

## VISUAL STORYTELLING: STAGING & SCENEART 221F

Fullerton College CRN 24302, 3 Units Spring 2020, 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 study of how visual storytellers “stage” characters in settings to create compelling scenes. Students begin with brief idea pitches and develop them into 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) Create a visual display of staged scenes

### 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 for stage performing, 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:

Homework Uploads, Attendance, and Involvement in Class Sessions . . . . .	30 points
<b>Midterm</b> (March 21): Six Scene Analyses; Twelve Scene Ideas . . . . .	30 points
<b>Interim Project:</b> Study and Report a worthy topic for class discussion . . . . .	10 points
<b>Final</b> (May 23): Three 1-4 minute original scenes written & storyboarded (or shot as videos) . . . . .	30 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 21: MID-TERM

**6 SCENE ANALYSES** from film masterpieces (12 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.

**12 SCENE IDEAS**, Original or Restaged (18 points).

List objectives, emotions, actions, “arcs”, and ironies. Fit onto 6–12 slides.

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

Your scenes can be comedic, dramatic, horrific, charming, any combination, or 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. Consider “restaged” scenes.

**STUDY & REPORT:** Choose a MasterClass, Great Course, subject, book, or teacher to absorb and report for discussion.

#### May 23: FINAL

**2 – 3 SCENE PRESENTATIONS:** Three original scenes as storyboards, *or*...

Two scenes if you produce one or both as live-action or animatic in addition to storyboards. (40 points)

**MATERIALS:** Use any materials you like that are appropriate to the problems you’re trying to solve. We will discuss software. Most projects can be done with pencil and paper, but you have the option to animate or shoot live action video.

**BOOKS RECOMMENDED** (none required):

STORY by Robert McKee

ACTING WITHOUT AGONY by Don Richardson (*Highly* recommended for this semester!)

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 2020 Weekly Schedule.** (Green = learning. Red = grade points)

- Feb 1: Intro to Staging & Scene. Micro-to-Macro Storycrafting. Choosing Styles. The “Core” of a Scene.  
Assignments: Choose a report topic. Watch at least three of these five movies:  
**Paper Moon, Groundhog Day, The Artist, The Big Lebowski, Bullets Over Broadway.**  
Prepare a show & tell of 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 8: Hooks and Dramatic Questions. Genre Clubs. Commercials. FC Photo Hunt. 100 Note-Pad Ideas.  
Assignment: From one of our five movies, list scenes in numerical order (the best you can), and “title” each scene.  
If you would like to study particular scenes, title them, note their timecode (e.g. 6:23 to 8:51) to propose as studies.  
Brainstorm compelling scenes you would like to stage, and **post ten ideas on one 1920x1080 slide by Feb 21 at 11pm.**
- Feb 15: NO CLASS
- Feb 22: Shapes of Scenes. Setups & Payoffs. Risks, Stakes, and Risings. Crises and Points of Tension. FC Photo Hunt.  
**Develop** two scene *analyses* with our class criteria. **Post on two slides** (one slide per scene) **by Feb 28 at 11pm.**  
**Prepare** two *silent scenes* as “beat descriptions”. **Post on two slides** (one slide per scene) **by Feb 28 at 11pm.**
- Feb 29: Emotions in Staging. Actions/Staging. Who drives the scene? FC Photo Hunt.  
**Develop** two more scene analyses. **Post one slide per scene by March 6 at 11pm.**  
**Prepare** two scene ideas. Consider restaging an existing scene in a contrasting style. **Post rough ideas on 1–2 slides.**
- Mar 7: Acting for the Camera. Setting Responses. FC Photo Hunt.  
**Develop** your remaining scene analyses. Post one slide per scene **by March 20 at 11pm.**  
**Prepare** two scene ideas that could be acted out in an FC environment. **Post rough ideas on 1–2 slides.**  
Consider your campus photos as locales for scenes to stage.
- Mar 14: Prep for Midterm. Jon Blake: Lessons from Bad Artists. Transcending Our Limitations.  
Prepare a slide of “local environment” photos (FC, etc) to inspire ideas for scenes at available locations.  
Prepare your remaining scene ideas, and for midterm, **post all scene ideas on 6–12 slides by March 20 at 11pm.**
- Mar 21: MID-TERM: 6 Scene Analyses and 12 Scene Ideas.** Screenwriting.  
Assignment: Write your 2–4 scenes in screenplay format. **Post by March 27 as a pdf.**
- Mar 28: Scripts to Beats to Thumbnails  
**Post “Beat Sheets” with simple images by April 10.** If you can, limit it to one slide per scene (...back to *jpg’s*).
- April 4: Storyboard for Clarity  
Storyboard one scene. Use as many slides as necessary, but include one with all frames. **Post for feedback by April 17.**
- April 11: NO CLASS (Spring Break). WonderCon.
- April 18: Storyboard for Camera & Image  
Re-storyboard your scene, or begin storyboarding your remaining scene(s). **Post for feedback at latest by May 1.**
- April 25: Storyboard for Image. Key Images: “What Must We See, and How?”  
**Consider removing shots.** If you intend to present live-action scenes, begin shooting video.
- May 2: Shot Structure and Editing. Timing: Expansion, Contraction, and Consolidation of Shots.  
**Consider alternate shots for pace.** **Prepare to show developed work during the next two sessions.**
- May 9: Feedback on developing work.  
**Prepare to show developed work during the next session, uploaded by our usual deadline.**
- May 16: Feedback on developing work.  
**Prepare** your storyboarded scenes for final. Post them on as few slides as readable by May 22 at 11pm.  
**Include an extra “slide per scene” displaying the storyboard of that entire scene on one slide.**
- May 23: FINAL PRESENTATIONS.** Three staged scenes presented as storyboards, or...  
Two storyboarded scenes with accompanying video.

## CLASS ASSIGNMENT “SPECS”

To pass this class, do the work and honor the specifications.

To get a B, apply the lessons to do your best work, and honor the specifications.

To get an A, do your best work, be actively involved in class, and meet all the specs impeccably.

## HOW TO PRESENT YOUR WORK:

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

*PRIVATE*

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. Usually one. But when necessary to show detail, break it 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!

In special cases when you need more space, or to “zoom in” for details, ask to include extra 1920x1080 images.

**FILE FORMATS & NAMING:** Submit work as *jpeg* files with three-letter extension *.jpg*

“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: MarshallVandruuff\_KidTalkScene\_02.jpg

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

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

DART 001 Part 1 - File Creation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzgjuO4X7TI>

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

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: **IMPORTANT! This determines whether your work will be seen and credited.**

- 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 Wednesday 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:** Do not upload movies. Unless we find a convenient way to upload them before class, 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: 1920 x 1080, H.264 codec, AAC audio, 24 frames per second, progressive scan, square pixels.

---

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.

---