

## VISUAL STORYTELLING: STAGING & SCENEART 221F

Fullerton College CRN 24876, 3 Units      Spring 2018, Saturdays 11:30 - 6:30 pm, room 1002  
Instructor: Marshall Vandruff [www.marshallart.com](http://www.marshallart.com)      [mv@marshallart.com](mailto:mv@marshallart.com)

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** To learn the craft of staging scenes for visual stories.

**COURSE CONTENT:** Intense survey and application of how to stage characters in settings to create compelling scenes in visual media, from brief idea pitches to storyboarded frames, with the option of live action video.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Upon successful completion of ART 221F, the student will be able to:

- 1) Identify character objectives and emotions both for finished scenes and works-in-progress
- 2) Create an outline and chart for scene dynamics
- 3) Write subtext synopses for visual scenes
- 4) Re-stage scenes for contrasting effects

### CATALOG DESCRIPTION

This lecture course will introduce students to how story illustrators and filmmakers create scenes that hook, compel, and satisfy an audience, using the tools that writers and actors use on stage, but within a pictorial frame that has unique limitations, opportunities, and dynamics. The emphasis is on individual scenes, how character objectives and emotions lead to visible action, and how to frame a scene for the camera to augment the emotional effect. Lessons will apply to a variety of styles and moods of visual stories. Assignments include analysis of master scenes, creation of original scenes, and reducing multi-panel scenes to single images.

**EVALUATION:** Grade-point division:

Misc Homework Uploads and Involvement in Class Sessions . . . . .	20 points
<b>Midterm</b> (March 24): Ten Scene Analyses; Ten Scene Ideas . . . . .	40 points
<b>Final</b> (May 26): Four 1-3 minute original scenes written & storyboarded (or two as videos). . . . .	40 points
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS FOR COURSE</b> . . . . .	100 points

Late work receives no credit. Treat the deadlines as if you were in the profession.

Not following directions lowers your grade. See **HOW TO PRESENT YOUR WORK**

### PROJECTS & ASSIGNMENTS:

#### March 24: **MID-TERM**

**10 SCENE ANALYSES** from film masterpieces (20 points)

Essential info for each scene:

Characters, Objectives, Emotions, and Actions.

Name its placement or role in the story: its “core”, “dramatic situation”, or “basic joke”.

Display a “fortune graph” for the protagonist. List any important events. Note at least one irony.

Optional info: Are there recognizable “character types”? Who “drives the scene”?

You may include screenshots or small drawings, or any storytelling strategies worth pointing out.

Present one scene per slide. Include movie title w/scene number on slide and in file name.

**10 SCENE IDEAS**, Original and Restaged (20 points).

List objectives, emotions, actions, changes, and ironies. Fit onto 5 – 10 slides.

Include a drawing or keyframes enough to give us a glimpse of how it will look.

Your scenes can be comedic, dramatic, horrific, charming, any creative combination, in any style you choose.

They can be commercials, but not mere sales pitches – “story” commercials that hook to entertain and sell.

They can be simple or complex, fast or slow-paced, but at least two without dialogue, and two “restaged”.

#### May 26: **FINAL**

**2 – 4 SCENE PRESENTATIONS:** Four original scenes as storyboards, *or*...

Two scenes if you produce them as live-action in addition to storyboards. (40 points)

**MATERIALS:** Use any materials you like that are appropriate to the problems you’re trying to solve.

Most projects can be done with pencil and paper, but you have the option to animate or shoot live action video.

Celtx software is free and will allow you to write in screenplay format, otherwise the only digital requirement is presentation.

**BOOKS RECOMMENDED** (none required):

STORY by Robert McKee

ACTING WITHOUT AGONY by Don Richardson

THE ART OF DRAMATIC WRITING by Lajos Egri

MAKING A GOOD SCRIPT GREAT by Linda Seger

CREATIVE FILMMAKING FROM THE INSIDE OUT by Dannenbaum, Hodge & Mayer

REBEL WITHOUT A CREW by Robert Rodriguez. Inspiring! A model for success.

