

COLORADO FILM SCHOOL  
*Criteria for Assessment of Student Work*

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**All student work and portfolio reviews will be evaluated according to the following criteria:**

**I. Evaluative scale:**

- A. Let 50-59 represent the scale of amateur home video production.
- B. Let 100 represent the value of professional feature film and national advertising production values, performances, scripts, and content.
- C. Let 60-69 be the values expected of First Year (Production I, Post Production I) students.
- D. Let 70-79 be the values expected of Second Year (Production II, Post II) students.
- E. Let 80-89 be the values expected of Third Year (Production III, Post III) students.
- F. Let 90-99 be the values expected of Fourth Year (Production IV, Post IV) students.

**II. Categories of Evaluation:**

- A. Writing/Directing majors shall be evaluated with consideration in all categories (A-I) with a 2:1 weighting in:
  - 1. D (camera as narrative tool)
  - 2. F (story structure)
  - 3. G (scripting fundamentals)
  - 4. H (pre-production techniques)
  - 5. I (directorial techniques)
- B. Post Production majors shall be evaluated with consideration in all categories (A-I) with a 2:1 weighting in:
  - 1. C (sound)
  - 2. E (post production)
  - 3. F (story structure)
- C. Cinematography/Videography majors shall be evaluated with consideration in all categories (A-I) with a 2:1 weighting in:
  - 1. A (exposure)
  - 2. B (lighting aesthetics)
  - 3. D (camera as narrative tool)
  - 4. F (story structure)
  - 5. H (pre-production techniques)

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D. Writing/Producing majors shall be evaluated with consideration in all categories (A-I) with a 2:1 weighting in:

1. F (story structure)
2. G (script writing fundamentals)
3. H (pre-production techniques)

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**III. Professional/narrative/content quality and technical processes.**

***A. Evidence of an understanding of proper exposure in film & video:***

1. Production stays within broadcast specifications (under 100 IRE, above 7.5)
2. Flesh tones hit benchmark exposure ratings.
3. No milky blacks for underexposure compensation/no washed-out images.
4. Contrast is used in a manner that serves the narrative goals.

***B. Evidence of an understanding of lighting aesthetics as narrative reinforcement:***

1. Characters faces and expressions can be seen/hidden to best effect.
2. Student uses lighting plans, equipment needs lists, the highest level of professional equipment and exposure notes in the preproduction and production process.
3. There is believable evidence of a motivated source of light in or outside of the frame that is the justification of the lighting scheme.
4. A sense of time of day and location is conveyed as appropriate to narrative & theme.
5. Student gives evidence of seeing lighting in the world around him/her and uses these observations in the construction of lighting plans and realized aesthetics.
6. Most important narrative elements are highlighted or hidden as appropriate.
7. Desired/appropriate mood is conveyed in the lighting.
8. Student uses color to telegraph emotional content within scenes and to reveal character/narrative development throughout the project.
9. External landscape is indicative to theme or internal strife being conveyed.

***C. Evidence of an understanding of sound in film and video:***

1. Proper sound acquisition techniques are used. (There is clarity of dialogue recording).
2. Audio tracks are distortion free and contribute to narrative, thematic, and character development goals. Appropriate use of sound perspective to match/underscore frame image.
3. Appropriate variation of intimate vs. distant mic'ing of dialog and VO tracks to achieve narrative, thematic, and character development goals.

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4. Proper audio reinforcement of the narrative is used: Audio sweetening (appropriate use of the sound effects library). Appropriate use of music as narrative reinforcement of mood, etc.

***D. Evidence of an understanding of the camera as a tool of narrative expression:***

1. Production is completed by due date.
2. Camera movement is stable and professional (appropriate use of camera supports).
3. Scope of project is realizeable within the limitations of assignment structure (not over-ambitious).
4. Format chosen (film/video/color/b&w) is appropriate to subject matter.
5. Shot size meets professional norms for distribution of close ups & master shots and is appropriate to narrative content (reveals character development).
6. There are enough close-ups to carry the story on a television screen.
7. Project uses deeply considered shot lists or storyboards in the pre-production process.
8. Project clearly employs shooting for transitions & shot planning to achieve narrative and thematic goals.
9. There is enough coverage shot to allow editing rhythms/pacing to develop. (There is adequate use of cut-aways, inserts, and emphasis shots.)
10. There is proper use of selective focus techniques to underscore the narrative (telephoto-wide angle).
11. Evidence of emphasis and de-emphasis of important and unimportant narrative elements through a variety of means (selective focus, camera blocking, framing, lens selection).
12. Project employs conscious and effective use of depth of field in film projects, and use of shutter speeds to achieve depth of field in video.
13. Camera movement is used to reinforce narrative, thematic & character development goals (emotions and reveals).
14. Project uses effective composition in depth, dynamic & color composition to realize narrative, thematic & character development goals.

