Adjunct Professor: Duwayne Dunham  
DunProd@aol.com  
Office Hours: By appointment

SA: Tarik Polansky  
ptarik@usc.edu  
619.243-4691

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Picture Editors are storytellers. Unlike writers who use text, or lyricists who use words, we use visual images, dialogue, sound, special effects and music to tell our stories. “How” we use these elements and why we use them is important. Why should I cut at this frame as opposed to this one? Why is it more important to use off-camera dialog as opposed to playing dialog on-camera? Why should a music cue start at this point in a scene as opposed to that point? When to cut when not to cut, when to stylize when not to and why.

This class is about the “hows” (using the AVID, editing techniques, the grammar of editorial) and the “whys” (editing aesthetics, basic theory and concepts behind film editing.) This course will teach you how to think like a picture editor and will introduce you to the basic skills of picture editing using the Avid Media Composer.

The class will partly be a hands-on course where you will learn the basics of how to use Avid Media Composer, the leading software in the motion picture post-production industry. Even though picture editing is fundamentally about story telling, it is also a technical medium needing great organizational skills. Therefore you will also learn how to organize a project, set up bins, manage media (footage, sound effects, music) create custom settings, and how to properly present your assignments each week.

Learning the basic concepts of editing is useful for all facets of filmmaking, especially if you want to be a writer, director, producer, or even a cinematographer for after the shooting stops it all comes down to the editor to put the pieces together to make a story.

By the end of the semester you will be able to think like an editor and consequently, you will become better visual storytellers. In a sense, you will become media literate. You should not only be able to analyze any piece of media from an editing perspective and understand why the editor made the choices he/she did, but you will also be able to edit your own stories based upon the skills you have learned in this class.
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

SCA approved and supported Hard Drives
Below is the navigation to information on what hard drive to purchase.
SCA Community:
https://scacommunity.usc.edu/index.cfm
Scroll down center frame to SCA Post Help and CLICK
Scroll down to Required Equipment by Class and CLICK
Choose SCA Required Hard Drives PDF and CLICK

The G-Tech Drive (2TB version) can be purchased for as low as $200:
http://www.avalive.com/G-TECH/0G00203/179997/productDetail.php?utm_source=googleBase&utm_medium=feed&utm_content=0G00203&gclid=CLyXj-_B17gCFa9_Qgodi11AfQ

The Western Digital: My Book Studio Edition II can be as low as $169:
http://www.bhphotovideo.com/bnh/controller/home?O=&sku=552322&Q=&is=REG&A=details

I consider the Glyph as the Rolls Royce of hard drives, however, their smaller 500GB version is still available and can purchased for only $159. They say it is in stock here:

Comtel Pro Media has offered USC students a discount.
The contact person at Comtel is Rich Merritt 818-450-1104 or 714-296-7297
Tell him you are a USC student, he will need your student ID number etc.

Head phones
You will have to purchase headphones with a ¼” adapter for use in the labs.

REQUIRED READING
You will be required to read the following text:
“The Lean Forward Moment: Create Compelling Stories for Film, TV, and The Web”
by Norman Hollyn; New Riders Press
(mainly chapters: 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)

I will also be assigning Avid tutorials from Lynda.com which every student has access to with their @usc.edu e-mail address. You can login here: http://www.usc.edu/its/lynda/
What you will need for this class is the tutorial:
Avid Media Composer 6 Essential Training

OPTIONAL READING
“Media Composer 6: Part 1 - Editing Essentials”
by Mary Plummer; Avid Learning Series

*I HIGHLY recommend buying the hard copy of this book as it comes with media that coincides with each chapter. If you are a hands-on learner, this is the way to go.*


**CLASS FORMAT**

Each week will be a mixture of lecture, class discussion/presentations and hands-on training. Once you begin your editing assignments a portion of class time will be devoted to sharing individual editing assignments. An editor’s work is scrutinized every day in the real world, so in this class you will be expected to show your work to everyone and get their notes.

