



VIRTAUL FILM MAKING
SCHOOL

SIX WEEKS COURSE OUTLINE

Prepared For :
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Here's a structured six-week online filmmaking workshop outline, with three classes per week, perfect for beginners to intermediate filmmakers looking to strengthen their storytelling, technical, and production skills.

Course outline

Week 1: Introduction to Filmmaking & Visual Storytelling

- Class 1: Way of seeing
 - Introduction to the course structure, objectives, and essential filmmaking concepts.
 - Discuss the filmmaking process: from idea generation to distribution.
 - Assignment: Write a one-paragraph film idea.
- Class 2: Storytelling Essentials
 - Elements of storytelling: plot, character, theme, conflict, and setting.
 - Exploring different genres and their narrative techniques.
 - Assignment: Develop a basic outline of the story from Class 1.
- Class 3: Visual Storytelling Basics
 - Understanding shot composition, camera angles, and framing.
 - Introduction to mise-en-scène and how visuals convey emotion and tone.
 - Exercise: Analyze a short film clip, focusing on visual storytelling.



Course outline

Week 2: Scriptwriting & Pre-production

- Class 1: Screenwriting Basics
 - Introduction to screenplay format, structure, and style.
 - Writing dialogue and creating subtext.
 - Assignment: Write a 1-2 page scene for the story.
- Class 2: Character Development & World-Building
 - Building multidimensional characters with goals, conflicts, and growth.
 - Creating a believable and immersive world around your characters.
 - Exercise: Write character bios and a description of the setting.
- Class 3: Pre-production Planning
 - Elements of pre-production: budgeting, scheduling, location scouting, and casting.
 - Introduction to storyboarding and shot lists.
 - Assignment: Create a basic storyboard for the scene written.



Course outline

Week 3: Cinematography & Lighting

- Class 1: Basics of Cinematography
 - Understanding lenses, focal length, depth of field, and camera movement.
 - Selecting the right equipment for different types of shots.
 - Exercise: Practice framing techniques using a smartphone or camera.
- Class 2: Lighting Fundamentals
 - Introduction to three-point lighting and natural lighting.
 - How to create mood and atmosphere through lighting.
 - Assignment: Light a scene at home and share photos for feedback.
- Class 3: Camera Techniques and Movement
 - How to plan and execute camera movements: pans, tilts, tracking, etc.
 - Techniques for handheld and stabilized shooting.
 - Exercise: Film a short clip applying learned camera movements.



Course outline

Week 4: Directing & Working with Actors

- Class 1: The Role of the Director
 - Responsibilities of a director from pre-production through post-production.
 - Understanding the director's vision and communication techniques.
 - Assignment: Prepare a director's vision statement for your film idea.
- Class 2: Working with Actors
 - Techniques for casting and collaborating with actors.
 - Understanding actor psychology, motivations, and blocking.
 - Exercise: Direct a family member or friend in a short scene.
- Class 3: Scene Rehearsal & Blocking
 - Techniques for rehearsing and blocking scenes effectively.
 - Creating spatial relationships and movement in a scene.
 - Assignment: Rehearse and block the scene you've written, record the process.



Course outline

Week 5: Sound Design & Production Sound

- Class 1: Basics of Sound in Film
 - The role of sound: dialogue, effects, ambiance, and music.
 - Introduction to sound recording equipment and techniques.
 - Exercise: Record sounds at home that reflect different emotions.
- Class 2: Sound Design and Sound Effects
 - The impact of sound design in storytelling and enhancing visuals.
 - How to use Foley and background sounds creatively.
 - Assignment: Add sound effects to a clip to create a specific mood.
- Class 3: Music and Scoring
 - How music enhances the emotional impact of scenes.
 - Basics of working with composers and sound libraries.
 - Exercise: Select music for your scene and share how it affects tone.



Course outline

Week 6: Editing & Final Production

- **Class 1: Editing Basics**
 - Introduction to editing software and fundamentals of video editing.
 - Understanding cuts, transitions, and pacing.
 - **Assignment:** Assemble a rough cut of your short scene.
- **Class 2: Finalizing the Edit**
 - Tips for refining edits, adding color grading, and visual effects.
 - Introduction to continuity and visual coherence.
 - **Exercise:** Complete the final edit of your scene, incorporating feedback.
- **Class 3: Review & Wrap-Up**
 - Screening and critique of final projects.
 - Discussion on distribution channels: YouTube, Vimeo, film festivals, etc.
 - **Q&A** and feedback on individual progress, with tips for continued practice.





This course will cover the basic filmmaking process, allowing participants to create a short scene or microfilm by the end of six weeks. It emphasizes hands-on exercises and practical assignments, helping students develop skills applicable to real filmmaking projects.

Book reference

Introduction week

- **"How to read a film Book by James Monaco"**
 - A foundational book on story structure, character development, and narrative principles. Ideal for understanding how to craft compelling, structured stories for film.
- **"Save the Cat! Writes a Novel" by Jessica Brody**
 - Although this is primarily aimed at novel writers, it adapts the screenplay structure of "Save the Cat" (by Blake Snyder) to storytelling broadly and works well for filmmakers too.
- **"Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting" by Syd Field**
 - This classic book introduces the essential elements of screenwriting, focusing on three-act structure, scene building, and formatting.

