
Chapter 9: Assignment 9

1. Describe the basic duties of a DP. Explain the difference between a director of photography and a cinematographer?

The basic duty of the DP is to ensure that the visual image is captured at the highest possible quality. The difference between the DP and the cinematographer is that the cinematographer operates the camera.

2. What jobs comprise the director of photography's crew? What are the duties of each member of his team?

The jobs comprising the director of photography's crew is the cinematographer, 1st assistant camera (1st AC) and the 2nd assistant camera (2nd AC).

The cinematographer is the camera operator and works with the lighting crew (gaffers and grips) to ensure the best possible shot.

The camera assistants are responsible for building the camera and any associated equipment such as tripods, sliders and/or jibs or other supporting equipment. The 1st AC is the focus puller and the 2nd AC is the clapper / loader.

The gaffers and grips are responsible for providing the equipment for lighting and positioning the lighting for the shot required as well as powering the lights and serve as electricians.

3. Why is depth perception important when lighting an actor?

A camera cannot separate the foreground and the background as it only has one lens. To resolve this lighting the background provides this depth perception.

4. What are the three main lights used in cinematography? How are they used together to create the "visual image"?

The three main lights used are the key light, fill light and back light. The key light is the primary light used on the actor's face and is usually set at an angle. To fill in the rest of the shadows on the face, the fill light is used. To provide more depth, if required, a backlight is used. They are used together to ensure a picture is shot at the exposure required.

5. What is the difference between tungsten incandescents and HMIs? What is the purpose of each?

Tungstens provide a yellow light and HMIs provide a blue light and both of these can be used for effect to establish moods and themes.

6. What are some of the other tools a director of photography will use to create lighting effects?

Other tools that a DP may use are gels which change the color of the light, scrims which diffuse the light or provide patterns. The DP can also bounce the light using things like reflective foam, shiny pieces of plastic or even mirrors.

7. What are the different parts of a camera?

The different parts of the camera are the body, lenses and filters.

8. Why is vetting your DP so important? When vetting them, what characteristics are you looking for? What do you want to avoid?

The vetting of the DP is important to ensure the matching of styles between the filmmaker and DP such that the film turns out the way it was envisioned. It is also important to make sure the DP is easy to work with, smart, competent and experienced.

9. What is the most important quality of a camera?

The most important quality of a camera is to exclude light except where it is wanted.

10. What is a lens and what is its primary purpose?

The lens is a collection of glass elements in different shapes mounted in a barrel made of metal or plastic. The primary purpose of a lens is to form a sharp image of an object on to the focal plane where the film is located.

11. What is focal length and what does it affect?

The focal length is the distance between where the light rays converge in the lens to the digital sensor or 35 mm film. It affects the depth of field i.e. shallow depth of field focuses on an object and makes the background blurrier than a wide depth of field which brings both the foreground and

background objects into focus.

12. What is controlled by the iris?

The iris controls the intensity of the light which travels to the film or digital sensor.

13. What does the shutter control?

The shutter controls the period of time that light is exposed to the film or digital sensor.

14. Why is well executed sound important?

For shooting video or film, capturing good audio is very important because it is the first thing that an audience can tell is either good or bad quality.

15. Who generally comprises a sound crew?

A sound crew usually comprises of a production sound mixer, a boom operator and a utility sound technician. The production sound mixer is responsible for recording all sound on set. The boom operator is an assistant to the production sound mixer responsible for microphone placement and movement during filming. The utility sound technician often acts as an additional boom operator and pulling cables on set.

16. Why does the mixer need to make sure levels are kept within a proper range?

The mixer needs to make sure levels are kept within a proper range to ensure the sound is not too low and cannot be heard, or that the sound is too loud such that it is distorted resulting in poor audio quality.

17. What are the tasks of a sound assistant?

The sound assistant provides support to the production sound mixer or the boom operator such as being an additional boom operator or helping move around sound equipment and cables.

18. What is time code used for?

The time code is used to synchronize the video and audio captured during filming in post-production.