

Making of a Film:

Development / Pre-Production / Production / Post-Production / Distribution

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Course Description:

“Making of a Film” traces the entire journey of filmmaking in chronological order, offering students a comprehensive understanding of the process from initial concept to final release. The course examines how stories are discovered and shaped into scripts, how productions are planned and executed, how visual effects are anticipated and designed, and how distribution strategies position a film for audiences. Industry professionals will join as guest speakers to share firsthand experiences, giving students direct exposure to real-world practices. By exploring the behind-the-scenes dynamics of film production, students will develop an insider’s perspective on how creative ideas are transformed into the finished works that reach the screen.

Reading Sources:

- The Filmmaker's Handbook**, *Ascher & Pincus*
- Voice & Vision**, *Mick Hurbis-Cherrier*
- The Hero's Journey**, *Joseph Campbell*
- Making Movies**, *Sidney Lumet*
- On Photography**, *Susan Sontag*
- How to Read a Film**, *James Monaco*

Assessment:

Attendance & Participation 15%
Assignments 30%
Midterm Exam 20%
Final 35%

- * Assignments submitted beyond deadline are not graded.
- * Four unexcused absences will result in an F.

Week	Subject	Assignment
1	<p>Introduction to Filmmaking</p> <p>This week introduces students to the structure and expectations of the course while providing an overview of filmmaking as a creative and industrial process. We will explore what it means to “make” a film, looking at the different stages from development to distribution, and discuss how both historical and contemporary approaches have shaped the industry.</p> <p>Activities: Class discussion: “Why do we make films?”</p>	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Roland Barthes, <i>Mythologies</i> – “Myth Today” □ James Monaco, <i>How to Read a Film</i> – “Film as an Art”
2	<p>Development I: Finding the Story</p> <p>Students will examine the differences between the independent film scene and the mainstream entertainment market, learning how producers and filmmakers define a target audience and search for the right material to develop into a film project. The emphasis will be on identifying stories that resonate both artistically and commercially.</p> <p>Activities: Group brainstorm: If you were a producer in Istanbul, what film would you greenlight?</p>	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Mick Hurbis-Cherrier, <i>Voice & Vision</i> – “From Idea to Cinematic Story” □ Joseph Campbell, <i>The Hero’s Journey</i> – “The Call to Adventure”
3	<p>Development II: Writing for the Screen</p> <p>This week focuses on the fundamentals of screenwriting and the qualities that make a compelling, well-structured screenplay. We will analyze how screenplays balance artistic vision with commercial appeal, and explore how genre conventions shape both structure and storytelling choices. Special attention will be given to the rewriting process and how collaboration between producers, directors, and writers refines a script.</p> <p>Activities: Script analysis workshop (breaking down act structure).</p> <p>Guest: An experienced scriptwriter will join the class to share insights into the craft of writing for the screen, reflecting on their own professional journey and discussing the realities of working across genres in today’s industry.</p>	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Alexander Mackendrick, <i>On Filmmaking</i> – “Dramatic Construction” □ Sidney Lumet, <i>Making Movies</i> – “The Script: Are Writers Necessary?”

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4	<p>Development III: Packaging the Project</p> <p>Students will explore the processes of adapting existing material, such as novels or video games, into screenplays and examine the legal and creative steps of acquiring rights. The session will also cover how to create professional project folders and pitch decks, followed by an introduction to pitching strategies and techniques used to sell a project to potential buyers.</p> <p>Activities: Pitch practice in pairs.</p>	<p>Assignment #1: Write a one-page synopsis for an original story or adaptation set in Istanbul.</p>
5	<p>Pre-Production I: Producing and Financing</p> <p>This week introduces the role of the producer in bringing a project to life, focusing on how films are financed through different models including studios, public funding bodies, festivals, and international co-productions. Students will also learn how to break down a script into a working budget and shooting schedule, as well as how to approach crew hiring and location scouting in a professional and strategic way.</p> <p>Activities: Mini exercise: Break down 2 script pages into a simple budget.</p>	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Steven Ascher & Edward Pincus, <i>The Filmmaker's Handbook</i> – “Scheduling and Planning” □ Mick Hurbis-Cherrier, <i>Voice & Vision</i> – “Preparing for Production” and “The Cast and Crew”
6	<p>Pre-Production II: Directing Preparation</p> <p>Students will examine the critical role of casting and rehearsals in shaping a film, followed by an exploration of how directors prepare their visual plans through tools such as shot lists, storyboards, and overhead diagrams. The session will also introduce the chain of command on set, explaining the protocols that define professional set environments. A guest director will share insights into their personal process of preparing for production.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Guest: A Turkish film director on their prep process. 	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Mick Hurbis-Cherrier, <i>Voice & Vision</i> – “From Screenplay to Visual Plan” □ Gilles Deleuze, <i>Cinema 1: The Movement-Image</i> – “Frame and Shot, Framing and Cutting” □ Assignment #2: Pre-visualization exercise of an assigned scene.
7	<p>Midterm Exam</p> <p>This week is reserved for the midterm exam, which</p>	

