

FILM 310 Short Film Production

Trimester 2 2014

14 July to 16 November 2014

30 Points



And The Ship Sailed On (1983) Directed by Federico Fellini

IMPORTANT DATES

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Teaching dates: | 14 July to 17 October 2014 |
| Mid-Trimester break: | 25 August to 7 September 2014 |
| Last assessment item due: | 17 October 2014 |

WITHDRAWAL DATES

Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds. If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats.

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Lectures

| | | | |
|------------|---------------|----------------|---------|
| Wednesdays | 10:00 - 12:50 | 77 Fairlie Tce | FT77205 |
| Fridays | 10:00 - 12:50 | 83 Fairlie Tce | FT83102 |

NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Costa Botes lonepinefilms@gmail.com Phone 973 3769 Room 311, 83 Fairlie Terrace

Office hours: TBA

Bernard Blackburn Bernard.blackburn@vuw.ac.nz Phone 463 9760 Room 106 85 Fairlie Terrace

Office hours: Mon, Tue, Thurs 9.30 – 11.30am.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information on changes will be conveyed to students, for example via class notices, Blackboard, and email.

PRESCRIPTION

This course involves a practical study of the creative and technical aspects of film production. Students will make a short dramatic film in small groups. This will develop their skills at scripting, photography, mise-en-scene, performance, editing, sound recording and mixing.

COURSE CONTENT

The aim of FILM 310 is to develop students' knowledge of the creative and technical aspects of film production. There will be a particular emphasis on encouraging students to develop a robust creative process based on understanding and respecting the fundamentals of dramatic narrative storytelling.

Students will be given tools and strategies for developing their ideas, and ways to effectively present them. The course emphasises 'hands on' learning, with basic introduction being given on the use of cameras and audio recording. Students will learn basic techniques for working with actors and crew. All students will be given a practical introduction to non-linear editing equipment and editing techniques.

Students passing the course will have demonstrated creative ability at an introductory level in the field of audio visual production, and a basic mastery of relevant technical skills. They should also have enhanced their analytical skills and gained a greater understanding of filmmaking as a craft and industrial process.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CLOS)

Our emphasis will be on involving students in goal oriented production activities that stimulate creativity and build craft skills. Students who pass this course should be able to :

- 1 Demonstrate enhanced knowledge of film production techniques and processes
- 2 Develop their film production skills further, including specialisation in direction, screenwriting, cinematography, sound, editing, or producing
- 3 Demonstrate their enhanced critical and communication skills
- 4 Demonstrate their ability to work collaboratively

TEACHING FORMAT

The course will be delivered primarily via lectures and interactive practical sessions in class time. There will be no set texts, but much suggested reading or viewing material. Additional notes will be made available on Blackboard. Outside class time, students will be expected to put the necessary amount of time into completing personal and collaborative assignments.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

- Submit the written work specified for this course, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work).
- Attend at least 11 lectures and 11 studio/practical sessions, except where unable by reason of ill health, accident, or unavoidable ill fortune.

WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 30-point course is 300 hours over the trimester or 20 hours per teaching week. On average, you should expect to spend at least seven hours outside of the class periods, becoming familiar with equipment, designing and writing shooting scripts, and shooting and editing your films. The course is highly practical, and the demands on your time will inevitably increase as you move into the production phases of your project.

In addition to the time spent in class, students will be expected to attend various technical workshop/tutorials on the use of equipment. Attendance at all sessions is necessary, both as a prerequisite for checking out equipment, and also for students to develop skills in the various crew positions.

ASSESSMENT

| Assessment items and workload per item | | % | CLO(s) | Due date |
|--|---|-----|------------|------------|
| 1 | Dramatic outline from real life, 2 pages | 10% | 1, 2, 3 | 25 July |
| 2 | Pitch to class (Class Presentation 2-3 minutes + 8 Mins discussion/feedback in class. Students will be assessed individually) | 10% | 1, 2, 3 | 1 August |
| 3 | Creative preparation and planning (6-8 pages) | 10% | 1, 2, 3 | 8 August |
| 4 | Short film script (6-8 pages) | 20% | 1, 2, 3 | 22 August |
| 5 | Group Work on Short Film (6-8 minutes in length; students will be assessed individually) | 50% | 1, 2, 3, 4 | 17 October |

Assignment One:

DRAMATIC OUTLINE FROM REAL LIFE **Due 25 July** (10%)

Students will write a brief dramatic story outline based on real life – derived from research (magazine, newspaper, or TV stories, historical events etc), or actual experience. The outline should paraphrase or present the real life story using dramatic 3 act story structure.

