

Previsualization and Preproduction for Film a.k.a “Written, Produced, and Directed by...”

University of Alaska Fairbanks

Fall 2015

ART/FLM 172 - 3 credits

CRNS: 73712/74724

Meets **Tuesdays /Thursdays -9:45-11:15AM**, Theatre Room 101 or Music 305

A. Instructor:

Maya Salganek, Assistant Professor
Office Location: 105B Fine Arts/Theatre
Office Phone: (907) 474-5950
Office Hours: T/R 2-3:30PM with appointments available at:
<http://tinyurl.com/mayaUAF>
Or by appointment, check my Google Calendar:
<https://sites.google.com/a/alaska.edu/salganek>
Email: maya@alaska.edu

B. Required Reading & Equipment

- **Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting** by Syd Field ISBN: 0385339038
- **The Complete Film Production Handbook**- 4th Edition by Eve Light Honthaner ISBN 9780240811505 - Available online through UAF Rasmuson Library:
 - <http://catalog.library.uaf.edu/uhtbin/cgiirsi/?ps=F4Tfmctops/UAFRAS/2893700?1/9#>
- **Film Directing Shot by Shot: Visualizing from concept to screen** by Steven D. Katz. Michael Wise Productions publishers. ISBN: 978-0-941188-10-4 On reserve at the library.
- All students will be required to use Blackboard online at <http://classes.uaf.edu>
- Any additional readings or films are on reserve at the Rasmuson Library for 2 hour check out or will be posted to Blackboard
- **External hard drive** I highly recommend that all video production students purchase their own external hard drive - at least 200GB (500GB recommended) for storing your video projects. The drive can be formatted for Mac or Mac and PC (using exFAT format), according to your preference. All video projects stored on the department's computers will be deleted by May 15, 2015.
- **Writing Journal** - In class exercises should be done in writing journal or on Blog. May be electronic if so desired.

C. Suggested Reading and Resources:

- “Making Short Films” by Clifford Thurlow ISBN: 1845200632
- *Story: Substance, Structure, Style and The Principles of Screenwriting* by Robert McKee ISBN: 978-0060391683
- *Hero with a Thousand Faces* by Joseph Campbell.
- <http://www.frameforge3d.com/kb/> Knowledgebase for FrameForge software
- <http://www.simplyscripts.com> Thousands of screenplays online for free

D. Course description:

Laying a foundation for cinema production, this course will explore screenwriting,

storyboarding, previsulization animation, animatics, and film pre-production approaches. This course will focus on developing original stories for animation or dramatic film productions.

What is Previs?

"Previs is a collaborative process that generates preliminary versions of shots or sequences, predominantly using 3D animation tools and a virtual environment. It enables filmmakers to visually explore creative ideas, plan technical solutions, and communicate a shared vision for efficient production."

-Definition formulated by the ASC-ADG-VES Joint Technology Subcommittee on Previsualization, 2009.

E. Goals:

- Students will learn to write visually for film/television/animation.
- Students will evolve their approach to filmmaking through storyboarding, shot composition, and visual design.
- Students will produce animatics and animated storyboards to express their cinematic ideas.
- Students will understand the foundations of film budgeting, scheduling, and preproduction process.
- Students will be prepared to produce an original film using their ideas developed in this course.

F. Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will write an original screenplay and realize it through storyboarding and animatics with a firm grasp of preproduction requirements.
- Students will understand setting up shots and scenes to match their vision of the film.
- Students will have a pitch, schedule, budget, and creative vision for their film project.
- Students will be prepared to launch production of an original film project.

G. Instructional methods:

The class will meet for lecture and "hands-on" demonstration and practice of various techniques and exercises.

H. Course policies:

1. Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Class participation and preparation is essential for this course. Your classmates are counting on you! The following points will be issued each class for attendance. Attendance is 10% of your total grade.

