

Rob Spera's
"The Spoken and Unspoken Languages of Film and Television Directing"
Nostos Retreat
Course Syllabus
August/September 2026

COURSE OVERVIEW

Rob Spera's ten-day workshop, *The Spoken and Unspoken Languages of Film Directing*, explores the cornerstone maxims from his book, *Film/TV Director's Field Manual*. Through practical, hands-on directing exercises, illustrations, demonstrations, video clips, and lectures, Mr. Spera offers directors a unique technique that empowers actors to deliver multidimensional film performances without restricting actors' instincts or stifling their spontaneity.

WEEK #1

Week One examines the *Unspoken* Language of Film Directing used to inform performances through subtext in staging, blocking, and visual storytelling.

DAY ONE

Explore Maxims #16 – #19 in *Film/TV Field Director's Manual* by Rob Spera

- Lecture and Illustration: The *Unspoken* Language of Film Directing.
- Physical Demonstration: Informing Performance through blocking and staging.

Review Syllabus and Assignments:

- Assign Camera Exercise #1: "Designing The Frame" Instructions: See Page #167 of *Film/TV Director's Field Manual DUE DAY TWO*
- Assign FINAL Camera Exercise "The Single Continuous Shot" Instructions: See Page #177 *Film/TV Director's Field Manual DUE DAY TEN*

DAY TWO

Review Camera Exercise #1 "Designing the Frame" as it relates to Maxims #16-#19

- Introduce "Staging the Visual Story" Exercise #1 "The Bare Necessities", Instructions: See Page #178 of *Film/TV Director's Field Manual DUE DAY THREE*

DAY THREE

Review Assignment #2 "The Bare Necessities"

Lecture, Illustration, and Demonstration:

- **Point of View** in Visual Storytelling

DAY FOUR

Lecture and Illustration: “*From the Script to the Screen*”, preparing the shooting script.

- Analysis and Breakdown of original scripted material from selected professional work that Mr. Spera revised into shooting scripts.
- Screening of those professional clips.

DAY FIVE

Lecture, Illustration, and Demonstration:

- “*Graphic Components of Visual Storytelling: Deep Space, Flat Space and Limited Space*”

Review and Wrap Week One.

WEEK #2

The *Spoken* Language of Film Directing, Directing the Actor

DAY SIX

Explore Maxims #32 - #38 in Film/TV Director’s Field Manual by Rob Spera

Lecture, Illustration, and Demonstration:

- The *Spoken* Language of Film Directing
- Objectives, Obstacles, and Actions
- Introduce “Staging the Visual Story “Exercise #2: Instructions Page #179 “*Bare Necessities Plus*”

DAY SEVEN

In-Class Review and Critique of Staging the Visual Story Exercise #2

Lecture and Demonstration: “*The Scene as a Single Human Transaction.*”

In-Class Exercise #1: Scene Breakdown and Analysis

DAY EIGHT

Lecture, Demonstration, and Illustration: “*Designing the Shot List*”

In-Class Exercise #2 Shot Breakdown

Assign Shot List Assignment #1: “*Designing the Shot List*”

DAY NINE

In-Class Review and Critique Shot List Assignment #1 “*Designing the Shot List*”

DAY TEN

In-class review of FINAL Camera Assignment #2, “*The Single Continuous Shot*”

Review and Wrap Week Two