

# SM4121: DIRECTING FOR HONG KONG CINEMA

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## Effective Term

Semester A 2023/24

## Part I Course Overview

### Course Title

Directing for Hong Kong Cinema

### Subject Code

SM - School of Creative Media

### Course Number

4121

### Academic Unit

School of Creative Media (SM)

### College/School

School of Creative Media (SM)

### Course Duration

One Semester

### Credit Units

6

### Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

### Medium of Instruction

Chinese

### Medium of Assessment

Chinese

### Prerequisites

Nil

### Precursors

SM3115 Chinese Scriptwriting I

### Equivalent Courses

Nil

### Exclusive Courses

Nil

## Part II Course Details

### Abstract

Building on what students have learned from the screenwriting class, this course allows students interested in the cinematic arts to learn and practice film directing. A firm grasp of film language is vital for a director, whose artistic expression and

communicative power can only be achieved through a precise and meaningful treatment of sounds and images. This course aims to enhance students' understanding of the crafts of film directors, their role and work in a production team, and the steps for them to pitch for a future project. Taught by an experienced director from the Hong Kong film industry, this course provides students a hands-on experience, from developing a screenplay into a filmable script to learning methods in casting and director actors to working with student producers, art directors, recording artists, etc., and to completing postproduction of a short film with music composers, sound design, and special effects when necessary.

### Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1 Understand what film language is, and explain through critical analysis how creative, meaningful and successful film language is used in a cinematic work. Have a thorough understanding of the creative work of a director and be able to apply his/her knowledge of the art and skill of directing to his/her cinematic work. Take up the creative role and responsibility of a director in a professional cinematic production.		x	x	
2 Visualize ideas, emotions and abstract concepts in a narrative context, and translate them into expressive moving images.			x	x
3 Execute good judgement, as director, in various aspects of pre-production work - e.g. casting, location scouting, and storyboarding.		x	x	x
4 Conduct casting with good judgement, and communicate accurately with actors, directing them with clear and effective instructions in a narrative context.			x	x
5 To create and direct a narrative cinematic work that carries the personal vision of the director.		x	x	
6 Transform basic technical competence into a unique style or personal signature and proactively create a highly positive climate to promote social interactions among team members			x	x

#### A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

#### A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

#### A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

### Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

	TLAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lecture	Lectures on the meaning and expressive power of film language and its creative application in the art of directing. Students also learn the key areas of a director's creative contribution in a cinematic production and are taught the ways to conduct a good and effective execution. Excerpts from film classics are used as illustrations for the lecture texts.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	3hrs/wk
2	Lecture	A series of practical exercises conducted in class, out of class, and on location to ensure students gain pre-production experience in casting, location scouting, cold reading and storyboarding etc.	2, 3	3hrs/wk
3	Workshop	On location workshop sessions that focus on mise-en-scene and directing actors. Acting demonstrations with professional actors, with students' participation in group project of shooting-a-scene.	4, 6	3hrs/wk
4	Workshop	Group critique and discussion sessions that concentrate on scripting and production matters, monitoring progression of students' video projects and giving advice on directing.	5, 6	3hrs/wk

**Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)**

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks (e.g. Parameter for GenAI use)
1	Students' individual presentation of 'Scene Analysis' in class.	1	20	

2	Students' performances in all class assignments or exercises – location research, storyboard presentation, group project etc.	2, 3, 4, 6	30	
3	Creativity and performance of students as 'director' in Individual Project.	5, 6	50	

**Continuous Assessment (%)**

100

**Examination (%)**

0

**Assessment Rubrics (AR)****Assessment Task**

1. Class Assignments/ Exercises/ Projects

**Criterion**

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, build up argument and analysis. The threshold of 'discovery' lied in a student's self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal daily experience.