## **STAGING & SCENE Spring 2018 Weekly Schedule:**

- Feb 3: Intro to Staging & Scene. Course Outline. Micro-to-Macro Storycrafting. Choosing Styles. The “Core” of a Scene.  
Assignments: Watch three of these four movies: **Paper Moon, Groundhog Day, The Artist, The Big Lebowski**.  
Prepare a show & tell of your favorite writing, acting, or filmmaking styles that you want to master. **Post on 1-3 slides**.  
Review this outline, especially HOW TO PRESENT YOUR WORK, and prepare the uploading checklist.
- Feb 10: Hooks and Dramatic Questions. Objectives & Obstacles. Character & Crisis. Genre & Clubs. “Watch & Respond”.  
Assignment: From one of our four movies, list the scenes in numerical order (the best you can), and “title” them.  
If you would like to study particular scenes, title them, note their timecode (e.g. 6:23 to 8:51), and post on one slide.  
Brainstorm compelling scenes you would like to stage, and **post ten ideas on one 1920x1080 slide by Feb 23 at 11pm**.
- Feb 17: NO CLASS
- Feb 24: Shapes of Scenes. Setups & Payoffs. Risks, Stakes, and Risings. Crises and Points of Tension. “Watch & Respond”  
**Develop two scene analyses** with our class criteria. **Post on two slides** (one slide per scene) **by March 2 at 11pm**.  
**Prepare two silent scenes** as “beat descriptions”. **Post on two slides** (one slide per scene) **by March 2 at 11pm**.
- Mar 3: Emotions in Staging. Actions/Staging. Who drives the scene? “Watch & Respond”  
**Develop four more scene analyses**. **Post one slide per scene by March 9 at 11pm**.  
**Prepare two scene ideas restaged in a different style from an existing scene**. **Post rough ideas on 1–2 slides**.
- Mar 10: Acting for the Camera. “Watch & Respond”  
**Develop your remaining scene analyses** for midterm. **Post one slide per scene by March 23 at 11pm**.  
**Prepare your remaining scene ideas** for midterm. **Post all ten on 5–10 slides by March 23 at 11pm**.
- Mar 17: Guest Teacher. “Pitching”
- Mar 24: **MID-TERM: 10 Scene Analyses and 10 Scene Ideas**. Screenwriting.  
Assignment: Write your 2–4 scenes in screenplay format. **Post by April 6 as a pdf**.
- Mar 31: NO CLASS (Spring Break)
- April 7: Scripts to Beats to Thumbnails.  
**Post “Beat Sheets” with simple images by April 13**. If you can, limit it to one slide per scene.
- April 14: Storyboarding for Clarity  
**Storyboard one scene**. **Post for feedback by April 20**.
- April 21: Storyboarding for Camera & Image  
**Re-storyboard your scene, or begin storyboarding your remaining scene(s)**. **Post for feedback by May 4**.
- April 28: Guest Teacher  
If you intend to present live-action scenes, begin shooting video.
- May 5: Shot Structure and Editing  
**Prepare to show developed work during the next two sessions, uploaded by our usual deadline**.
- May 12: Feedback on developing work.  
**Prepare to show developed work during the next session, uploaded by our usual deadline**.
- May 19: Feedback on developing work.  
**Prepare your storyboarded scenes for final**. **Post them on as few slides as readable by May 25 at 11pm**.  
**Include a slide per scene displaying the storyboard of that entire scene on one slide**.
- May 26: **FINAL PRESENTATIONS**. Four scenes staged for presentation as storyboards, or...  
Two storyboarded scenes with accompanying video.

## **SESSION SCHEDULES:**

**11:30 – 2 pm:** Responsive ideating, review of work, and instruction. Prep for next week.

**2 – 3 pm:** Break

**3 – 6:25 pm:** Case studies: analysis & discussion. Lab-time. Prep for next week.

To make the most of our formal class time, commit to full attention with electronic media off.

## HOW TO PRESENT YOUR WORK:

**Weekly Homework and Projects:** Upload digital files at this page on Friday nights previous to class by 11 pm:

<https://www.dropbox.com/request/Dz3hvDf9U98inn0gLgH5>

If the above link doesn't work, *copy and paste* the URL. Once it works, bookmark the Dropbox link to upload weekly homework.

**LAYOUTS:** 1920 x 1080 horizontal slides, because the display screen is horizontal.

Lay out images to delete excess white space. In other words, make it easy to see things on the page.

Include the fewest pages possible, but rather than overcrowd a page, break it up into separate pages.

**RESOLUTION:** Make all files 1920 wide x 1080 pixels high.

DPI is not relevant for presentation. Pixel dimensions are. 1920 x 1080!

If you need more space, or to "zoom in" for details, present extra 1920x1080 images.

**FILE FORMATS & NAMING:** Submit work as *jpeg* files with three-letter extension *.jpg* (no *e*).

"jpeg compress" the files efficiently (between 8 -11), but not so low that it damages the image (like 6 or lower).

Include your name in two places:

1) **On the image**, integrated into the pixels, like with a promo piece.

Include semester and year on Midterm and Final (though its a good habit to always include them)

2) **As first part of file name**, no spaces. Use underscores (not hyphens) for necessary divisions.

For example: MarshallVandruff\_Idea01\_EnlightenmentScene.jpg

Give each file a unique name. If you name a file MyProject\_Design.jpg each week, it overwrites your previous image.

Frank Guthrie has presented short YouTube videos for his class that use similar criteria as ours:

DART 001 Part 1 - File Creation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzgjvO4X7TI>

DART 001 Part 2 - Naming & Export: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5fExrl08Ds>

If you are brand-new to Photoshop, you may want more of Frank's instruction at:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Y\\_xEV3hW84&list=PL-ICJfwI1Fupd4A6-17wWJ2AQImcE27aB](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Y_xEV3hW84&list=PL-ICJfwI1Fupd4A6-17wWJ2AQImcE27aB)

Let's do this like pros. Your work must meet these specs. If it does not, or if it is late, you do not receive credit for it.

If in doubt, or if you are not digitally competent, ask for help.

## UPLOADING CHECKLIST:

- Δ The layouts are efficient and images read clearly on the screen
- Δ The image has your name embedded into the pixels on each frame
- Δ The file is 1920 x 1080, RGB, jpeg file with the extension .jpg (no "e" in jpg)
- Δ The file name begins with your name, no spaces or hyphens - underscores only
- Δ The atomic clock says the time is previous to 11 pm on Friday night before the homework is due

**MAKE IT EASY!** Go to this URL and download a ready-made template:

<http://marshallart.com/SHOP/misc-pages/assignments/template/>

**FOR MOVIES:** Unless we find a convenient way to upload movies, bring them on flash keys or any quick-transfer medium to the class computer. Follow the same naming conventions. For example:

MyName\_ShortFilm\_WonderfulV4.mov (MOV's or MP4's only)

Criteria: Quicktime 1920 x 1080, H.264 codec, AAC audio, 24 frames per second, progressive scan, square pixels.

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Fullerton College is committed to providing educational accommodations for students with disabilities upon the timely request by the student to the instructor. Verification of the disability must also be provided. Disability Support Services functions as a resource for students and faculty in the determination and provision of the accommodations.

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