Marking criteria:

1. Evidence of ability to recognise a viable dramatic story
2. Demonstrate your understanding of 3 act story structure principles
3. Emotional Impact (funny/sad/angry) of content
4. Creative expression of an event or idea, evidence of ability to render real life into meaningful dramatic metaphor.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES: 1, 2, 3

Assignment Two:

PITCH TO CLASS **Due 1 August** (10%)

Each student will be required to formulate and deliver a short pitch, duration 2-3 minutes, to the class for an original or adapted story. Pitching has become increasingly vital as a means of rapidly winning the confidence of potential backers. This assignment will introduce students to the highs and lows of the process.

Marking Criteria:

1. Emotional impact of the pitch – are we excited? Did we laugh or cry?
2. Clarity of the idea - what is the essential idea? Is it clearly evoked, or buried in extraneous detail? A good pitch should deliver a clear payload of meaning.
3. Marketability (i.e how relevant to its target audience?)
4. Effectiveness of personal delivery.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES: 1, 2, 3

Assignment Three:

CREATIVE PREPARATION AND PLANNING **Due 8 August** (10%)

Students will develop ideas based on their pitches into character notes, and an outline treatment for a short dramatic script. Feedback and notes from the tutor will assist students focus their ideas prior to writing a full draft.

Marking Criteria

1. Evidence of ability to recognise a viable dramatic story (marketability/appropriateness to the goal of creating a short film)
2. Demonstrate your understanding of 3 act story structure principles (the idea either powerfully uses, or effectively contradicts orthodox story structure)
3. Emotional Impact (funny/sad/angry) of content that moves the reader
4. Creative expression of an event or idea, evidence of ability to render real life into dramatic metaphor (the ability to use art to communicate meaning).

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Assignment Four:

SHORT FILM SCRIPT **Due 22 August** (20%)

Students will write a short dramatic screenplay – maximum length 8 pages.

This assignment will test both creative and formal discipline in a vital aspect of film-making. Four scripts will be selected by the tutor for production.

Marking Criteria:

1. Emotional impact – does it move the reader?
2. Narrative craft – is the story involving and satisfying?
3. Marketability – is the script suitable/practical for a Film 332 production? Is the idea appropriate for a typical short film audience?
4. Use of correct screenplay formatting (guides will be provided).

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Assignment Five:

GROUP WORK ON SHORT FILM **Due 17 October** (50%)

Completion of a **short dramatic film**, from the preliminaries of location selection, casting, art direction and wardrobe, through shooting, recording and on through final editing and post-production. In this group assignment you will be given an individual mark that reflects the overall accomplishment of the group and

your own achievement in your assigned production role. There will be four production groups (one-quarter of the class in each). Delivery of finished films will be as a file on the server drop box (details will be provided).

Marking Criteria:

1. Fulfilling the set task within the production group in a direct, relevant and complete manner.
2. Clear evidence that you understand and have researched your key creative role.
3. Clear evidence that you have engaged with the production process in a creative way that expresses your own original ideas as well as complementing the script. If you are not the director you should also complement the directorial vision.
4. Evidence of preparation and research for the filming.
5. Quality, fluency and coherency of expression in your assigned production role.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SUBMISSION AND RETURN OF WORK

Written assignment shall be submitted as hard copies, AND as WORD or Plain Text files emailed to the lecturer (lonepinefilms@gmail.com).

Hardcopy assignments are submitted in the drop slot outside the administration office: 83 Fairlie Terrace. Attach an assignment cover sheet or extension form, found on Blackboard or outside the administration office.

Your marked assignment will be handed back in class or during office hours. Any uncollected assignments can be picked up from the Programme Administrator after the last day of teaching. Assignments will be held in the Administration office until the end of the following trimester. You need to show your student identification to collect marked assignment from the Administration office.

EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES

Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

In exceptional and unforeseen circumstances an extension may be granted. If you require an extension, you must complete an extension request form (available on your course Blackboard site) prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's certificate) where appropriate. Tutors cannot grant extensions.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT AND/OR ADDITIONAL EXPENSES

Most of the equipment, media and resources required for this course can be loaned from the Film Programme through Bernard Blackburn during the loaning and receiving hours of Monday – Friday, 9.30 – 11.30am. There will be some costs involved in the production of films as students are expected to supply their own consumable materials such as gaffer tape, lighting gels, transportation costs etc. Depending on the nature of the individual film projects, other costs such as location charges, wardrobe rental or construction, transportation rental and so on may also be encountered.

Video cameras, support equipment, lighting, and audio equipment are issued on loan from SEFTMS. Facilities for sound recording, mixing, and editing will be made available by reservation. **School equipment must be treated with the utmost care and respect.** The student is in exactly the same relationship to the SEFTMS as he or she will be in the outside world renting equipment from a supplier. Learning to bring the gear back on time, and better than you received it, is an important and valuable lesson.