**CLASS ASSIGNMENTS**

There will be small editing assignments and four major editing projects that deal with different editing theories and techniques. You will work in pairs cutting raw footage (called “Dailies”) from Hollywood Industry films and television shows. You will be asked to cut scenes together, show your first cuts in front of the class and get their feedback, then hand in revisions based on your notes. Part of this process will also be learning the technical skills necessary to work with Avid Media Composer more creatively and efficiently. All work will be copied to your hard drive. **Bring your hard drive to class each week so you can show work in class.**

There will also be a written scene analysis assignment and various oral presentations throughout the semester.

**CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PROTOCOL**

Students are expected to attend class regularly and be punctual. Class starts promptly at 7:00 pm. Excused absences will be granted only in the case of rare extenuating circumstances with an email of explanation prior to class. If you are absent without a valid excuse or habitually late your grade will be affected. There will be no use of any cell phone functions in class. Laptops may remain open only if they are used to take notes. Non-observance of the above will definitely affect your grade.

**GRADING:**

Grading will be done on a standard scale with no curve:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>600 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>550 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>450 pts</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>400 pts.</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>350 pts</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Editing Assignment #1</td>
<td>75 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Editing Assignment #2</td>
<td>75 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Editing Assignment #3</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Quiz</td>
<td>50 points</td>
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</table>
Scene Analysis/oral class presentation 100 points
Class participation 100 points
Final exam 100 points
Total of 600 points

Attendance: More than three unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your grade 50 pts.
Tardiness: Each unexcused tardiness is minus 5 points (tardiness is arriving after 7:10)

I would like everyone to be an active participant every week. Your contributions to the work of others are crucial to the learning process. **Participation is an important part of your grade!!**

Do not hesitate to ask me for help or to discuss conceptual ideas you have for your assignments. Editing in the beginning can be confusing so please do not let concerns over the ‘buttons’ keep you from a rewarding and fun experience.

**PRESENTATION OF Editing Assignments**
All of your editing assignments are to be copied to your hard drive and shared in class:
Your SA and lab assistants can also help with this process. Every assignment should have a Title Card at the beginning with all of the necessary information and be presented in this format.
- 2 seconds of black,
- 5 seconds of Title Card that contains the following information:
  - Your name (s)
  - Project Name (ie: Roswell, ER, Gladiator)
  - Version (ie: “First Cut,” “Second Cut, etc.”)
- 2 more seconds of black
- Your edited assignment
- then finish with 1 second of black at end

**RULES FOR USING SCA COMPUTER LABS**
1) No food, drinks (including bottled water), gum, or skateboards in the labs, Edit or Sound Edit Suites. Violation of this rule will result in suspension of Lab or Edit Room privileges. Locker area is available for food and drink storage.
2) You must sign in at Front Desk with your Student ID and use station assigned. Any change must be done through Front Desk.
3) If you are having technical problems with your workstation, contact a Tech through the Front Desk or Help Desk.
4) Closing time is strictly enforced. Techs will give warnings when to begin saving. Please do not argue with them.
5) Lab Hours and Supported Hard Drive documents can be found at the Front Desk, Help Desk, and SCA Community.
6) Headphones with 1/4 inch adapters are required at each workstation. SCA does not supply
headphones or adapters.

7) Users may be bumped after their station has been vacant for a period of 30 minutes.
8) For locker checkout, fill out locker form in B144. Lock must be approved before locker is assigned.
9) SCA Help Documents are located on each workstation desktop.
10) Please handle all equipment and computers professionally.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**
The School of Cinematic Arts expects the highest standards of excellence and ethics from all of you. It is particularly important that you avoid plagiarism, cheating on our exams, or submitting any work that you or your partner have not done. Violations of this policy will result in a failing grade and be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. If you have any questions or doubts about these policies, consult "Scampus" and/or confer with your SA or me.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**
Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. Please be sure that the letter is delivered to your SA or me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30am to 5pm, Monday through Friday. Their phone number is 213/740-0776.

