

USC SCA CTPR507 Production 1 – 18608 Fall 2008

Instructors:

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Class Hours Tue 2:00–5:50pm (Production) RZC 124

& Locations

 Thu 2:00–5:50pm (Cinematography) Kurosawa Stage RZC 114

Text:

Voice and Vision

By Hurbis-Cherrier

WELCOME

Welcome to 507! You are about to be immersed in the creative process

Some students start out a bit anxious about the semester. But rest assured, you will in fact turn out two projects, learn a great deal about filmmaking and yourself, make some new close friends, and we hope, have a great time. Along the way we are here to help you.

Please know that Brenda, Alan and Josh are available to work with you throughout the semester.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

CTPR 507 is about communication. The core focus of the class is to communicate ideas, feelings, moods and emotions through the design of visual and aural environments. All approaches to cinema are welcomed including non-fiction, abstract, experiments--as well as narrative fiction.

CTPR 507 is about exploring the cinema medium, about ideas and the ability to turn those ideas in to a script and onto the screen.

It is also about finding your own strengths and weaknesses as a filmmaker, and learning about creative teamwork,

CTPR 507 combines introductions to the five major disciplines within the cinematic arts: producing, directing, editing, cinematography, and sound with guided opportunities to create individual and small group projects.

Each student will produce and direct two projects, managing all facets of filmmaking from ideation and preproduction through postproduction and class presentation.

Class screenings will focus on each filmmaker's implementation of production techniques to fulfill a specific creative intent while exercising all students' critical analysis and collaborative communication skills. Students will receive feedback on their work from their classmates as well as a diverse and experienced faculty.

CTPR 507 is the beginning of an educational process that will strengthen your instincts as a filmmaker, develop strong critical faculties, help clarify themes that will define your art and develop the skills necessary to express those themes effectively through moving pictures.

CTPR 507 will cover introductions to these skill-sets:

Producing: the art and craft of producing from pitch to delivery; finding your voice, your taste, your aesthetic; the role of producer, assistant director and unit production manager. Including: script breakdown, location and scheduling concerns

Directing: developing a comprehensive aesthetic approach to the goal, central idea, and theme of a project; including: story beats, character arc, and behavior that reveals character

Cinematography: five weeks of 16mm in-class exercises that will cover: composition, use of space, all aspects of production design (including wardrobe, etc.), color temperature, deep focus, shallow focus, hard and soft light, available light, key, fill, back-light and negative fill. Instruction in how to light for day interior, night interior, sunset (exterior light), and night exterior; - four weeks introducing Sony HD EX Camera.

Editing: exercise in editing a basic 2-character dialogue scene; story shaping, paper edits, continuity editing; parallel, montage and non-linear editing; media management

Sound: Concepts of sound design and using sound as a creative element in cinematic storytelling. Introduction to production sound recording, sound editing, use of music and effects, and sound mixing

COURSE OUTLINE:

Week 1

August 26— Producing (1 of 2) RZC 124

Who does what - the roles, responsibilities and functions of the creative collaborators - Basic production techniques: script breakdown, identifying shooting sequences, location concerns, production meetings and scheduling methods

August 28

Cinematography, 16mm (1 of 5) RZC 114

Philosophy of the course; assignments; facilities; safety

Basics: camera reports, slates, ditty bags, cameras, lenses, filters, cleaning and maintaining equipment, set procedure, diopter (both kinds), ground glass, framing, hand-holding, loading cameras, using light meters. What is a T stop? an aperture? What is depth of field and what does it mean visually? How do you control it? 6 camera packages in class

Week 2

September 2—Producing (2 of 2) RZC 124

The basics of a pitch, analysis of material for costs and how to maintain story, focus, intent, clarity, organization and basic set workflow.

September 4 —Cinematography, 16mm (2 of 5) RZC 114

Light meters, camera packages and ditty bags, how to clean and pack a lens, filmstocks and ASA/ISO/EIs, how to read ISO label on can, exposing for interiors, exteriors, loading and cleaning cameras, electricity, lights, flags, stands, lighting demo, check gate, 85s & NDs; 6 camera crews work in class

Week 3

September 9—Editing Exercises (1 of 3) Duwayne Dunham RZC 124

Editing two-character dialogue scene with supplied material; aesthetic editing instruction, using examples from professional film and television, and previous student films. Concepts of character and story shaping, shot selection and sizes, angles, matching action, the 180-degree line, and character blocking; students will create a paper cut and begin editing

Homework – The students will be responsible for editing and outputting a final version of the supplied scene.