Cinema reference

- **"Citizen Kane" (1941, dir. Orson Welles)** – Known for its innovative narrative structure and deep character study.
- **"Pulp Fiction" (1994, dir. Quentin Tarantino)** – Famous for its nonlinear storytelling and genre-blending script.
- **"Parasite" (2019, dir. Bong Joon-ho)** – A masterclass in blending genres, tone shifts, and strong socio-political themes.

Book reference

1. Storytelling and Scriptwriting

- **"Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting" by Robert McKee**
 - A foundational book on story structure, character development, and narrative principles. Ideal for understanding how to craft compelling, structured stories for film.
- **"Save the Cat! Writes a Novel" by Jessica Brody**
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Book reference

2. Directing & Visual Storytelling

- **"On Directing Film" by David Mamet**
 - A collection of insights into the craft of directing, with a focus on visual storytelling and keeping things simple and impactful.
- **"Directing: Film Techniques and Aesthetics" by Michael Rabiger**
 - Covers all aspects of directing, from script analysis to shot composition and working with actors.
- **"The Visual Story: Creating the Visual Structure of Film, TV, and Digital Media" by Bruce Block**
 - Explores visual components such as space, line, shape, color, and movement, essential for creating compelling visuals.

Cinema reference

- **"The Godfather" (1972, dir. Francis Ford Coppola)** – For its direction and use of framing, lighting, and mise-en-scène to build tension and atmosphere.
- **"Roma" (2018, dir. Alfonso Cuarón)** – Known for its immersive black-and-white cinematography and seamless, intimate camerawork.
- **"Amélie" (2001, dir. Jean-Pierre Jeunet)** – Creative visual storytelling, color use, and whimsical direction that enhances its narrative.

Book reference

3. Cinematography

- **"Cinematography: Theory and Practice" by Blain Brown**
 - Comprehensive guide to cinematography, covering everything from lighting to composition and camera techniques.
- **"Film Lighting: Talks with Hollywood's Cinematographers and Gaffers" by Kris Malkiewicz**
 - Interviews with professionals that give practical insights into lighting setups and problem-solving on set.
- **"Master Shots: 100 Advanced Camera Techniques to Get an Expensive Look on Your Low-Budget Movie" by Christopher Kenworthy**
 - Practical examples of creative camera techniques that enhance the visual storytelling without requiring large budgets.

Cinema reference

- **"In the Mood for Love" (2000, dir. Wong Kar-wai) –** Revered for its romantic and atmospheric cinematography, with masterful use of color and framing.
- **"Blade Runner 2049" (2017, dir. Denis Villeneuve, DP Roger Deakins) –** Stunning sci-fi visuals that create a moody, immersive future world.
- **"Lawrence of Arabia" (1962, dir. David Lean) –** Known for its breathtaking wide shots and use of natural landscapes.

Book reference

4. Sound Design & Production Sound

- **"Sound for Film and Television" by Tomlinson Holman**
 - A comprehensive guide to sound recording, design, and editing, with insights into the production and post-production sound process.
- **"The Practical Art of Motion Picture Sound" by David Lewis Yewdall**
 - Focuses on practical sound techniques used in the film industry, covering everything from recording on set to sound mixing.
- **"Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen" by Michel Chion**
 - Examines the relationship between sound and visuals in film, offering insights on how sound affects storytelling and audience perception.

Cinema reference

- **"Apocalypse Now" (1979, dir. Francis Ford Coppola)** – Innovative sound design that immerses viewers into the chaos of war.
- **"A Quiet Place" (2018, dir. John Krasinski)** – Excellent example of using silence and minimal sound to build tension.
- **"The Dark Knight" (2008, dir. Christopher Nolan)** – Known for Hans Zimmer's memorable score and impactful sound effects that intensify the film's tone.

Book reference

5. Editing

- **"In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing"** by Walter Murch
 - Written by an Oscar-winning editor, this book discusses editing philosophies, continuity, and the emotional impact of cuts.
- **"The Technique of Film and Video Editing"** by Ken Dancyger
 - Explores editing techniques across genres and media, from narrative films to documentaries.
- **"The Filmmaker's Guide to Visual Effects: The Art and Techniques of VFX for Directors, Producers, Editors, and Cinematographers"** by Eran Dinur
 - Covers visual effects integration in the editing process, which is increasingly relevant for filmmakers today.

Cinema reference

- **"Whiplash" (2014, dir. Damien Chazelle)** – Known for its sharp editing that enhances the tension and rhythm, especially in music scenes.
- **"Mad Max: Fury Road" (2015, dir. George Miller)** – A masterclass in high-energy editing, maintaining clarity and coherence in intense action sequences.
- **"Psycho" (1960, dir. Alfred Hitchcock)** – The shower scene alone demonstrates impactful editing that heightens suspense and horror.

Cinema reference

Overall Craft (Multi-disciplinary Approach)

- **"2001: A Space Odyssey" (1968, dir. Stanley Kubrick)**
– For its groundbreaking achievements in visual storytelling, sound design, and production design.
- **"Schindler's List" (1993, dir. Steven Spielberg)** – An emotional journey through historical tragedy, exemplary for its cinematography, editing, and use of color.
- **"Moonlight" (2016, dir. Barry Jenkins)** – For its nuanced storytelling, sensitive direction, and unique visual style, as well as its portrayal of identity and coming-of-age themes.