



## INTRODUCTION TO FILMMAKING

Seminar Leader: **Laura Li**

House Leader: **Hikari Yoshida**

### Course Description

Recall a film that you like. What do you remember? The handsome actor or the cute actress? Wait – there must be something else. How about the plot – did you enjoy the story? How were the costumes, the lighting, and the special effects? Have you ever wondered, “Wow, how did they make that?” Making a movie is like cooking dishes. You not only need a well-written recipe, like a good story-line written by screenwriter, but you also need fresh raw ingredients, like experienced actors who can portray the characters well. You will need a director and cinematographer who can work together to cut dishes and cook, and an editor who will add seasonings like music and special effects to make it tasty and visually-pleasing.

This class will teach you how to write the recipe (the script), how to plan for the cooking (story-boarding), how to be part of the recipe (acting), how to cut and cook (cinematographer and director), and how to add seasonings (edit). It is fascinating to learn how to make films, but more importantly, by making it, you feel more comfortable working with people in a collaborative process using English. You will need to use film terms to convey your creative thoughts and to help the team make this happen. It might sound easy for you but actually it will only work with everyone’s full effort and enthusiasm. Let’s plan, shoot, cut, and go!

### Schedule

**Day 1:** *What are films? Who makes them? What is the first step to make one on my own?*

For the first half of Day 1, we will quickly go through film history by viewing a short animation about the early cinema era and three clips from three different time periods in film history to show their different approaches to storytelling. Then we will get to know the roles in the filmmaking industry by talking about the different jobs and their functions in a crew. For the later half of the class, we will discuss script-writing skills and how to do screenwriting.

**Day 2:** *Creating the Clips*

Today we are going to actually shoot-on-location. The director, actors, and cinematographer should prepare well enough by reviewing the things we learned in order to clearly communicate with each other in English.



### **Day 3: *Putting Everything Together***

Today the first goal is to put the clips we have together according to the script and story-board. During this process we can discuss what shots we are still lacking and need to re-shoot. At the end of the class, we will talk together about music choice and sound effects.

### **Day 4: *Reflections and Final Touches***

Today we will preview what we have edited and everyone should give their opinion of which part we can change without reshooting anything. Student will need to export them to the computer.

## **Final Exercise**

The final film should be 2-5 minutes long and should be a narrative story with English dialogue. Students should divide into roles (director, cinematographer, actors, and editor) according to their interest and prior experience. The film can be in any genre but keep in mind that you need to consider the actors' age, location, film length and the limited resources we have on our hands. Maybe start with some stories that are small but simple. Maybe a thriller of a missing student in a hotel? Maybe a romantic love story about a young couple travelling to a spring? Maybe a comedy of a family trip? In the end, we will screen our film to other students and everyone should be prepared to talk for 2-3 minutes about your experience.

## **Pre-Seminar Assignments and Readings**

- **Day 1:**
  - Make your own Thaumatrope (5-8 min)
  - Read: Film Art P10-17
  - Fill out the sheet of Basic Film Terms
- **Day 2:**
  - Read Film Art P18-21
  - After first day class, group discussion and decide your role with your group about the script. The final project should be a 3-5 min long short narrative film about those key terms: Komatsu, memory, summer, friends, or/and friendship.
  - Actors: read the acting tips sheet
  - Director: read the film directorial tips sheet and re-read the script and shot list
  - Cinematographer: read the Basic Film Terms sheet and re-read the script and shot list.
- **Day 3:** Read the editing sheet.
- **Day 4:**
  - Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2j5dnlDmos>



- Watch our rough cut during my office hour and take notes about what you think we can change.
- Reflect on your role during this film-making process and think about what you have done to make it work.

## Message from the House Leader

Hi, my name is Hikari Yoshida :) I'm a junior in Doshisha University studying English Literature. I really love watching films, musicals, and comedy shows. My favorite films are *Billy Elliot* and *Life is Beautiful!* Both are great films, and I've watched the musical of *Billy Elliot*, which was amazing. In my university, I've mainly studied about Noel Coward, an English playwright. Though it's my first time studying and actually teaching a course on filmmaking, I'm really really excited to see how you will tackle this topic since it's pretty unusual to learn about in Japan! Feel free to ask me a lot of questions and looking forward to talk to you all! Let's work hard and have a fabulous time together!

## Message from the Seminar Leader

Hey, everyone! My name is Laura/Jingyi Li. I am currently a sophomore at Oberlin College majoring in Cinema Studies and East Asian Studies and minoring in Hispanic Studies. In my favorite movie by Edward Yang, *Yi Yi*, one of my favorite lines is, "after the invention of film, our lives have been extended three times over." I like films because every time when I watch them, I feel that I am in a new world. I experience new things and emerge with a new feeling, without moving my body. Isn't it magical? Since high school, I started making short videos with my friends. This experience not only encouraged me to pursue it as a major in college but also taught me how to work in a team—keep in mind that filmmaking is collaborative work, and that everyone is equally important! Last semester, one of my two production classes required me to work with children. I enjoyed this experience a lot and was inspired to open this workshop/seminar. I wish this seminar will be a hands-on experience. After taking this seminar, you will realize how films are made, how to use film to tell a story, and more importantly than this technical stuff, you will know how to collaborate with your peers during this creative process! Please feel free to talk to me or e-mail me if you have any questions. I would be very happy to figure it out with you together :) !