	will assess students' knowledge of the development and pre-production stages covered in Weeks 1-6.	
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8	<p>Production I: On-Set Dynamics</p> <p>This week provides an inside look into the daily workflow of a film set, from call time in the morning until wrap at the end of the day. Students will learn how different departments – such as cinematography, production design, sound, costume, and special effects – interact and collaborate. A guest executive producer will demonstrate how a typical shooting day is overseen and managed.</p> <p>Guest: An executive producer from the Turkish industry.</p>	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Susan Sontag, <i>On Photography</i> – “The Heroism of Vision” □ Sidney Lumet, <i>Making Movies</i> – “Shooting the Movie: At Last!”
9	<p>Production II: Directing for Camera and Performance</p> <p>Students will study the art of blocking and staging a scene for the camera and explore techniques directors use to guide actors from text to performance. The session will also introduce the basics of stunt coordination and on-set special effects, illustrating how safety, choreography, and spectacle intersect in film production.</p>	<p>Assignment #3: Dramaturgical analysis of a scene (motivations, actions, directions).</p>
10	<p>Post-Production I: Workflow and Visual Effects</p> <p>This week offers a detailed overview of the post-production pipeline, including editing, sound, and visual effects. We will discuss how decisions made during production impact the efficiency of post-production and learn from a guest VFX supervisor about how filmmakers can plan ahead to achieve the best results.</p> <p>Guest: A VFX supervisor on planning for effects.</p>	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Mick Hurbis-Cherrier, <i>Voice & Vision</i> – “Post-Production Overview and Workflow” □ James Monaco, <i>How to Read a Film</i> – “Post-Production”
11	<p>Post-Production II: Editing and Color Correction</p> <p>Students will examine the traditions and stylistic approaches of film editing across different genres and understand how editing can reshape a narrative. The class will also explore the creative and emotional</p>	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Sidney Lumet, <i>Making Movies</i> – “The Cutting Room”

	<p>power of color correction, with a focus on how grading decisions affect the tone and atmosphere of a completed film.</p> <p>Activity: <i>Comparison of two edits of the same scene to see how pacing and color grading change its impact.</i></p>	<p>□ Mick Hurbis-Cherrier, <i>Voice & Vision – “The Art and Technique of Editing”</i></p>
12	<p>Post-Production III: Sound and Music</p> <p>This week focuses on the indispensable role of sound in film, covering both sound design and music composition. Students will learn how sound complements and enhances visuals, and a guest sound designer will share professional techniques for recording and editing audio both on set and in post-production.</p> <p>Guest: Sound designer on recording & editing tricks.</p>	<p>Reading:</p> <p>□ Mick Hurbis-Cherrier, <i>Voice & Vision – “The Sound Design in Film”</i></p>
13	<p>Distribution I: Festivals and Theatrical Release</p> <p>Students will be introduced to the strategies filmmakers use to circulate their films at international festivals, including how to prepare press kits and maximize exposure on the festival circuit. The class will also explore how theatrical distribution deals are negotiated and the key considerations involved in preparing a film for release.</p> <p>Activities: Case study of a Turkish film’s festival journey.</p>	<p>Reading:</p> <p>□ Ascher & Pincus, <i>The Filmmaker’s Handbook – “Producing and Distributing the Movie”</i></p> <p>□ Mick Hurbis-Cherrier, <i>Voice & Vision – “Finishing, Mastering and Distribution”</i></p>
14	<p>Distribution II: Digital Platforms and Final Projects</p> <p>In the final week, students will turn their attention to the new generation of digital platforms such as Netflix, Mubi, and BluTV. A guest content executive will provide insight into what platforms look for when acquiring films. Students will present their final projects: a professional project folder including market research, financial plans, schedules, and creative elements designed to showcase their film as ready for distribution.</p> <p>□ Guest: A content executive from a digital platform.</p>	<p>Final Project: Create a ready-to-sell project folder for an assigned screenplay (target market, finance plan, schedule, visual style, casting, etc.).</p>