***E. Evidence of an understanding of Post Production methods, software, and aesthetics:***

1. Finished production is within assigned length guidelines.
2. Production is completed by due date.

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3. The project is delivered on a professionally identified digital tape or DVD.
4. The project has slate, color bars & tone at the head.
5. All audio and image technical aspects are within broadcast specifications, including sync
6. Production's length and pacing is appropriate to narrative.
7. The project has utilized lined script technique where appropriate.
8. All effects appear organic to the story being told.
9. Student gives evidence of having spent requisite time cutting & recutting the project.
10. Audio is mixed to appropriate level - transparency and primacy of dialogue as appropriate.
11. Audio is clear of digital clicks and glitches.
12. Transitions are clear, motivated, and appropriate.
13. Pacing is appropriate to subject matter, and has variation within the project.
14. Techniques of time deletion and expansion are used appropriately to underscore the story structure.
15. There is appropriate use of audio sweetening (appropriate use of the sound effects library).
16. There is appropriate use of music as narrative reinforcement of mood, foreshadowing, and revelation of interior landscape of character. Use of character motifs as appropriate.

***F. Evidence of an understanding of story structure, dramaturgy, narrative goals, and character development.***

1. The scope or scale of the story is appropriate to the assignment or project (is realizable).
2. There is a beginning, middle and end, though not necessarily in that order. (There is use of the three act structure.)
3. There is a believable character with a problem to be overcome, or a goal that must be achieved.
4. There is an impediment to the main drive of the character that is believable.
5. The project is believable or compelling – answers the question: “Why should we care?”
6. The character is changed in some way by the realization or lack of realization of their drive. (There are consequences.)
7. Character is revealed through action, rather than through dialog or music.

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8. The project reveals the author's knowledge of the backgrounds of the principle characters.
9. The journey/struggle of the main character is believable within the world of the project.
10. The project creates a world that is believable or compelling.
11. There is enough complexity to keep the viewer engaged and enough simplicity to keep the viewer from becoming confused.
12. There are reversals of viewer expectation in the unfolding of the narrative.
13. There are turning points in the story at key developmental points.
14. There is a simple story in projects with complex characters, and simple characters in projects with complex story.
15. There is evidence of the development of theme or subtext as an ancillary to the principle action.

***G. Evidence of an understanding of the fundamentals of scriptwriting (in addition to # F above).***

1. Writing (grammar, vocabulary, syntax, spelling) is appropriate to college level work.
2. Correct formatting per professional standards is employed
3. Work is completed on time at the length and format assigned.
4. Student is able to provide early draft/outline/character histories/treatments to show evolution of the project.
5. Student writes from point of view of personal experience/knowledge/research rather than from genre conventions.
6. Project shows evidence of significant rewriting as "writing is rewriting".
7. Project shows an understanding of character and narrative development techniques.
8. There are distinctive and appropriate voices for different characters.
9. Student gives evidence of having listened to voices/expressions of characters/people in the world to create his/her fictions.
10. Project shows evidence of having considered/incorporated Instructor's critiques, and gone beyond their specific & literal incorporation in rewriting process.
11. Student actively applies imagination and creativity to create surprise and delight in the viewer.
12. Project has a thematic or subtextual content that is consciously developed.

***H. Evidence of knowledge and significant use of planning, pre-production techniques, and preparation for post production stages.***

1. Project has clear:

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- a) scripting
  - b) instructor script approval
  - c) shot listing/storyboarding
  - d) instructor shoot approval
  - e) casting
  - f) equipment requests/reservations
  - g) script breakdown
  - h) scheduling
  - i) location scouting
  - j) location agreement forms
  - k) location survey sheets
  - l) appropriate performer release forms
  - m) appropriate municipality shoot approval forms
  - n) adequate crewing ~ casting for scope of project
  - o) adequate time allotted for scope of project
  - p) accomplishment rather than excuses
  - q) appropriate equipment for accomplishment of narrative and thematic goals
  - r) a three ring binder notebook with full production management materials including the above
  - s) camera and sound logs
  - t) script supervision notes
2. The project gives strong evidence (through realization ~ production management notebook) of a mastery and full utilization of professional production management techniques for scheduling and budgeting.

***1. Evidence of a knowledge of directorial techniques in the execution of the project (in addition to all the above).***

1. Project shows serious consideration and application of casting for characters.
2. Project has elicited believable and compelling performances from the actors/performers.
3. Project shows application of professional processes (creative journey with talent in the development of characters) in the accomplishment of narrative, thematic, and character development goals.
4. Project and supporting materials (project notebook, etc.) reveals ability to summon/inspire creative input from others (listening/creative teamwork) including cast, crew, DP, AD, and Producers.
5. Project reveals professional promise in dedication to realization of narrative and thematic goals.

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6. Project shows character, narrative, and thematic development through the creative use of blocking, shot selection, and composition for talent and camera.
7. Project shows developed sense of storytelling.
8. Project shows presence of consciously developed subtext or thematic content without making characters state it.

***J. Evidence of a knowledge of screen performance techniques.***

1. The ability to use imagination to enter into the given circumstances of a scene, show or film.
2. The ability to make the circumstances of a given scene, film or show personal by employing “as if” as a tool.
3. The ability to interact effectively with a partner (to look, see, listen and hear within “the reality of doing”).
4. The ability to achieve and make believable, “public solitude”.
5. The ability to “be” on screen without “performing” or “showing”.
6. The ability to use action and objective in the truthful realization of a character.
7. The ability to analyze and breakdown the text of a scene into charts to find character motivations, objectives and actions.
8. The ability to use improvization as a tool to find the best action for a scene or beat.
9. The ability to follow a directors instructions, and to work with a director in the discovery of a character and the actions of a scene.
10. The ability to work in front of a camera, and understand blocking, and set protocol, terminology, and logistics.