

## **ENG 4136: Introduction to Filmmaking**

Professor: Dr. Trevor Mowchun

Term: Spring 2025, 4 credits

Office hours (TUR 4364): Monday 4 - 5pm, Wednesday 4 - 6pm

Email: tmowchun@ufl.edu

Class (TUR 2334): Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 3 - 3:50pm

Film screening (ROL 115): Monday 7:20 - 10:10pm. \*Most film screenings will not run the full class time.

Film lab technician: Owen Ward (TUR 4303)

Email: owen.ward@ufl.edu

Phone: 352-672-8459

Lab hours (with Owen):

- Monday: Periods 6-7 (12:50-2:45)
- Tuesday: Periods 6-7 (12:50-2:45)
- Wednesday: Periods 6-7 (12:50-2:45)
- Thursday: Periods 6-7 (12:50- 2:45)
- Friday: Periods 9-10 (4:05-6:00)

\*Keycode to the lab will be provided.

\*Students should see Owen during his hours to sign out keys to the editing suites. Students will have access to the editing suites outside of Owen's lab hours.

### **Course Description:**

Cinema is a unique, complex, evolving, and visionary artform with great individual and cultural impact. Cinema is also a language, and speaking it with imagination and conviction requires far more than mastering its technical equipment. To learn to "speak" cinema clearly and evocatively, the student filmmaker must develop a wide array of skills, such as conceptualization, visual thinking, dramatic construction, acting, (dis)continuity, cinematography, stylistic expressivity, spatial and temporal manipulation, to name but a few. An understanding of the traditional artforms from which film has grown and with which it continues to intersect – i.e., photography, literature, poetry, painting, music, theater – is no less crucial. This course explores both the artistic and technical aspects of filmmaking in tandem, considering the varied and inexhaustible ways that the medium of film activates the synergy between art and technology and leads the imagination into free, perhaps uncharted territory. Throughout the semester we will open a window into the inner workings of the creative cinematic process, analyze films from the perspective of their own making, and continually search for ways to enrich, stimulate and guide creativity throughout the entire filmmaking process from script to screen.

Students will discover the expressive potential of cinema through a combination of theoretical and practical instruction – a balance of weekly lectures on the art of filmmaking along with equipment workshops— and the creation of two short films. The instructor will

advise on the content, style, and logistics of the film work. Weekly readings and film screenings are essential components of the course and their understanding will constitute a portion of the coursework as well.

Students will be given access to the English Department's film lab, fit with ample production and post-production equipment to make films. Our lab technician will hold weekly office hours to provide equipment tutorials one-on-one, manage the borrowing and timely returning of equipment, and resolve any technical issues that arise. Students are permitted to borrow equipment and use the editing suites upon completion of tutorials held in class or by the technician.

### **Texts:**

\*For purchase at the bookstore or another vendor.

- Steven Ascher (with Edward Pincus), *The Filmmaker's Handbook*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (Plume 2019).
- Robert Bresson, *Notes on the Cinematograph*, trans. Jonathan Griffin (New York Review of Books, 2016).
- Alexander Mackendrick, *On Film-making: An Introduction to the Craft of the Director*, ed. Paul Cronin (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004).

\* All texts are required. Any other readings will be available on Course Reserves (ARES).

### **Course Plan**

- Lectures on Mondays and Wednesdays followed by questions and/or discussion. Equipment workshops on Fridays.

- Film screenings TBD.

- Mackendrick's *On Film-making* and Ascher & Pincus' *The Filmmaker's Handbook* are the two primary texts which you will read throughout the semester. Weekly chapters from *The Filmmaker's Handbook* are listed on the equipment workshop schedule below. Here is the schedule for Mackendrick's *On Film-making*.

- Mackendrick reading schedule: Week 3 – Jan. 27-29 (pp. 1-35), Week 4 – Feb. 3-5 (pp. 36-75), Week 5 – Feb. 10-12 (pp. 76-115), Week 6 – Feb. 17-19 (pp. 116-159), Week 7 – Feb. 24-26 (pp. 160-196), Week 8- Mar. 3-5 (pp. 197-250), Week 9 – Mar. 10-12 (pp. 251-end).

- Weeks 10 (Mar. 24-26) and Week 11 (Mar. 31 – Apr. 7): Read Bresson's *Notes on the Cinematograph* **twice**, once for each week.

