

Course Name – Filmmaking as a Design Activity

Course Code – TBD

Credits – 3

Faculty Name – Somnath Sen

Faculty Biography:

Somnath is a filmmaker and educator. He holds a Bachelor of Engineering (Mechanical) along with a Master of Science degree in Computer Aided Design (Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ) and a Master of Arts degree in Film and Television Production (University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA). Somnath has been making films, television shows, documentaries, music videos, ad films for the last 37 years. He has also been teaching for 20 years at FTII, Whistling Woods International among other places. Somnath also was a software engineer for 7 years in Orange County, California.

Course Description:

Filmmaking is, at its core, a design practice. Every creative decision on a film set – from the framing of a shot to the texture of a costume – is an act of intentional construction, guided by principles that designers across disciplines will recognize – problem-solving, systems thinking, iterative refinement, and the deliberate shaping of human experience.

This course approaches filmmaking through the prism of design, treating each phase of production as a distinct but interconnected design discipline. Students will work across four foundational areas that together constitute the architecture of a film.

Production Design encompasses the creation of the film's physical world – sets, locations, props, costumes, and colour – translating script and concept into tangible, inhabitable space. (In 3D Space, this is known as **WorldBuilding** or **World Design**). **Sound Design** addresses the auditory dimension of that world, building aural environments that orient, immerse, and emotionally engage the viewer. **Visual Structure Design** covers the organisation of the image itself – the principles of composition, the behaviour of light, and the grammar of camera movement – essentially the choreography of space, form, and motion within the frame. Finally, **Temporal Design** – the art of film editing – concerns the structuring of time and space in the film. It is the discipline through which rhythm, pacing, causality, and emotional arc are constructed by shaping the sequence, duration, and juxtaposition of images and sounds.

Together, these four practices mirror the collaborative, multidisciplinary nature of design itself. Students will develop both craft skills and a critical vocabulary, learning to see filmmaking not merely as storytelling, but as the design of experience – purposeful, layered, and built for an audience.



Prerequisites – None

Scheme of Evaluation and Grading:

Continuous Assessment: 70%

Assignment 1: 15%

Assignment 2: 20%

Assignment 3: 35%

End of Term Assessment: 30% (Viva with External Expert)

Ideal Number of Students: 20 ± 5