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|-------------|----------|
| < 9:45 AM | = 4 pts. |
| 9:45 < 9:50 | = 3 pts. |
| > 9:50 | = 1 pt. |

Take responsibility for getting assignments or handouts from classmates. If you miss class for any reason, it's your responsibility to arrange for a classmate to collect copies of any handouts, or to provide you with information on any assignments, activities, lecture materials, or dates changed. Studies have shown that students who attend class regularly and participate fully, find assignments and exams much easier and more meaningful, and (surprise!) tend to get better grades than those who do not attend class regularly.

Be in class to earn a grade for an in-class activity or exercise. Students will be responsible for presenting and critiquing video material in class, should you miss this portion, you will take a zero for the day. In-class activities and exercises may not be made

up at a later date. Missed in-class assignments will need to be performed on your own time, and will be expected in your writing journal. In rare instances, students may have to miss class for a valid, university-sanctioned reason (In general, an absence is considered "official" when the student is: (A) participating in an approved field trip or other official UAF activity [e.g., athletics, music, theater arts]; (B) confirmed under doctor's orders; or (C) granted a leave of absence from UAF for reasonable cause by an academic dean or director). Except for medical emergencies, which require documentation, absences must be approved by the instructor prior to the class session that will be missed. Alternate assignments to make up for any in-class points will be given only for instructor-approved absences.

2. **Blackboard/Assignments:**

- All students should access **Blackboard** at <http://www.classes.uaf.edu>. I do monitor who has accessed it when, so get online.
 - The "**Course Information**" folder includes a copy of this syllabus, research materials, software links, and instructor contact information, and instructional videos.
 - **Course Materials** contains information for the whole of the semester, as organized by week.
 - **Assignments** are posted in the **Assignments folder**, and organized by Week. You are responsible for all the assignments listed there. This syllabus is just an outline for class assignments and developments.

3. **Cell Phones:**

Cell Phones are helpful tools in film production, but should your cell phone ring during a shoot you will be asked to leave for the day and will receive zero points. If it happened on a working set, you would be fired! Texting is prohibited during class.

4. **Equipment:**

Film Students have access to check out equipment from the equipment checkout located in Bunnell 101A (Journalism department). Checkout hours TBD. You can look at available equipment at <http://lend-items.com> . Login with your Facebook account.

5. **Editing Labs:**

The Alaska Media Center computer lab (Music 305) has 20 imacs or MacPros loaded with Final Cut Pro 7 (Studio 3), Adobe Master Collection CS6, Movie Magic Budgeting & Scheduling, and Avid Media Composer 6 for you to use. The labs also feature Celtx screenwriting software, and FrameForge Previz software for storyboarding and animatics. **You will need your polar express card to access the lab.** *Each entrance to the Lab is recorded, so should there be a problem we know who was in the lab when.* Please sign-in and out when you use the computers (so I know how often you were really there editing).

I. Evaluation of Work & Grades

1. Values

All work will be evaluated using a +/- grading system as follows*:

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|--------------|------------|---------------------|
| A+ = 100-97% | A = 93-96% | A- = 90-92% |
| B+ = 87-89% | B = 83-86% | B- = 80-82% |
| C+ = 77-79% | C = 73-76% | C- = 70-72%* |
| D+ = 67-79% | D = 63-66% | D- = 60-62% |
| F = 59 - 0% | | |

*NOTE: Film majors are required to achieve a “C-” grade or higher in order to use this course towards graduation.

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| C+ (2.3) C (2.0) C- (1.7) | “C” (including C+ and C-) indicates a satisfactory level of acquired knowledge and performance in completion of course requirements. C- (1.7) is the <u>minimum</u> acceptable grade that undergraduate students may receive for courses to count toward the major or minor degree requirements, or as a prerequisite for another course. A minimum grade of C (2.0), however, MAY be required by specific programs for prerequisite and / or major / minor courses. Please consult specific program listings in the UAF Catalog. C- (1.7) is the <u>minimum</u> acceptable grade required for all Core (X) Courses. |
| D+ (1.3) D (1.0) D- (.7) | “D” (including D+ and D-) indicates a minimal level of acquired knowledge and minimal performance in completion of course requirements. This grade does not satisfy requirements for courses in the major, minor, Core, or graduate programs. |

