

Curriculum Philosophy and Overview

Berkeley Digital will have a vertically-integrated curriculum, focused primarily on the creation of above-the-line leadership skills in the Producer and Director categories.

By vertically-integrated, we mean the following:

The courses are “synchronized” with one another, and

The ongoing critiques are “additive” and synchronized with one another.

The courses “feed” one another in the following manner:

Every week, in every trimester, the classes are synchronized to be additive, as follows:

As a student progresses through each of the 7 projects they will complete during the course of the program, the “homework project goal” for every class, each week, is the same. Critiques are additive to each final project, with each skill class focusing on one particular additive skillset to complete the current project.

In this way, “homework” from one class reinforces “homework” from another class; the critiques from one class reinforce the critiques from every other class, and the instructors and the classes are all fully synchronized. There is no duplication of effort (and dissipation of time and energy) on multiple, unrelated projects.

And the faculty of all of the classes are synchronized during the 4 trimesters.

The four trimester paradigm will take the students through 7 projects, 2 in the first trimester, 2 in the second and third trimesters, and 1 in the final trimester, each of which will involve creating new pieces with a continuously increasing degree of difficulty, sophistication and length, culminating in a 30 minute long-form narrative thesis piece.

All of these projects are targeted on developing the student’s “unique personal vision”; which is to develop at all times what is completely unique about them; the stories and events which they have remembered; the visions which define what makes them unique in the world; their unique world-view.

All classes are focused on developing the look, feel, honesty, and fearlessness which will come from writing, producing, and directing from the heart, and from direct life experience.

Curriculum Overview

The classes, as they progress across trimesters, are as follows:

Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3	Trimester 4
Producing / Directing 1	Producing / Directing 2	Producing / Directing 3	Producing / Directing 4
3:00 min- Project 1	5:00 min- Project 3	10:00 min- Project 5	30:00 min- Project 7
3:00 min- Project 2	5:00 min- Project 4	10:00 min- Project 6	
Cinematography 1	Cinematography 2	Cinematography 3	Cinematography 4
High Definition 1	High Definition 2	incl. Music Videos	incl. Commercials
Editing 1	Editing 2	Editing 3	Editing 4
Final Cut Pro 1	Final Cut Pro 2	Shake	Smoke / Discreet
Screenwriting 1	Screenwriting 2	Screenwriting 3	Screenwriting 4
2 scripts: 3 pages	2 scripts: 5 pages	2 scripts: 10 pages	Thesis: 30 pages
Acting	Sound 1	Sound 2	Business Practices / Distrib.
Improv. / Directing Actors	Pro Tools	Sound Design	Legal & Taxation

These classes are each once per week, three hours per day, with 4 hours of lab per class. Labs are on the same day, continuing the new instruction while it is fresh.

Classes run for a total of 14 to 15 weeks per trimester.

Shooting is on weekends, at night, and during lab times.

Curriculum and Class Details

Producing Directing 1

Designed to begin mastery of Coverage in the Hollywood style. Covers framing and composition, shot size, the 180 degree rule, screen direction, movement and continuity. Two projects of increasing degree of difficulty, written and directed by the student director.

Producing Directing 2

Continues coverage and begins the process of matching lens choice, setup and camera placement to movement and continuity choices as they relate to coverage choices from the interpretation of the script. Two five-minute projects, written and directed by the student director, with advanced coverage of two and three people moving in the frame.

Producing Directing 3

Continues coverage with multiple actors and multiple camera platforms for movement. Guest lectures on Production Management and Location Management as they relate to the choices of the Producer and Director. Lecture and exercises in Production Design, Art Direction, Costuming, Props, Stunt Work, Choreography, and all the other on-screen art elements chosen by the director.

Producing Directing 4

Production and Direction of the final thesis project, 15 to 30 minutes in length.

Cinematography 1

Introduction to the skilled use of the Panasonic HVX200 High Definition Camera. All aspects of fluent operation will be taught through hands-on in-class exercises and field shooting. Mastery of and fluency with all external and menu-driven commands. Basic camera placement, and three-point interior lighting, and basic exterior shooting.

Cinematography 2

Advanced operation of the Panasonic HVX200 camera, crossing over into the artistic uses of the camera in directing the audience eye to the director's vision. Exercises in depth-of-field, depth of focus, the visual effects of different lens choices, f-stops, and camera placement. Mastery of camera movement in support of the director's vision. Advanced lighting in support of more complex camera coverage.

Cinematography 3

Introduction to the Panasonic Varicam and Sony CineAlta camera families, with emphasis on mastery of the menu options available to modify the feel of the camera in support of the director's visual choices for each project.

Cinematography 4

Arriflex 35mm BL4 film exercises. Working with 35mm film as a touchstone to what is still the predominant acquisition medium, for fluency and familiarity in future projects.
Sony CineAlta projects in support of the final thesis project.

Editing 1

Beginning to Intermediate Level Final Cut Pro HD. Digitizing, logging, beginning editorial. The concept of "ballistic" movement editing.

Editing 2

Intermediate to Advanced Final Cut Pro HD.

Editing 3

Editing Theory and Advanced asset Management in Longform Narrative Fiction.

Editing 4

Introduction to the Discreet Logic family of products:

Smoke, Flint, Flame, Inferno, Toxic, Lustre, and Cleaner.

Acting/Improvisation

Introduction to an understanding of the language and process of acting, focused upon the goal of being able to better understand the acting process, the language of the acting profession, and the value of improvisation in rehearsals, development of scenes, and dealing with crew and other production entities.

Screenwriting 1

Two scripts, of five pages each, developed for the Producing/Directing 1 shoots of that trimester.
Guest lectures with visiting screenwriters from the Writer's Guild.

Screenwriting 2

Two scripts, of five pages each, developed for the Producing/Directing 2 shoots of that trimester.
Guest lectures with visiting screenwriters from the Writer's Guild.

Screenwriting 3

Two scripts, of five pages each, developed for the Producing/Directing 2 shoots of that trimester.
Guest lectures with visiting screenwriters from the Writer's Guild.

Screenwriting 4

One script, from fifteen to thirty pages, developed for the Producing/Directing 4 Final.
Exercises in Pitching and Development of Treatments for feature film work.

Sound 1

Beginning and Intermediate level of Digidesign's ProTools. Guest lectures by Academy-Award winning Sound personnel on the thinking and processes behind Sound Design for motion pictures.

Sound Design

Intermediate to Advanced level of Digidesign's ProTools. Guest lectures by Academy-Award winning Sound personnel on Sound Design, preparation and preproduction of dialogue, music, and effects for motion picture rerecording and mixing sessions.

Business Affairs and Practices, and Film Distribution.

Creation of Sole Proprietorship and LLC businesses, and their concurrent Taxation and Legal issues. Full knowledge of permits, insurance, liability, copyright law, licensing, clip clearance, labor law, contracts, rights acquisition, distribution, film festivals, etc.

Development of Other Majors

It is inevitable, as has been seen in the prior academy setting, that certain students will gravitate towards other crafts within the program, notably:

Cinematography, Editing, and Screenwriting.

The way the program naturally supports this evolution is to identify (at the appropriate point) which students are gravitating in the direction of these support crafts, and to make them "leading vendors" of these skills on as many student projects as possible.

Since most students will be following a Producing and Directing track, they will usually welcome specialists who develop within the student ranks, and will seek them out as their expertise becomes more evolved and apparent.

This is the way things happened in the prior program, and many of these craftspeople have gone on to excellent careers in their chosen crafts.