It will be a prerequisite to checking out equipment that the student has gone through the safety, operation, and troubleshooting workshop for that piece of equipment. These sessions will be held early in the course, so that all students will be able to work with the gear for the maximum time.

Equipment bookings must be made with the proper lead time, must be strictly adhered to, and returns must be made on time; otherwise fellow students will be inconvenienced and their shooting schedules disrupted. Any gear damage, malfunction, or failure must be reported at once to the Technical Officer, Bernard Blackburn at 473 9640 or 027 294 9640.

You are required to read *The Fat Book*, which is Film and Theatre's protocol handbook. This will help you understand the ground rules, and help you know what services, equipment, and facilities are available within the School. Printed copies of *The Fat Book* will be distributed during the first class.

RECOMMENDED READING

Notes will be provided via Blackboard and email on all topics covered in class. In addition the course coordinator may suggest further reading on points of interest as required.

Recommended Reading:

Story by Robert McKee

Save the Cat by Zack Snyder

Adventures in the Screen Trade by William Goldman

Final Cut by Steven Bachman

The Devil's Candy by Julie Saloman

The Film Festival Survival Guide by Chris Gore

Recommended Viewing:

Jaws by Steven Spielberg

Chinatown by Roman Polanski

Aliens by James Cameron

Proof by Jocelyn Moorhouse

Gross Point Blanke by George Armitage

Little Miss Sunshine by Jonathon Dayton & Valerie Faris

The Station Agent by Thomas McCarthy

CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:

STUDENT FEEDBACK

Student feedback on University courses may be found at

www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

In week six or seven of the trimester your class representative will be invited to a meeting with the Programme staff. In week five your class representative will ask the class for any feedback on this course to discuss at this meeting.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Resolving academic issues: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute:
www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Student Contract: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- Victoria graduate profile: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz
- School website: www.victoria.ac.nz/seftms

COURSE PROGRAMME

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|--------|---------|---|
| Week 1 | July 16 | <p>Welcome & Administrative Info</p> <p>Intro to Dramatic Fundamentals and Filmic Storytelling</p> <p>Assignment 1: Students to source a story from real life (news, 3rd party anecdote or personal experience) and write a brief outline for a dramatic short film that considers the key dramatic questions – Who? What? And Why?</p> <p>Due Date: July 25</p> |
| | July 18 | <p>Camera 1: Intro to Cameras, Care and Assembly of equipment</p> <p>Students to email list of 3 preferred production roles to tutor by 25 July</p> |
| Week 2 | July 23 | <p>Idea Development: Creative Brainstorming & Pitching</p> <p>Handout: Character/Dialogue & Screenplay format guide</p> <p>Assignment 2: Prepare a 3 minute verbal pitch, presenting a viable creative idea for a dramatic short film. To be delivered in class: 1 August</p> |
| | July 25 | <p>Camera 2: Composition, Use of lenses</p> <p>Deadline for Assignment 1</p> |
| Week 3 | July 30 | <p>Field Sound Recording</p> |
| | Aug 1 | <p>3 minute Story Pitches delivered in class</p> <p>Assignment 3: Prepare an outline with key thematic and character notes towards an original dramatic short film due : 8 August</p> <p>Assignment 4: Short Dramatic screenplay due: 22 August</p> |
| Week 4 | Aug 6 | <p>Directing – Onset work flow and blocking scenes with actors</p> |
| | Aug 8 | <p>Lighting 1</p> <p>Students to hand in list of three preferred roles</p> |
| Week 5 | Aug 13 | <p>Directing 2</p> |
| | Aug 15 | <p>Lighting 2</p> |

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|---|---------|---|
| | | Production Roles to be assigned |
| | | Deadline for Script Draft 2 |
| Week 6 | Aug 20 | (Split Class) Audio Post Production/ Editing/Scheduling/Production Management |
| | Aug 22 | (Split Class) Audio Post Production/ Editing/Scheduling/Production Management Deadline for Final Draft <u>Screenplays</u> Final selection of 4 scripts for production will be notified during Break. |
| Mid Trimester Break: Monday 25 August to Sunday 7 September 2014 | | |
| Week 7 | Sept 10 | Pre-Production |
| | Sept 12 | Pre-Production |
| Week 8 | Sept 17 | Production |
| | Sept 19 | Production |
| Week 9 | Sept 24 | Production |
| | Sept 26 | Production |
| Week 10 | Oct 1 | Editing |
| | Oct 3 | Editing |
| Week 11 | Oct 8 | Rough Cut Screenings in Class / Critique/Feedback Continue Editing |
| | Oct 10 | Audio Post Production |
| Week 12 | Oct 15 | Audio Post/Grading/Final Post Production |
| | Oct 17 | Final Films Submitted by 5pm |