Value of Assigned Work toward Final Grade:

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| Attendance/participation & discussion | 10 % - 100 pts. |
| Written assignments | 30 % - 300 pts. |
| Character bio = | 30 |
| Screenplay 1 = | 50 |
| Screenplay 2 = | 60 |
| Screenplay 3 = | 60 |
| Final Screenplay | 70 |
| Union/Guilds = | 30 |
| Production Assignments | 40 % - 400 pts. |
| Storyboard 1 = | 60 |
| Photoboard = | 60 |
| Animatic (Midterm) = | 100 |
| FrameForge = | 60 |
| Budget = | 60 |
| Schedule = | 60 |
| Final Projects | 20 % 200 pts. |
| Total..... | 100% =1000 pts |

2. Grading Written and Production Assignments:

The ability to communicate ideas clearly is the cornerstone of a great filmmaker. To demonstrate your vision, you should plan to organize your ideas clearly, use correct grammar, spell words and names correctly, and demonstrate that you've thoroughly conceptualized and edited your work. Effort put in to the pre-production will make up for problems during production and post.

All production assignments should be turned in with accompanying production material. Screenplays, storyboards, production schedules, contact sheets, etc.

It's not "cheating" to ask for opinions and editing skills of others. Instead, the discussion is positive and can bring new insights to your work. The **Writing Center** (<http://www.alaska.edu/english/studentresources/writing/>) is available for students to develop their writing skills. Please visit or contact them for assistance, Gruening 801 or 474-5314. For assistance with video production, please consult me, or your production team members.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS may include:

- Writing journal/ in-class writings
- film reviews and film director papers
- play critique from a directorial standpoint
- directorial concept paper/ directors' notes
- screenplays

PRODUCTION ASSIGNMENTS may include:

- storyboards
- animatics
- an illustrated script or prompt book including analysis of script, scenes, characters
- designs, renderings, etc.

3. Late Papers/Assignments

ALL ASSIGNMENTS) WILL BE SUBMITTED ON TIME OR BE PENALIZED - 5pts FOR EACH LATE DAY. All written assignments, unless otherwise noted, are to be typed double-spaced and attached to assignments on blackboard.

J. Film Club: Students are encouraged to participate in the UAF Student Film Club. Meetings take place the every Thursday from 1:05-1:55 in the Theatre Green Room.

K. Disability Services: The Office of Disability Services implements the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and insures that UAF students have equal access to the campus and course materials. I will work with the Office of Disabilities Services (203 WHIT, 474-7043) to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities. Please notify me immediately if you need special assistance in this class.

Course calendar: Tentative schedule. Readings should be completed by the date assigned. All assignments should be reviewed on blackboard where explicit instructions and resource materials will be posted. Items marked with an * are available on Reserve at the Rasmuson Library. All items marked with a † are available via Blackboard to download/print/ and read.

