

USC School of Cinematic Arts

John C Hench Animation & Digital Arts

CTAN-592 Virtual Cinematography

Units: 2

Semester: Fall 2014

Course Type: Lecture

Location: SCB205

Day and Time: Thursdays 7 - 9:50 p.m.

Instructor: Gil Zimmerman

Contact Info: gzimmerm@usc.edu

Teaching Assistant: Sijia Huang

Office Hours: By Appointment

Contact Info: sijiahua@usc.edu

IT Help: DL-Animation Support

Contact Info: animsupport@cinema.usc.edu

Course Description

Although as avid filmgoers we have experienced the craft of cinematography, very few of us have been exposed to the techniques used to create the visual stories cinematographers tell. This course will introduce students to these tools starting with an historic overview of the development of film language and continuing on through the building blocks of cinematic storytelling: shot types, path of action, continuity, character blocking, camera blocking, camera rigs, editing, optics, lighting and production design.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of course, students are expected to gain a working knowledge of film language and cinematic technique in both an intellectual sense but, more importantly, in a practical sense enabling them to apply these tools to their own film projects.

Suggested Reading

The Five C's of Cinematography by Joseph V. Mascelli

The Visual Story: Creating the Visual Structure of Film, TV and Digital Media by Bruce Block

In the Blink of an Eye by Walter Murch

Course Notes

Each lecture will be presented in Keynote, the slides of which will be posted on Blackboard.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Most assignments will take the form of either shot-by-shot analysis of scenes reviewed during class or short Maya-based staging studies.

Grading Breakdown

Grades will be based on class participation, mid-term exam and final project. Criteria for grading will include conceptual clarity, creativity, and the application of concepts discussed in class to assigned projects. Grades will be allocated as follows:

Class participation:	15%
Homework (6 @ 5% each):	30%
Midterm Exam:	20%
Final Project:	35%
Total:	100%

Assignment Submission Policy

Written assignments are to be turned-in during class hours unless previously agreed to by instructor. Movie clip-based assignments may be posted to an established folder online.

Additional Policies

Assignments are expected to be turned in on time unless previously agreed to by instructor. Students are expected to notify instructor via email if they think they may be unable to attend class.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

8/28 (Week 1)	Course overview, class introductions and favorite film openings (film clips) <i>Featured films: Harold and Maude, The Big Lebowski, Raising Arizona, Touch of Evil</i>
9/4 (Week 2)	What is Cinematography? Early filmmaking and the development of film language <i>Featured films: Battleship Potemkin, Metropolis and Birth of a Nation</i>
9/11 (Week 3)	Cinematic Technique 1: Shot types <i>Featured films: Frankenstein, It Happened One Night, The Lady Vanishes, Ninotchka</i> <i>Homework: Shot Types and focal length</i>
9/18 (Week 4)	Cinematic Technique 2: 180 Degree Rule & Stationary Blocking <i>Featured films: Shadow of a Doubt, The Philadelphia Story, The Third Man</i> <i>Homework due: Shot Types and focal length</i>
9/25 (Week 5)	Cinematic Technique 3: Motivated Blocking & Continuity <i>Featured films: Rear Window, Some Like It Hot, Sunset Boulevard</i> <i>Homework: Blocking a Basic Scene</i>
10/2 (Week 6)	Cinematic Technique 4: Camera Movement & Shooting Strategy <i>Featured films: Diving Bell and Butterfly, True Grit</i>
10/9 (Week 7)	Midterm Exam
10/16 (Week 8)	Cinematic Technique 5: Visual Style & Production Design <i>Featured films: Seven, Brazil, Making of Monty Python and the Holy Grail</i>
10/23 (Week 9)	Production Pipeline, Workbook & Previsualization: Historical review and current state of industry <i>Featured films: Tarzan, Treasure Planet, Puss in Boots, How to Train Your Dragon</i>

10/30 (Week 10)	Cinematic Technique 6: Lensing & Lighting <i>Featured films: The Assassination of Jesse James, Touch of Evil, In Cold Blood</i>
11/6 (Week 11)	Real World Cinematography: How to Apply Cinematic Technique <i>Featured films: How to Train Your Dragon</i>
11/13 (Week 12)	The Final Project - Lab 1: <i>Intro & Applying what you've learned, part 1</i>
11/20 (Week 13)	The Final Project - Lab 2: <i>Applying what you've learned, part 2</i> Lab: Preliminary review of final project
11/27 (Week 14)	<i>Thanksgiving Holiday</i>
12/4 (Week 15)	The Final Project - Lab 3: <i>Applying what you've learned, part 3</i> Lab: Preliminary review of final project
Dec. 6-9	<i>Study Days (no student instructor interaction per USC protocol)</i>
12/11 Final Exam	<i>7-9 p.m. Final Project Due</i>

Statement for 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 to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP: http://sait.usc.edu/academic_support/center_programs/dsp/home_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, (www.usc.edu/scampus or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>. Information on intellectual property at USC is available at: <http://usc.edu/academe/acsen/issues/ipr/index.html>.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

Disruptive Student Behavior

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.