

College of the Arts
School of Theater + Film
Post Office Box 751
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November 3, 2017

Dear Professor Berrettini,

I observed Assistant Professor Courtney Hermann's Film 360 Digital Cinematography class on Wednesday, November 1, 2017. This class is for students who have successfully completed at least one of our two foundational production courses. In Professor Hermann's words from a brief she gave me before I attended, "students study and apply camera and lighting techniques for fiction and non-fiction film production and learn best practices for production planning and shooting on location." The class I attended was dedicated to learning the specifics of lighting – different types, what works in what situation, how to handle the gear, etc. The studying, application, and review of best practices for lighting is precisely what I observed: studying (by way of reviewing an excellent choice of non-intimidating reading the students had been assigned and the strategic use of slides and short clips), application (Professor Hermann handled and asked students to handle the gear), and a careful rehearsal of best practices (gloves, taping down wires, etc.). She then assigned them a project through which they could master the skills learned.

Professor Hermann accomplished all of her objectives for the class and did so with a skilful use of the time she had. She moved through each component steadily, engaging the students, allowing for questions – never seeming rushed. She has a wonderful demeanor in the classroom – treating her subject matter and students with great respect while still establishing a warm, friendly atmosphere. I admired the authority she has and the light way she wears it. My favorite moment is when she admonished the students not to lose a piece of equipment (that I infer is often mislaid by students): "Don't lose the flosier," she said as she held it up, demonstrating its use; "We love the flosier." Meaningful look. Light laughter around the room as students took in the lesson and appreciated her style of relaying it.

Professor Hermann explained the concepts clearly and demonstrated the gear carefully. What I found particularly impressive is her insistence on the professionalism of prioritizing safety – "No shot or film is worth a human person getting injured," she said at one point. At another point she said, "Nobody wants to check out a sandbag; they're heavy and awkward to carry to a shoot; nobody wants to do it; but we do it." I liked the tone she took: very serious without sounding in any way scolding – it's the kind of tone that inspires people to follow advice when it's given.

I very much enjoyed observing Professor Hermann's class and am proud that she is my colleague. She shows that we as a department treat our students with respect and warmth and that we prioritize their safety and well-being.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ruth
Professor