September 11—Cinematography, 16mm (3 of 5) RZC 114

Interior lighting workshops; Stage electricity checkout, C-stands, flags, grip Equipment, crew

Week 4

September 16—Editing Exercises (2 of 3) Duwayne Dunham RZC 124

“Lean Forward Moment,” Rule of 3’s, Scene transitions –match cutting, dissolves, fades, wipes; L-cuts, editing on movement, “popping in” or “popping back;” review students’ cuts of their scenes. Aesthetic concepts, such as editing for character, will be reinforced. Editing room concepts, such as media management naming conventions, proper output strategies; students begin work on 2nd scene; crossing the line, poor performances, mismatches; instructor will demonstrate alternatives

September 18—Cinematography, 16mm (4 of 5) RZC 114
Interior lighting workshop

Week 5

September 23 —Editing Exercises (3 of 3) Duwayne Dunham RZC 124

Filmic editing styles will be presented using existing film clips: fragmented editing, parallel editing, non-linear storytelling, pacing, montage, use of music, jump cutting; review students’ edited scenes; import and demonstrate the use of sound and music

September 25—Cinematography, 16mm (5 of 5) RZC 114
Interior lighting workshop

Week 6

September 30 -- Project One and two pitches (with Prod/Dir, Ideation faculty) RZC 124

- a. Producing Central idea - story - scope and demands and objective of project
 - b. Directing: central idea, goals, aesthetic
- Assignment: Project 1, Group A (6) shoots

October 2—Cinematography, HD (1 of 4) RZC 114

HD EX Camera: body, lens, menu settings, SxS Crads, handling & care, use of eyepiece vs. LCD, focusing diopter

Week 7 –

Project 1: Group A (6) shoots

October 7—Sound editing and mixing in Avid: editing backgrounds, effects, production; mixing in AVID, AudioSuite tools - Midge Costin RZC 124

October 9--Cinematography, HD (2 of 4) RZC 114
Color Temperature, production design, HD EX Cameras, controlling exteriors in HD

Week 8

Project 1: Group B (6) shoots; Group A (6) Edits

October 14—Project 1: Screen Group A(6) RZC 124

October 16 --Cinematography, HD EX (3 of 4) RZC 114

HD taught with production sound recordist, Doug Vaughan, principles and Techniques of sound recording kits, basic concepts of using mics, working on set with a boom, controlling location factors AND audio settings on camera

Week 9-

Project 1: Group C (6) shoots; Group B (6) Edits

October 21 —Project 1: Screen Group B (6) RZC 124

October 23 —Cinematography, HD EX (4 of 4) RZC 114

HD shot at Vagabond with sound teacher, Doug Vaughan

Week 10—

Project 1: Group C (6) Edits

October 28—Project1: Screen Group C (6) RZC 124

October 30 -- Project 2: Pre-Prod Meetings with faculty; production design materials for second projects; RZC 124

Week 11

November 4—Project 2: Group B Pre-Prod Meetings RZC 124

November 6—Project 2: Due: Group A shoots; Screen Dailies RZC 124

Week 12

November 11—Project 2: Screen Group A cuts RZC 124

November 13 2-6pm —Project 2: Screen Group B Dailies RZC 124

November 13 6-10pm *—Project 2:Group C Pre-Prod Meetings RZC

Week 13

November 18 —Project 2: Screen Group A final cuts RZC 124

November 20 2-6 pm-- Project 2: Screen Group B Cuts RZC 124

November 20 6-10pm *—Project 2: Group C Dailies RZC

Week 14

November 25—Midge Costin--Dialogue Editing: Students will learn how to clean up and organize production tracks to make them mixable. Basic techniques will be covered for editing dialogue, ADR, Production Fx, as well as creating fill for handles, use of alternative takes, and how to use Audiosuite tools to make production tracks useable. RZC 124

November 25 6-10*—Project 2: Screen Group C Cuts RZC

Week 15

December 2 Project 3 B final cuts—RZC 124

December 4-- View re-edits projects A/B Optional RZC 124

Day #3*—Project 2: Screen Group C Final Cuts RZC

*Production Majors only

CLASS SCHEDULE AND DEADLINES

Each section of 507 operates a bit differently than the others.

Each section is divided into three groups—A, B, and C. All Group A movies are due the same date. Group B follows a week later, and Group C after another week. The details are stated in the *Course Calendar*.

Deadlines provide a critical discipline in movie-making. Each project is to be handed to the SA at the ***beginning*** of the class,. Being on time is part of the discipline of filmmaking. As detailed below, late projects will be downgraded.