### **Coursework**

#### **Short film 1: Silent Film**

- Image + Text for silent film: Choose 1 photograph or painting as inspiration for a short silent film (4-5 minutes). Write a description of the film's main ideas, story, structure, setting, characters (if applicable), style, etc. **Due Monday Feb. 3 (hardcopy in class) = 10%**

- Completed silent film. **Due Sunday March 2 (digital) = 20%**

**Create a soundtrack for the silent film: Due Friday March 14 (digital) \*resubmit entire film with soundtrack = 15%**

### Short film 2: Adaptation

- Write a script based on or inspired by a poem (not longform) or short story (not too long) or piece of microfiction for a short film (8-10 minutes). Include the source material in your submission. Required preproduction materials: research the subject matter and related films/artworks, notes on themes, style, setting/location, character bios (if applicable), storyboards (minimum of 10), and any other material which you will use to guide the filming and editing process. **Due Monday March 31 (hardcopy in class) = 20%**
- Final film. **Due Wednesday April 30 (digital) = 20%**

### Quizzes (on Ascher/Pincus and Mackendrick, assigned in class or via Canvas) = 10%

- Ascher/Pincus quizzes will be administered every second Friday.
- Mackendrick quizzes will be administered spontaneously.

### Participation: 5%

### Weekly Schedule for Friday Equipment Tutorials

#### **\*Subject to change**

- Week 1 (January 17): Basic Camera/Tripod tutorial (Read: Ascher Chapter 3)
- Week 2 (January 24): Basic Audio tutorial (Read: Ascher Chapter 10)
- Week 3 (January 31): Basic Lighting tutorial (Read: Ascher Chapter 12)
- Week 4 (February 7): Basic Editing tutorial (Read: Ascher Chapter 13)
- Week 5 (February 14): In-depth camera tutorial (advanced settings, histogram, focus guide, shooting with different types of cameras, iphone, file types, etc) (Read: Ascher Chapter 6)
- Week 6 (February 21): Camera Accessories Part 1: Lenses and Monitors (focal length, macro vs zoom, lens tutorials, effects lenses) *\*field work may be required* (Read: Ascher Chapter 5)
- Week 7 (February 28): In-depth Audio tutorial (field recorder, practicing proper positioning/matching sensitivity, differences in microphone quality, RODE mic tutorial) *\*field work required* (Read: Ascher Chapter 11)
- Week 8 (March 7): In-depth Lighting tutorial Part 1: LEDs (tutorials for KINO, Falcon softlight, mini LEDs, LED stick, and more)
- Week 9 (March 14): In-depth Editing tutorial Part 1: Editing Picture (Read: Ascher Chapter 14)
- Week 10 (March 28): Camera Accessories Part 2: Gimbals, Shoulder Rigs, Sliders and More *\*field work required* (Read: Ascher Chapter 9)
- Week 11 (April 4): In-depth Lighting tutorial Part 2: HMIs, C-stands, Deflectors, and Gels
- Week 12 (April 11): In-depth Editing tutorial Part 2: Editing Sound (Read: Ascher Chapter 15)
- Week 13 (April 18): In-depth Editing tutorial Part 3: Features of Adobe Premiere Pro and Davinci Resolve

### Equipment, Technical Assistance, and Proficiency

- Basic proficiency must be met before checking out equipment for the first time, particularly the department's cameras/lenses.

- Our film lab technician, Owen Ward, will be available in the equipment room (TUR 4303) during scheduled lab hours (see above) to conduct basic proficiency tests and provide demonstrations of production and postproduction equipment, in addition to assisting with any technical questions you may have. Owen will also be available to answer questions via phone, email, and text message. Please be aware that technical support is restricted to the department's onsite resources.
- In order to record, store, transfer and regularly back up your work you may need all or some of the following equipment:
  - SD card for video recording (recommended: SanDisk 32-128 GB) \*V90 is recommended for 4K recording
  - SD card for audio recording (recommended: SanDisk 16-32 GB)
  - External hard drive for project storage (recommended: 500GB-1TB)
  - SD card reader \*The department's Mac computers have SD slots.

### **Equipment and Lab Policies**

- The English department media lab is located in TUR 4303. The key code will be provided. Throughout the semester you will have access to the lab (not the equipment room) and will be given a key to one of the editing suites. **A \$50 replacement fee will be charged for lost keys.** To sign out keys please consult with the technician during scheduled office hours in TUR 4303. Be sure to return your keys at the end of the semester.
- When checking out equipment, the technician will manage all equipment sign-ins and sign-outs, support all computer platforms and deal with any equipment problems, exchanges, repairs etc. He will ensure equipment is distributed fairly and may request that equipment be returned in accordance with the syllabus, workshops and course deadlines. **You are fully responsible for all equipment that you have signed out, including any mishandling, damage or loss of gear. Treat our equipment as if it were your own and think of future filmmaking classes that will depend on the equipment being in good condition.**

### **UF Policies and Services:**

- Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://drc.dso.ufl.edu/>).
- Information on current UF grading policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>
- Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.
- For counseling or urgent help you may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center at 352-392-1575, or contact them online: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/services/individual/>
- UF's policy on Harassment: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty: <https://hr.ufl.edu/forms-policies/policies-managers/sexual-harassment/>