.edu

Course Pre-requisites

A student doesn't need to be a master draftsman although some knowledge of drawing would be an advantage but not essential to gain from taking this class.

A student does not need to have a laptop or software to take this class, but I would encourage students to have knowledge of Photoshop or other storyboarding software particularly in relationship to Industry standards.

Course Description

This program is designed to introduce students to the fundamental elements of storyboarding. To be clear this is not about script writing or story structure, but rather applying storytelling principals to the film medium. Each step is intended to introduce concepts in a manner that imitates the various stages of development and production of an animated film. We'll discuss and analyze the various elements of cinematic

storytelling via storyboard, then apply them to short assignments culminating in a group effort, students working together to produce their own film project in storyboard. The industry demand is always high for good storyboard artists, and hopefully this course will provide the tools and prepare students to pursue a career in their choice of media; Animated Feature Film, TV, Film, Advertising or Games or even develop their own stories.

This class will consist of lectures, demonstrations, film references, constructive critiques and discussion.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Students will learn how to visually present a story narrative using various design and cinematography methodologies, storyboard various complex film sequences, develop and pitch their ideas.

Required Textbooks

Not Applicable

Required Materials

- Prisma Color Pencils (Indigo Blue, Orange, Black)
 - Sharpie Marker Pens (black) or Sharpie Marker Pen (Extra Fine)
 - 1 large Newsprint Pad (11x17)
 - 1 sketch Pad
 - Large 3x5 post-it note pads
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Recommended Reading

- The Illusion of Life – Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston
- FILM An Illustrated Historical Overview – Barron’s
- Save the Cat – Blake Snyder
- Story – Robert Mckee
- The Filmmakers Eye – Gustavo Mercado
- Cinematic Storytelling – Jennifer Van Sijil
- The Art of Alfred Hitchcock – Donald Spoto
- Shot by Shot – Steven D Katz

- A personal journey with Martin Scorsese through American Movies – Martin Scorsese and Michael Henry Wilson
 - Dreamworlds – Hans Bacher
 - Framed Ink – Marcos Mateu
 - Anything Hitchcock...
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Assignments & Academic Calendar

Week 1 (Aug. 22)

- So to start...what is a Storyboard?
- History of Storyboards

**Instructor gathers related film reference to view and analyze.*

Assignment: Pick a favorite film/sequence take notes and ask yourself what are the visual and emotional cues that best engage you and why? Bring your notes and conclusions to next class.

Week 2 (Aug. 29)

- The ‘Visual Language’ of Film

**Instructor gathers related film reference to view and analyze.*

Assignment: Research the early development of international film such as German Expressionism * The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, French Impressionism, Soviet etc. Write or Sketch examples

Week 3 (Sept. 5)

- Exploration of a Story Moment

Assignment: The instructor provides a treatment with about 20 beats which tell the story in a clear and interesting manner. Asking the questions from the course the student will identify the most important needed for the story and clearly. Illustrate those beats.

Don't rush straight into drawing take time to become familiar with the written material take time to understand the story and choose the beats which he/she intends to visualize.

**Concentrate on the quantity of ideas rather than quality of drawings.*

**Instructor gathers related film reference to view and analyze.*

Week 4 (Sept. 12)

- Cutting, Staging and Continuity-Part 1

Introduce basic concepts of cutting, staging, continuity,

**Instructor gathers related film reference to view and analyze*

Assignment: Watch a film that you admire, with the sound turned off select a sequence, observe the composition of each shot. Using simple light, medium and dark value studies. Roughly sketch out the frames, draw the directional lines of each shot. Think abstract shapes only...not *pretty* detailed drawings. Observe the focal point in each shot. Where does your eye go first? Why?

Week 5 (Sept. 19)

- Cutting, Staging and Continuity-Part 2

Introduce basic concepts of cutting, staging, continuity,

**Instructor gathers related film reference to view and analyze.*

Week 6 (Sept. 26)

- Using Cinematic Composition

Composition principals and pacing to help tell a story.

**Instructor gathers related film reference to view and analyze.*

Week 7 (Oct. 3)

- Character Analysis

**Instructor gathers related film reference to view and analyze.*

Assignment: Given a character sheet, define specific characteristics and personality that could breath life into the character. This exercise is used to sharpen a student's ability to understand written material, gather information about the character and use this information to present dimensional and entertaining characters to the story.

Week 8 (Oct. 10)

- Continuity Storyboards

**Instructor gathers related film reference to view and analyze.*

Assignment: Using the script provided storyboard a sequence of 6 shots to illustrate the intention and character motives. Emphasize clear drawings but keep it rough and loose that show expression, action, graphic strength and simplicity.

Week 9 (Oct. 17)

- Emotional/ Dramatic Moments
- View a sequence of a movie with the sound turned off in order to watch the flow of scenes without the distraction of sound. Review the shots and interpret the emotion or dramatic tone.

**Instructor gathers related film reference to view and analyze.*

Assignment: Student uses scripted scene beats to board a sequence of emotional intensity between two or more characters. This can be a romantic moment or a realization of betrayal etc. any material which relies heavily on character acting with a high degree of emotion.

Week 10 (Oct. 24)

- Action, Comedy and Song Sequences

**Instructor gathers related film reference to view and analyze.*

Assignment: Student uses scripted scene beats to board a sequence that contains a high degree of comedy and gags. This can be a situation of misunderstanding between two characters, a comic chase sequence etc. Should contain a high degree of physical action with an emphasis on humor.

Student uses a favorite song or music piece to storyboard. (Alternative; use an unfamiliar piece that the student has no previous visual conceptions that would influence his/her work.

The material should be chosen to challenge trainee in an area of weakness.

Week 11 (Oct. 31)

- Putting it all together

Your only job now is to develop the business and explore the story and characters to bring the sequence to life.

**Instructor gathers related film reference to view and analyze.*

Assignment:

Week 12 (Nov. 7)

- Student Collaborative Project.
- Using a piece of development artwork as a springboard the trainee will develop his/her visualization of a story moment. This can be a piece of art or illustration. The chosen piece of artwork should contain a significant number of ideas/elements. The trainee can assemble an idea board including possible gags, situations, relationships and locations for inspiration.

Alternative; Project could be an animated Logo or ID. Using characters, titles or shapes.

- Through the brainstorming process students are encouraged to explore and develop a 1-2 minute short using entertaining ideas and situations, contribute gag and animation ideas, visual ideas and props for 'business' to complete a final finished presentation board. The board should contain between 50 – 100 panels.

During this process remember to leave your ego at home. The process of film making means there can be a lot of re-inventing to get the best ideas to surface.

Week 13 (Nov. 14)

- Student Collaborative Project group working together.

Week 14 (Nov. 28)

- Finalize Collaborative Project

**If time and resources are available, instructor may assist the team in assembling an animatic reel of the boards.*

Week 15 (Dec. 5)

- Final Collaborative Project *in class Presentation, review and critiques.

***All descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.**

Grading Policy

Students must demonstrate satisfactory achievement of course objectives through fulfillment of course assignments and by contributing to class discussions and critiques. Students will be working in terms and contributing peer evaluations which will count towards their teammate's grades and their own.

Course & Instructor Policies

Comet Creed

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