**WEEKLY COURSE PLAN:**

The following is a rough outline of how the semester will progress.
All material below is subject to change based on class progress, films we screen and availability of guest speakers.

**Editing assignments will be done in pairs.**

**Week 1 (Jan 12)**

**Lecture:**
- Take care of registration
- Review the syllabus
- Discussion about the course
- Introductions and BG

**Films to screen:**
Cutting Edge – all or partial

**Assignment:**
- Read “The Lean Forward Moment.” (Ch.1)
  (we will only be reading ch. 7-11. Weekly chapters will not always be assigned)
- Watch Lynda.com (introduction and Ch.1)

**Editing in the LAB: ** **OPTIONAL** -- set up your editing project:
- Create and label your project (Roswell)
- Make and label bins (dailies) (first cut)
- Copy project to hard drives in lab (bring all work to class on your hard drive)

**Week 2 (Jan 19) - ** **NO CLASS -- MLK HOLIDAY**
**Week 3 (Jan 26)**
- From 8-10 PM we will have an introductory tutorial on using the SCA labs and Avid Media Composer in the editing Labs.
  (setup project, bins, transfer media, user settings, hard drives)

**Lecture:**
- A brief history of film editing
- Discuss log lines and scene Analysis, creating change.
- Discuss camera angles (coverage) setups and slating.

**Practice:**
- Setting up project (Roswell)
- Sub clipping and organizing your dailies to prepare for cutting.

**Assignment:**
- Pick a scene from classroom exercise partition (Roswell)
- Editing in the LAB:
  - find your scene Roswell on classroom exercises partition.
  - Organize it:
    - (sub clip dailies, copy to the dailies bin, with scene numbers labeled, text view or frame view)
    - copy project to hard drive
  - Bring to class your organized scene (on your hard drive) and be prepared to share with the class **along with written scene analysis and log line.**
  - Continue reviewing Lynda.com (ch. 2)
  - Continue to read “The Lean Forward Moment” (Ch. 2)

**Week 4 (Feb 2)**

**Lecture:**
- Approaching dailies: how to watch raw footage and understand the thought process of the editor using the scene analysis
  -- Cutting a basic scene
- Whose scene is it? What is the scene about? What is the most important moment in the scene?
- The Lean Forward moment in a scene (The Godfather)
- The Lined Script

**Screen in class:**
- Editing assignment and logline/script analysis
- Study dailies of Roswell
- Basic concepts of making your first cuts.
- Source/Record. Cutting in the timeline. Working with splice, lift vs. extract, and basic trimming.

**Film Clips:**
The Godfather – Restaurant
Laurence of Arabia – Drink from the well
Return Of The Jedi – Vader kills Emperor
The Cutting Edge

**Assignment:**
- Start cutting your scene (first assembly - Roswel)
  **Be prepared to bring your cut, on your hard drive to class.**
- Continue to read “The Lean Forward Moment”
-Continue reviewing Lynda.com (ch. 2)

**Week 5 (Feb 9)**

**Lecture:**
- Review The Lean Forward Moments
- Rule of Three’s
- Where do I want to be now?
- Cutting a scene: Action, Thriller, Comedy and Documentary

**Screen first cuts from Roswel**
- Give editorial notes

**Practice:**
- More editing techniques: trim mode, scrolling, match cut… L-cuts, checker boarding.

**Film Clips:**
The Great Train Robbery – simple cuts, parallel action
2001: A Space Odyssey – opening - interpretative
Homeward Bound – end – drama
The Cutting Edge

**Assignment:**
- Implement notes on first cut of Roswel
- Continue to read “The Lean Forward Moment”
- Continue reviewing Lynda.com (ch. 2)

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**Week 6 (Feb 16) - NO CLASS – PRESIDENT’S DAY HOLIDAY**