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

- Excellent grasp of creative material, able to explain key concepts, assumptions and debates
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, distinct thesis, properly argued with strong narrative
- Insightful interpretation of the subject matter with distinct themes and thesis
- Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize
- Ability to approach a filmic text using a variety of theories and creative tools

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

- Firm grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts and assumptions
- Reasonable organization, balanced structure, adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Clear ideas which keep to the point, clear-cut subject, ability to interpret opinions independently

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

- Comprehensive grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts
- Fair organization, weak structure, adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Relevant points to the subject matter, fair ability to interpret opinions

**Marginal (D)**

- Loose grasp of materials, cannot explain key concepts
- Poor organization and structure, weak content, limited use of resources
- Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret opinions

**Failure (F)**

- Poor grasp of materials
  - No organization and structure, inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources
  - Irrelevant points to the subject matter, minimal ability to interpret opinions
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## Assessment Task

### 2. Presentation

#### Criterion

This assessment will grade on content and fluency of presentation. Students should show their co-operation to conduct a well-organized presentation with their own argument and evidence from readings and notes. The threshold of ‘discovery’ lied in a student’s self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal daily experience.

#### Excellent (A+, A, A-)

- Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the subject matter
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative
- Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize

#### Good (B+, B, B-)

- Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter
- Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition

#### Fair (C+, C, C-)

- Adequate content with comprehensive grasp of the material demonstrating basic knowledge of the subject matter
- Fair organization, weak structure and composition

#### Marginal (D)

- Weak content, loose grasp of the general ideas with some knowledge of the subject matter
- Poor organization, structure and composition

#### Failure (F)

- Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter
- No organization, structure or/and composition

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## Assessment Task

### 3. Individual Project

#### Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, execute creative ideas and projects. The threshold of ‘discovery’ lies in a student’s proactively turning theory into praxis, to transform course material into self-owned authorship.

#### Excellent (A+, A, A-)

- Work has strong affective quality and the articulation of personal styles and signature
- Excellent appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium
- Work raises questions and instill insights about the process of conception, creative stratification and production
- Innovative exploration by combining knowledge from different disciplines to create an impactful cinematic project
- Efficient adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, cast, equipment, etc) available with constructive adjustment

#### Good (B+, B, B-)

- Strong appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium
- Ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Proper adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, cast, equipment, etc) available and constructive feedback/ suggestions

#### Fair (C+, C, C-)

- Basic appreciation and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium

- Limited ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, cast, equipment, etc) available

#### **Marginal (D)**

- Marginal appreciation of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium
- Marginal ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Limited adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, cast, equipment, etc) available

#### **Failure (F)**

- No appreciation of the aesthetics and expressive qualities of the medium
- Fail to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Minimal adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, cast, equipment, etc) available

#### **Additional Information for AR**

All A+/A/A- grade assignment should comply with the highest performance of Discovery-oriented learning.

## **Part III Other Information**

#### **Keyword Syllabus**

Work of a Director  
 Film language for a Director  
 Pre-production/ Production/ Post Production  
 Location Scouting and Film Space  
 Art Direction  
 Creative Use of Sounds  
 Casting and Rehearsal  
 Cold Reading  
 Directing Actors  
 Mise-en-scene  
 Storyboarding  
 Shooting a Scene  
 Individual Video Project

#### **Reading List**

##### **Compulsory Readings**

<b>Title</b>	
1	Notes on the Cinematographer – Robert Bresson. Quartet Books
2	Theory of Film Practice – Noel Burch. Princeton University Press
3	Sculpting in Time – Andrey Tarkovsky. University of Texas Press
4	The Aesthetics and Psychology of the Cinema – Jean Mitry. Indiana University Press
5	Godard on Godard – Jean Luc Godard. Da Capo Press
6	Directing Film Techniques and Aesthetics – Michael Rabiger. Focal Press
7	Total Directing – Tom Kingdon. Silman-James Press

##### **Additional Readings**

<b>Title</b>	
1	How To Read A Film – James Monaco
2	Understanding Movies – Louis D. Giannetti