

INTERMEDIATE DIRECTING

CTPR 532 – Fall 2014

SECTION 037-18634D **Tuesday 7:00 – 10:30 P.M.** **SCA Stage 2**
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RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

DIRECTORS TELL THE STORY: Master the Craft of Television and Film Directing By Bethany Rooney and Mary Lou Belli
A SENSE OF DIRECTION by William Ball
DIRECTING ACTORS by Judith Weston
MAKING MOVIES by Sidney Lumet

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This class is a practicum in directing and staging actors for film and television. It is concerned with what is the sole responsibility of the director – the motivation of performance.

Recognizing that this is a fundamental and primary responsibility of narrative directing, this course aims at a deeper understanding of and practical familiarity with actor performance and scene analysis. We will provide students experiential opportunities as well as a “tool box” of directorial techniques.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Each student will present an open scene in partnership with another student using Uta Hagen’s 6 steps.

Each student makes two video projects during the course of the semester:

1. **A two-character dialogue scene (using DV equipment) of three to five minutes**, edited for presentation in class. Each student will cast & rehearse a scene outside of class (at least 5 hours). You will then bring that scene into class off-book with appropriate props & wardrobe and stage the scene. You will also bring the logline, theme of the piece and a 3 sentence synopsis of the film to be handed in. If the scene comes from something that has already been published like plays, or short stories or scenes from novels or comics, you must obtain the rights from the author, publisher, lawyer or agent. Since we want you to deal with issues of directing instead of writing. You are encouraged to use something that you relate to – something you read or saw that affected you deeply. Five minutes is the maximum length allowed. You will receive feedback in class, then you will shoot the scene outside of class and return with an edited version two weeks later for presentation and critique, **along with your director’s notebook**.
2. **A three-character dialogue scene, 3 - 5 minutes long**, so you can experience what it is like to work with more than two actors. The scene should be sourced as before, rehearsed as before, brought into

class to workshop, then shot & edited and brought in to class, along with **your director's notebook**, in two weeks for presentation before the class. Five minutes is the maximum length allowed.

Each scene must be watermarked "This is a classroom exercise and not intended for distribution" at the bottom of every frame of each scene in order to receive your grade.

AN ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITY of each student twice during the semester is to bring in on DVD a **3 – 5 minute scene from a movie that you love** and present storyboards (stick figures are OK) and floor plans with actor and camera placement that allow you to explain how an effective scene was shot and edited to have maximum emotional impact. You will also present the logline and theme of the piece with a 3 sentence synopsis of the film to be handed in with the storyboards. These will be staggered in the scheduling so that they will least conflict with your scene work.

CASTING REQUIREMENTS:

You will utilize SPO, Now Casting, LA Casting, online services and other resources to secure actors. **You are required to see at least FIVE actors for each part, which you will document by turning in, when you present, an ORIGINAL (not photocopied) picture & resume for each actor you auditioned.**

Also, please tell the actors that legally, they can only place up to 30 seconds of the clip online, and no more.

GRADING

Grading will be determined by evaluation of the learning over the semester as reflected in the student's understanding and expression of the concepts taught in the class.

for the first five minute scene -----30%
for the second five minute scene-----40%
for clip analysis-----10%
for open scene-----10%
for class participation-----10%

PROFESSIONALISM

Missing "delivery dates" will not be excused without verifiable (by documents) medical/personal emergencies. **THIS MEANS YOU MUST HAVE "PLAN Bs" (and "Cs") FOR YOUR CASTING and your locations.** Instructor reserves the right not to accept any late assignments. **IF YOU ENCOUNTER SEVERE PROBLEMS, NOTIFY S.A. AND ME IMMEDIATELY.**

You are allowed a maximum of two unexcused absences (documentation required for excused absences). Beyond two, you will receive a reduction of one-third grade letter for each unexcused absence.

I do not like to be petty about tardiness and so I don't like to set specific penalties. However, in cases where it becomes chronic, I will give one "official" warning, and then I will begin to lower grades by

one-third letter grade each occurrence. PLEASE BE ON TIME. IT IS UNPROFESSIONAL AND HIGHLY INCONSIDERATE OF YOUR COLLEAGUES NOT TO BE.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: "Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are 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 the instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The office is in Student Union 301, and their phone number is (213) 740-0776."

All students are expected to understand and abide by USC School of Cinematic Arts Safety Guidelines. Violations of any of the safety guidelines may result in disciplinary action ranging from confiscation of footage to expulsion from the University.

There will be FOUR Production Groups (A thru D) of one to four students each, which will be staggered in scheduling so only one group will be in their shooting phase at any given time. ALSO, please keep in mind that we are not as concerned with the technical quality of these projects as the impact of the acting and staging of the scene.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Wk 1 - 8/26 Intro, arrange Groups, discuss acting/casting principles, story analysis

Wk 2 - 9/2 Lecture/Demo, principles of scene analysis, arrange Groups/Prod numbers.

Wk 3 - 9/9 Lecture/Demo, principles of rehearsal, blocking & staging, Open Scenes, Prod numbers

	GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D
Wk 4 - 9/16	Scene Workshop		SceneYouLove	
Wk 5 - 9/23		Scene Workshop		SceneYouLove
Wk 6 - 9/30	Edited Scene		Scene Workshop	
Wk 7 - 10/7		Edited Scene		Scene Workshop
Wk 8 - 10/14	SceneYouLove		Edited Scene	
Wk 9 - 10/21		SceneYouLove		Edited Scene
Wk 10 - 10/28	Scene Workshop		SceneYouLove	
Wk 11 - 11/4		Scene Workshop		SceneYouLove
Wk 12 - 11/11	Edited Scene		Scene Workshop	
Wk 13 - 11/18		Edited Scene		Scene Workshop

Wk 14 – 11/25 SceneYouLove

Edited Scene

Wk 15 – 12/2

SceneYouLove

Edited Scene

Fair Use Info:

Using or adapting work protected under copyright without the author/holder of the copyright's permission is against the law.

Fair use doesn't protect work that is publicly exhibited. Exhibition includes posting on the internet.

Anyone using work without such permissions is liable for prosecution. That includes students, their parents if the student is underage, and very likely the faculty member allowing this activity.

The scripts used in **99 Film Scenes For Actors**, by Angela Nicholas, published by Avon Books are available for you to choose from. She cleared the rights from the authors and studios associated with the scripts. So we can use them for scenes without worry about lawsuits or copyright infringement. You can also use scenes from **Great Scenes from the World Theater Volume 1**, by James L. Steffensen, Jr., also published by Avon Books. Many great scenes from 20th Century authors here.

Tell your actors the SAG agreement allows for only 30 seconds only of material to be posted online.

All students must 'watermark' their projects on the bottom of each frame of the image with these remarks: **"This is a classroom exercise and not intended for distribution."**