

0501A212

Digital Filmmaking

Instructor: TBA

E-mail: TBA

Time: May 17, 2027 - June 18, 2027

Office Hours: by appointment

Contact Hours: 60 (50 minutes each)

Credits: 4

Course Description

In this course, we will study the essentials of digital film production, including the technical foundations of effectively using camera, lighting, and other tools to convey a message, script writing, directing, editing, etc. The course aims to deepen students' understanding of film as a technical medium by examining its fundamental forms and features and exploring various aspects of moving image production through practical and formalist approaches. This course will enhance students' comprehension of the technical, aesthetic, and sensory aspects and potential of audiovisual media through practical exercises and case studies. It will also expand their knowledge of how both artists and mainstream producers utilize film and video.

Course Goals

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the motivations that viewers bring to media watching, including movies; what needs do media consumers bring to media watching? How does each media work differently to satisfy audience needs?
2. Understand the basic skill sets necessary to create most media content.
3. Understand where ideas for media content come from and how they move to

production.

4. Understand what the economic, technological and regulatory driving forces behind the media content we get.
5. Understand how movie studios and theaters evolve to increase audiences.
6. Understand the different levels of meaning the media user gets from the media
7. Understand “narrative form”—the general story-telling structure of most movies.
8. Understand the importance of each of the ten elements of ‘misc en scene’—how each contributes to media content; specific skills related to the elements.
9. Understand basic terminology and practices to getting optimum sound in media content.
10. Understand the generic definitions of different genres, their tropes and how they can be mixed and adjusted to create original ideas.
11. Understand how film criticism works, how it is produced and utilized.

Required Textbook (s)

Reading materials will be provided by the course instructor

Prerequisites

No prerequisites

Course Outline

Please note that the outline is meant to give an overview of the major concepts in this course. Changes may occur as needed to aid in the student’s development.

Module 1: How It All Begins for Producing Media Content

- Lecture Slides: (First PowerPoint) P1-9
- Skill sets needed to make a movie; how ideas for movies are created; economic forces behind creating media content; media literacy from the consumer perspective
- Quiz : must be completed

Module 2: Media needs us to watch—what do we need from the media?

- Lecture Slides: (First PowerPoint) P10-18

- Why we go to movies—what psychological needs do movies fulfill; theories of how movies affect us; how different media fulfill different needs; different types of needs;
- Quiz: must be completed

Module 3: Creative aspects of film

- Lecture Slides: (First PowerPoint) P19-42; Textbook: Part1/Chapter 1
- Nature of film; how technology + artistic vision + technical abilities makes successful media content; famous film beginnings, where movie ideas begin; movies in gigabytes; stages of movie production; hiring staff; movies on low budgets; famous and effective movie openings
- Quiz: must be completed

Module 4: Movie structures and elements

- Lecture Slides: (First PowerPoint) P43-66; Textbook: Part 2
- Types of meanings we get from movies; Narrative structure in film; how stories move in film (usually); elements of most any story—how it is developed to make a cohesive script; developing characters to work within the needs of the script;
- Quiz: must be completed

Module 5: Misc En Scene introduced, its first five elements

- Lecture Slides: (Second PowerPoint) P1-15; Textbook: Part 3
- First five elements in Mis en Scene---everything that goes on stage in film; set, costuming, lighting, movement and shot blocking; lighting techniques and related terms, functions of each light and collective lighting;
- Project 1 due

Module 6: Elements 6-10 Mis En Scene (except film stock); Getting good sound and editing techniques

- Lecture Slides: (Second PowerPoint) P16-51; Textbook: Part 3
- Numbers 6-10 of elements in Mis En Scene---(excluding #8 film stock); composition, depth of space, costumes and hair and makeup; rule of thirds, acting without words; how to get good audio—terminology, tools and techniques; editing terminology and artistic effects of different transitions

- EXAM 1: must be completed

Module 7: Genres, how to categorize film and how to shift genres

- Lecture Slides: (Second PowerPoint) P52-78; Textbook: Chapter 9
- Genres: Style and creativity require a plan to create the story; defining genres, tropes, showing how they can be combined and be changed; job opportunities; genres as reflection of society
- Quiz: must be completed

Module 8: Documentaries and animation; film criticism

- Lecture Slides: (Second PowerPoint) P79-111; Textbook: Chapters 10 and 11
- Documentary production; Documentaries as commentary, news and for humor and drama; 8 approaches to documentary production; Film criticism—defining film criticism and it's not all about criticism; more than whether we liked it but why or why not and being sure to reference related works and writing something people want to read, Chloe Zhao—first Chinese born director to win Academy Award; movie she directed won Golden Globe in January 2026 for best film (Hamnet).
- Project 2 due
- Final Exam: must be completed

Grading Policy

Quizzes	10%
Exam1	20%
Final Exam	20%
Project1	15%
Project2	35%
Total	100%

Grading Scale

The instructor will use the grading system as applied by JNU:

Definition	Letter Grade	Score
Excellent	A	90~100
Good	B	80~89
Satisfactory	C	70~79
Poor	D	60~69
Failed	E	Below 60

Academic Integrity

As members of the Jinan University academic community, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic coursework and activities. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) cheating on assignments or examinations; plagiarizing, i.e., misrepresenting as one's own work any work done by another; submitting the same paper, or a substantially similar paper, to meet the requirements of more than one course without the approval and consent of the instructors concerned; or sabotaging other students' work within these general definitions. Instructors, however, determine what constitutes academic misconduct in the courses they teach. Students found guilty of academic misconduct in any portion of the academic work face penalties that range from the lowering of their course grade to receiving a failing grade for the entire course.