SCREENWRITING

| Week | Tuesday "A" | Thursday "B" |
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| <p>Week 1 WELCOME</p> <p>September 3</p> | | <p>Overview of syllabus. Intro to Screenwriting.</p> <p>Reading Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Making Short Films Chapter 1 -The Script</i> † <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Screenplay</i> by Syd Field, Chapters 1-5 † <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Sikumi screenplay</i> by Andrew MacLean † <p>FILM/THEATRE TOWN HALL MEETING 1:05-1:55PM</p> |
| <p>Week 2 Character is action</p> <p>9/8 & 9/9</p> | <p>Motifs, Heroes, and Enduring Truths</p> <p>Have Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Making Short Films Chapter 1 -The Script</i> † <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Screenplay</i> by Syd Field, Chapters 1-5 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Sikumi screenplay</i> by Andrew MacLean <p>IN-CLASS Writing Exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Entering the world of the film: Character, Location, Symbol <input type="checkbox"/> VIEW: <i>Sikumi</i> by Andrew MacLean <p>Writing Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> On Blackboard: Character biographies - 30 pts | <p>Writing images, showing action. Identifying Character need.</p> <p>Have Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Screenplay: Chapters 13 & 15</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Little Miss Sunshine - excerpts</i> † <p>Introduction to Celtx</p> <p>VIEW: Rango & Little Miss Sunshine</p> <p>IN-CLASS Writing Exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Character biography A <p>Writing Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 3 page Dramatic Screenplay – Genre: Dramatic Choice. Due next class. Bring Copies for classmates! -50 pts <input type="checkbox"/> DUE on Blackboard: Sikumi Characters (30 pts) |
| <p>Week 3 9/15 & 9/17</p> <p>Story Structure & Metaphor</p> | <p>End, Begin, and Change</p> <p>Have Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Screenplay: Chapters 6-9</i> <p>View: short films & excerpts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Spin" by Double Edge Films • Rubber <p>IN-CLASS Exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Read Script 1 of all students <input type="checkbox"/> Endings/Beginnings/Pivot <p>Writing Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 page Screenplay –Genre: Comedy or Tragedy- Due next class <input type="checkbox"/> DUE: 3 page Dramatic Choice /Symbolic screenplay (50 pts) | <p>Write what You Know</p> <p>Have Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Selected short film scripts on blackboard</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Shot by Shot: Pages ix - 6</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Screenplay: Chapters 10-12</i> <p>IN-CLASS Writing Exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Index card scenes - story structure <p>Writing Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 page Dramatic Screenplay – Genre: Your choice. Due online by next class. 70 pts. <input type="checkbox"/> DUE: Comedy/Tragedy/Experimental Screenplay 2 (60 pts) |

STORYBOARDING & VISUAL DESIGN

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| <p>Week 4 9/22 & 9/24 Pre-production Design & Story- boarding</p> | <p>“Designing the Frame: Shot composition, art design, and visual metaphors”</p> <p>Have Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Shot by Shot</i>: Chapters 2 & 3. Words to Stills to Shots (Empire of the Sun, Citizen Kane, Graduate) <p>View: examples of above plus Brother’s Quay, Chel White, David Lynch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Writing Assignment: Cleanup/expand one of the previous three screenplays, and bring the best one to class with copies next week. <input type="checkbox"/> DUE: 5-10 page Dramatic Screenplay 3 - Genre: Your Choice (60 pts) | <p>“Propelling the Action forward with Montage”</p> <p>Visiting Artist: Mareca Gutherie</p> <p>Have Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Shot by Shot</i>: Chapters: 5-7, 21& 22 <input type="checkbox"/> Eisenstein’s theories of Montage†. |
| <p>Week 5 9/29 & 10/1 Story to Storyline</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> DUE: Best screenplay w/ class copies 70 pts <p>Have Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Screenplay: Chapters 14,16,17,18</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Shot by Shot: Chapters 4 & 8,</i> <p>In Class: Read and review screenplays</p> <p>PRODUCTION ASSIGNMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Storyboard of YOUR screenplay as slide show. Due in 1 week. 60 pts <input type="checkbox"/> Screenplays assigned. Visualize and design. Photoboard of Classmate’s Script due in 3 weeks. 60 pts | <p>Have Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Shot by Shot</i>: Chapters 13 -16 Depth of Field, Camera Angles, Framing, POV, <p>In Class: Read and review screenplays, cont.</p> |
| <p>Week 6 10/6 & 10/8 Previz into</p> | <p>DUE: Storyboard 1 - Class Critique - 60 pts</p> | <p>Animatics Introduced with video editing software (MIDTERM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Production Assignment: Animatics from Storyboards or Photoboards. Due Week 8A (3/3). 100 pts. |