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**Week 7 (Feb 23)**

**Lecture:**
- Murch
- 180 degree rule
- Discuss action-cutting techniques
- Review AVID techniques learned up till now

**Screen second cuts of Roswell**
- Give editorial notes

**Film Clips: (different styles)**
- Social Network – Opening dia sc
- Star Wars – Gun Port
- 12 Years a Slave – Hanging

**Assignment:**
- Assemble first cut of ER
- Continue to read “The Lean Forward Moment” (especially ch. 9 Music)
- Continue reviewing Lynda.com (ch. 2, 3, 4)

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**Week 8 (Mar 2)**

**Meet in Editing Lab??**

**Lecture:**
- Cutting for action, pace and rhythm

**REVIEW for MID-TERM QUIZ – HANDOUTS**
Screen first cuts of ER
- Give editorial notes

Film Clips:
- Gravity
- Top Gun – Danger Zone
- Wild At Heart

Assignment:
- Implement editorial notes on first cut of ER
- Study for Mid-Term Quiz

Reading:
- Continue to read “The Lean Forward Moment” (especially ch.10 Sound)
- Continue reviewing Lynda.com (ch. 2, 3, 4)

Week 9 (Mar 9)
Mid-Term Quiz

Lecture:
- Working with Sound and Music - Handout
- Creating a sound design

Screen second cuts of ER
- Give editorial notes

Film Clips:
- The Godfather - Restaurant scene. DVD – 1:23;20
- The Godfather – Baptism. Chapter 21, 2:36:8
- Lawrence Of Arabia – Chapter 33, Ship in canal
- American Graffiti – Opening, or Johnny be Good
- 2001 A Space Odyssey – Ch 2, 3:14 Opening
- Twin Peaks – Title sequence

Practice:
- Finding snd/efx and music library and how to lay in music

Assignment:
- Work on FINE CUT of ER with Sound and Music
- Lay in snd efx & music over your cut scene ER.
- Organize Gladiator Dailies into bins.

Reading:
- Continue to read “The Lean Forward Moment” (Ch. 9-10 Sound & Music)
- Continue reviewing Lynda.com (ch. 2, 3, 4)

Week 10 (Mar 16) SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES Mar 16-21
Week 11 (Mar 23)
Discuss: ORAL PRESENTATION AND SCENE ANALYSIS (Due April 20)

Lecture:
- How to create suspense in Film and television
- Film time vs. real time
- Slow motion
- Action and realism
Screen: Fine cut of ER with sound and music

Film Clips:
- Pulp Fiction – Adrenaline scene, 54:46
- Bonnie and Clyde – Ch 34, Shoot out at end
- Blue Velvet (Change character to victim) Ch 10, 34:31…37:26 -- Ch 11, 41:41.
- Star Wars – Opening, Vader entrance

Practice:
- Continue to work with audio editing/mixing. Downloading sound efx and music. Basic audio effects.

Assignment:
- Assemble first cut of Gladiator
- Work on ORAL PRESENTATION AND SCENE ANALYSIS (DUE: April 20)

Reading:
- Continue to read “The Lean Forward Moment” (Ch 9-10 Sound & Music)
- Continue reviewing Lynda.com (ch. 2,3,4)

Week 12 (Mar 30)

Lecture:
- Different editing styles
- Working with Style/VFX
- How to use the EFX. pallet and other stylistic techniques

Screen first cuts of Gladiator
- Give editorial notes

Film Clips:
- Return Of The Jedi – Speeder bike chase – vidiots from web-site
- Return Of The Jedi – Speeder bike chase from final film
- Ylvis – The Fox, Someone Like Me.
- Jar Head – Color and transition
- Twin Peaks – The red room
- Wild At Heart – Ch 1 Sailor kills

Assignment:
- Assemble second cut of Gladiator
- Begin to add efx and style to your cut of Gladiator
- Continue working on ORAL PRESENTATION AND SCENE ANALYSIS (DUE: April 20) ______ Email Scene by Wednesday, April 9