PROJECTS: Students will complete two, five minute max projects in HD:

PROJECT 1:

1. one weekend shooting
2. one week editing

Suggestions:

Narrative:

1. Beat change within a scene
2. Behavior which reveals character
3. Give a character a dilemma; resolve it

Documentary:

1. Portrait of a person
2. Capture a process
3. Explore the complexity and nuance of a place

Experimental:

1. Use montage to express an emotion or mood
2. Explore the qualities of light and darkness
3. Explore shape, line, time and/or space

PROJECT 2:

Student Choice Project (must be crewed)

use location sync-sound; five minutes max

- a. emphasis on story structure; building tension, character development; optional production recording/dialogue
- b. four weeks of production (begins week 10)
- c. faculty supervise production from pre-prod through dailies, cuts, and sound design

Weekly journals are due to bgoodman@cinema.usc.edu each Sunday night.

Pitches and other assignments will be given out in class.

GRADES:

CTPR is graded on a Credit/Non-Credit basis. According to University Standards you must achieve a minimum letter grade of B in order to receive Credit. Each student must complete both films and all exercises in order to receive credit. Grades will be based on both subjective and objective judgments; essentially we look for intelligence, clarity, craftsmanship and emotional depth indicative of a growing mastery of the art form. Success is necessarily predicated on an energetic and ongoing interaction between all members of the class. So, late projects, tardiness and unexcused absences will have a negative impact on your grade. Late projects will be docked 10 percent per day. If you must miss class, call your instructor or SA as soon as possible and always before class begins.

MID-SEMESTER CONFERENCES:

These conferences allow you to get a sense of your overall progress, areas for improvement and an estimated grade at mid-point in the semester. If you are in danger of failing, you will be alerted in writing and in a conference; we will outline together what steps must be taken in order for you to pass. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of USC's add/drop and withdrawal deadlines.

SAFETY:

THE PERSONAL SAFETY OF YOURSELVES, YOUR CAST AND CREW MEMBERS IS A VITAL CONSIDERATION AS YOU PLAN AND SHOOT YOUR PROJECTS. PLEASE CHECK WITH YOUR INSTRUCTORS BEFORE SHOOTING IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS. READ THE SAFETY HANDOUT AND UNDERSTAND THE CONTENTS. FOOTAGE SHOT UNDER UNSAFE CONDITIONS WILL BE WITHHELD FROM THE PROJECT; STUDENTS PRIVILEGES MAY BE SUSPENDED: AND GRADES LOWERED. BE SURE TO DISCUSS ALL HAZARDOUS SHOOTING CONDITIONS LISTED ON THE HSC HANDOUT WITH YOUR INSTRUCTORS.

PRODUCTION SAFETY GUIDELINES, The Student Handbook, and the Pre-Production Hazardous Shooting Form and other valuable documents ARE available at:

[<https://scacommunity.usc.edu/index.cfm>](https://scacommunity.usc.edu/index.cfm)

Faculty Sign-Off sheets are required for all Hazardous shooting conditions prior to production, including shoots with minors and studio teachers.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or the TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301, and is open 8:30am-5:00pm Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

COPYRIGHT

Because the School provides equipment and facilities, the copyright to all 507 films resides with the University. However, the student retains ownership of the intellectual property rights to their work. The SCA provides a community portal on the internet so that 507 students may share their work. The complete copyright agreement can be viewed at: https://scacommunity.usc.edu/resources/physical_production/pdf/PP-copyrightAgreement.pdf

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Cinema school is intense. One important aid in coping is managing one's time, energy and health. This translates into:

- scaling projects to do-able sizes;
- having back-up ideas, locations, equipment and actors in case of problems (weather, accidents, camera break-downs, etc.)
- realistically estimating time.

If you are feeling overwhelmed, talk it over with fellow students, or with your SA, or with us. USC also provides a Student Counseling Service which has helped pull many stressed-out students through rough spots; you can reach them at (213) 740-7711.

Chances are that as the semester progresses you will be amazed at how much you are capable of and how quickly you are becoming a seasoned filmmaker.

ETHICS

The USC Student Conduct Code fully discusses issues of academic integrity and student conduct (see your issue of Scampus). Motion picture production involves some additional issues of conduct off-campus. USC student filmmakers need to observe professional standards of behavior with actors, crew, and location owners. If you offend someone, they won't help any more students, and they'll tell a lot of other people. Moreover, all students must help protect our reputation with the Screen Actors' Guild, and the City and County of Los Angeles.