PREVIZ & PREPRODUCTION

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| <p>Week 7 10/13 & 15</p> | <p>Producing: What and Why? Have Read : <input type="checkbox"/> · <i>Film Production: Chapter 1-The Production Team,</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Chapter 2 - The Production Office</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Chapter 3 - Basic Accounting,</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Chapter 5 - Incentives</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Chapter 7- Insurance Requirements</i></p> | <p>Outsourcing - Finding the right person for the job. Have Read: <input type="checkbox"/> Film Production: Chapter 9 - Building Relationships <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 10 - Deal Memos <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 11 - Unions and Guilds, <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 12- Principal Talent; <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 13 - Background Talent</p> |
| <p>Week 8 10/20 & 10/22</p> | <p>Final Cut Animatic PHOTOBOARD DUE. Class Critiques. 60 pts</p> | <p>FrameForge introduced: Have explored: http://www.frameforge3d.com/watch-demo/ http://www.frameforge3d.com/kb/ “Reading between the lines” Dialogue & Dramatic Need Have Read: <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Shot by Shot: Chapters 9,10, 11, 12 - Dialogue Staging</i> In Class: Animatics Production of Blue Bead Production Assignment: Blue Bead in Frame Forge. Due Week 9B. 60 pts</p> |
| <p>Week 9 10/27 &10/29</p> | <p>Have Read: <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Film Production: Chapter 17: Safety</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Shot by Shot: Chapters 17-20</i> Staging and Motion options via FrameForge Production Assignment: Final Animatics, with rendered audio, voice over, credits, soundtrack Due Week 15 for Critique.</p> | <p>Production Preparations: Script Breakdown & Scheduling Have Read · <i>Film Production:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Chapter 4 - From Script to Schedule</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Chapter 6- Pre-Production</i> Production Assignment: Do a script breakdown for classmate’s film. Include a budget and breakdown sheets. Due Week 11B. DUE: 3D Animatic Exercise (Blue Bead) - 60pts</p> |
| <p>Week 10 11/3 &11/5</p> | <p>Budgeting with MovieMagic Have Read: <i>Film Production</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 25 -Independent Filmmaking, <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 26, Low-Budget Filmmaking Production : Prepare a preliminary budget for your film. What’s worth paying for? Keys and equipment - Due Week 12A. 60 pts</p> | <p>Locations Have Read: · <i>Film Production:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 18- Locations <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 19 - Distant Location, <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 20 - Foreign Locations Enticing your crew: Housing, Food, and Fun · <i>Film Production., Chapter 21: Travel and Housing, Chapter 22: Shipping</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Production: Find locations for your film, and upload potential Fairbanks locations website/blog - pt of final</p> |
| <p>Week 11 11/10 & 11/12</p> | <p>Audio & Effects Enhancements: Adding Sound Design to your project. Voice-overs, score, and music rights. Have Read: <i>Film Production:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 15 - Clearances &</p> | <p>Fundraising: Pitching & The Biz Sources for film producing, the reality of the independent film industry. Low and high budget models. Have Read: <i>Film Production:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 24 -Specifically Television</p> |

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| | Releases, <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 16 - Guide to Music Clearance <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 23 - Effects Casting: What to look for, and how. Voice over casting call. Preliminary readings for production casting. | Guest Speaker: Ronan Nagle <input type="checkbox"/> DUE: Production Budget - 60 pts |
| Week 12 11/17 & 11/19 | Wiggle Room | Wiggle Room |
| Week 13 11/23 & 11/26 | Sharing and Exporting your projects Have Read: <i>Film Production</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 29 - Wrap <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 30 - Post Production Overview | THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY No Classes |
| Week 14 12/1 & 12/3 Anchorage Film Festival: Dec 4-13 | The Future Job Have Read: <i>Film Production</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 27- New Media, <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 28 - Commercial Production <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 31 - Greener Filmmaking <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 32 - Industry Survival Tips | Patience or Broadcast? Have Read: <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Shot by Shot: Chapter 23</i> Avatar to the Max. Without a box. Self-publishing vs. Distribution vs. hulu. Can you go viral? |
| Week 15 12/8 & 12/10 | Website Development | Website Development |
| <u>FINAL EXAM</u> | CLASS VOTE - 10:15AM - 12:15PM Tuesday 12/15 - 4PM or Saturday 12/19 at 8AM-10AM? Screenplay & Production notebooks due. | |