Reading:

- Continue to read “The Lean Forward Moment” (Ch. 8, Opticals and VFX)
- Continue reviewing Lynda.com (ch. 5, 6, 7)

Week 13 (April 6)

Class will be held in AVID LAB

Screen SECOND CUT of Gladiator with VFX/Style

Lecture:
- Multiple story lines
- Parallel Action

Screening:
- Crash
- Wedding Crashers
- The Departed
- American Hustle
- Lost
- The Cutting Edge (if time permits)

Assignment:
- Continue refining your FINE CUT of Gladiator with efx and style. (DUE: April 28)
- Continue working on ORAL PRESENTATION AND SCENE ANALYSIS (Due next week)

Reading:
- Continue to read “The Lean Forward Moment” (Ch. 8 Opticals and VFX)
- Continue reviewing Lynda.com (ch. 5, 6, 7)

Week 14 (April 13)

Oral Presentation and Scene Analysis

Lecture:
- Documentary films
- Cutting genres, Horror and Suspense, Multi-cam editing for sitcoms.
- Beginnings and Endings

Screening:
- Wild At Heart
- Buck, Ch 10, 1:09:33 Horse bites trainer
- Blue Velvet

Assignment:
- Work on FINE CUT of Gladiator with Music, Snf Efx and VFX / Style
- Continue to read “The Lean Forward Moment”
**Week 15 (April 20)**

**Screen ALL FINE CUTS OF GLADIATOR**

**Lecture:**
- Review for the final
- Realities of the editor's job, the challenges, the usual behavioral mistakes first-time editors make and how to avoid them, the psychological aspects of working with the director and other creative people, how to run the room, how to get the job and keep it.

**Screen Film Clips:**
- *Fatal Attraction*, First the original ending (YouTube). Then the new released ending.
- *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*, Opening
- *Star Wars*, Opening-Introducing Characters

**Assignment:**
- Study for Final.

**Reading:**
- Continue to read “The Lean Forward Moment”

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**Week 16 (May 4) -- NO CLASS -- FINALS STUDY DAYS -- May 2-5**

**Week 17 (May 11)**

**FINAL EXAM: 7:00PM -- DATE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

**CLASSROOM TBD**

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**NON REQUIRED/ADDITIONAL READING**

The following texts are invaluable knowledge for any editor, aspiring or otherwise.

- [http://magazine.creativecow.net/article/style-emotion-vamping-on-the-vampire-diaries](http://magazine.creativecow.net/article/style-emotion-vamping-on-the-vampire-diaries) (An article I wrote about my experiences editing “The Vampire Diaries”)

**Murch, Walter: In the Blink of An Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing** 2nd Edition
Silman-James Press. AESTHETIC.

**Ondaatje, Michael. The Conversations: Walter Murch and the Art of Editing Film.** This is an incredible series of interviews with Murch. Far more accessible and interesting than *In The Blink of an Eye*, it goes over many of the real world concerns in shaping characters and filmic story telling. AESTHETIC.

**Oldham, Gabriella. First Cut: Conversations with Film Editors.** This is the book mentioned above. An incredible series of interviews with some of the top, most thoughtful, editors around. THIS IS A HIGHLY RECOMMENDED addition to our handout readings. AESTHETIC

**Koppelman, Charles. Behind the Seen: How Walter Murch Edited Cold Mountain Using**
**Apple’s Final Cut Pro and What This Means for Cinema.** This is a really great book which describes what it was *really* like in the editing room on COLD MOUNTAIN, from the prep work that Murch typically does before a film is shot, through the later previews. Rather than a book about Final Cut (though it does talk a lot about that) it is more a look at the real world of editing. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. AESTHETIC and PRACTICAL.

**Arijon, Daniel. Grammar of The Film Language.** A very detailed, thorough and incredibly tedious (but valuable) look at how to block a scene to create the best shots for editing. If you've ever tried to plan shots for a group of eight people around a dinner table, you'll appreciate this book. TECHNICAL

**Bayes, Steve The Avid Handbook.** This is an excellent reference book for the intermediate Avid editor, complete with tips and tricks on organizational skills, the Avid program, and the hardware. TECHNICAL

**Boorman, John and Donahue, Walter. PROJECTIONS.** This is a periodic book series that often includes interviews with directors. Some of their discussions are quite amazing in their description of storytelling. The excerpt from Walter Murch’s interview about THE ENGLISH PATIENT that I use in class originally appeared in this series. AESTHETIC.

**Cohen, Steve. Avid Agility (2ndEdition).** This is a great book that encompasses both basic and intermediate tips for the Avid Media Composer. Once you're good at the program, this book will give you a number of "Oh My God! THAT'S how to do that faster/easier" moments. TECHNICAL. Order directly from Amazon at [http://amzn.to/qX8x0y](http://amzn.to/qX8x0y)

**Crittenden, Roger. Fine Cuts: The Art of European Film Editing.** AESTHETIC

**Dancyger, Ken. The Technique of Film Editing.**

**Davis, Richard. Complete Guide To Film Scoring.** We will be discussing film editing and music during one of our classes. This is a good companion for those of you who want to dig deeper into the topic.

**Dmytryk, Edward. On Film Editing.** A great discussion of editing, from a personal point of view. Also valuable from the same author are *On Screen Writing, On Screen Directing,* and *On Screen Acting* and *On Film.* AESTHETIC.

**LoBrutto, Vincent. Selected Takes: Film Editors On Editing.** A wonderful series of interviews with some of the top editors of the past and present. AESTHETIC.

**Pepperman, Richard D. The Eye Is Quicker: Film Editing: Making a Good Film Better.** A profusely illustrated discussion of film editing, using frame grabs from well-known movies, to make general points about different styles of editing. AESTHETIC.

**Rabiger, Michael. Directing: Film Techniques and Aesthetics.** A very detailed study of the issues in directing. Its discussion of editing is very valuable for what it reveals about the storytelling mind, from the director’s point of view. AESTHETIC.
Reisz, Karel, and Millar, Gavin. *The Technique of Film Editing*. One of the seminal texts on editing. While outdated in terms of some stylistic choices, it remains one of the classic texts on editing. AESTHETIC

Rosenblum, Ralph. *When The Shooting Stops... The Cutting Begins*. Rosenblum, a veteran film editor who cut many of Woody Allen's early films, talks about his experiences both in and out of the editing room. More raconteurial than instructional, it does give a nice sense of the style of a colorful editor -- both in terms of editing and politics. AESTHETIC.

Rubin, Michael. *Nonlinear - A Field Guide to Digital Video and Film Editing*. A description of the history and equipment in non-linear digital editing. Pictures of the various editing systems with descriptions of each one fill up most of the back part of the book. TECHNICAL

Solomons, Tony. *The Avid Film Editing Room Handbook*. This book is an excellent introductory work to the Avid. Though it isn’t a how-to book in the classic sense, it does give the new Avid user a good sense of how to perform varying levels of tasks. TECHNICAL


Truffaut, Francis. *Hitchcock/Truffaut*. A series of interviews done by then-critic Truffaut of the master director, Alfred Hitchcock. It is here that his incredible theory on surprise vs. suspense is mentioned. AESTHETIC.

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**STUDENT SURVEY:**

Name ____________________________

Major ____________________________ Email ____________________________

The following is not graded. My intention is to understand everyone’s capabilities and interests coming into the semester.

* What kind of editing experience have you had at USC or elsewhere? Please be specific.

* What editing software are you familiar with?
* What is the number one reason you chose this course?

* Name three things you hope to learn in this course.

* List your five favorite films...and why (this doesn’t have to be about editing).

* List your five favorite TV shows...and why (this doesn’t have to be about editing).