COURSE DESCRIPTION

Picture Editors are story tellers. 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 and language of editing), and the “whys” (editing aesthetics, basic theory and concepts behind film editing.)

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. At the end of the semester, 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 cut your own stories using your own choices.
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_Qgodi1IafQ

The Glyph ss has a smaller 500GB version still available and can purchased for only $159. Check if it's 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.

SUGGESTED READING

“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)

“Media Composer 6: Part 1 - Editing Essentials”
by Mary Plummer; Avid Learning Series
This book comes with media that coincides with each chapter. If you are a hands-on learner, this is the way to go.

Foundations of Video: The Art of Editing with Norman Hollyn on www.lynda.com

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:
A 600 pts.
A- 550 pts.
B 500 pts.
B- 450 pts.
C 400 pts.
C- 350 pts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Editing Assignment # 1</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Editing Assignment # 2</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Editing Assignment # 3</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Editing Assignment # 4</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scene Analysis/oral class presentations</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
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**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 7:15)

I would like everyone to be an active participant every week. Filmmaking and editing requires teamwork, collaboration, and the sharing of opinions on your work on a daily basis, so 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 will copied to your hard drive and shared in class:

Your SA and lab assistants can 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 (i.e.: Law & Order: SVU sc.18)
  - Version (i.e.: “First Cut,” “Second Cut,”)
- 2 more seconds of black
- the editing assignment
- then finishing with 1 second of black at the 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.
WEWLY COURSE PLAN:

The following is a rough outline of how the semester will progress. All material below is subject to change. ***Editing assignments will be done in pairs.***

Week 1 (Jan. 13)

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

**Practice:**
- 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)

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

Week 2 (Jan. 20)

**Lecture:**
- Watch portion of “The Cutting Edge” – a brief introduction, overview and history of film editing.
- Discuss log lines and scene Analysis, beats, creating change.
- Discuss camera angles (coverage) setups and slating.
- The 180 degree rule

**Practice:**
- Setting up project (Law & Order or Roswell)
- Sub clipping and organizing your dailies to prepare for cutting.
- Start setting up your Keyboard

**Assignment:**
- Pick a scene from classroom ISIS (Roswell or SVU)
- Write out a scene analysis for your scene (ask SA to email you copy of the script.)
- Pick a movie you like, write a log line for it. Bring both to class to hand in.

**Editing in the LAB:**
- Find your scene for SVU or Roswell on classroom exercises partition.
- Organize it:
  - (subclip 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 your written scene analysis and log line.

Week 3 (Jan. 27)

**Lecture:**
- Approaching dailies: how to watch raw footage and understand the thought process of the editor, using the scene analysis
- Cutting a basic scene
- The Lean Forward moment in a scene – an example from my work
- The Lined Script

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

**Assignment:**
- Start cutting your scene (first assembly)
- **Be prepared to bring your cut, on your hard drive to class.**

**Week 4 (Feb. 3)**
- Finish watching The Cutting Edge

**Practice:**
- **Class will be held in AVID LAB**
- Review and watch editing assignments (first assembly)
- Discuss refining your cuts.
- More editing techniques: trim mode, scrolling, match cut... L-cuts, checker boarding.

**Assignment:** - Refine your cut (editor’s rough cut)

**Week 5 (Feb. 10)**

**Lecture:**
Comedy Editing – show clips and examples.
Guest speaker – comedy editor/producer/director

**Practice:**
- Watch editing assignments refined and give notes.

**Assignment:**
- Prepare AVID project from Gladiator or ER dailies (subclip dailies, organize project)
- Refine scenes from SVU or Roswell, add music and SFX

**Week 6 (Feb. 17)**

**Lecture:**
- Working with Action Cutting
- Watch and discuss examples of action cutting in feature films or TV shows
- Watch dailies of Gladiator and ER, analyze dailies for action cutting
- Discuss action cutting techniques, review AVID techniques learned up until now - dialogue editing, checkerboarding etc.

**Practice:**
- Watch final version of editing assignments

**Assignment:** - Work on your cut of *Gladiator* or *ER*

**Week 7 (Feb. 24)**

**Lecture:**
- Working with Sound and Music
- Creating a sound design
- Watch and discuss examples of sound FX and music in feature films or TV shows

**Practice:**
- Watch 1st versions of *Gladiator* or *ER*

**Assignment:**
- Continue working on your cut of *Gladiator* or *ER*

**Week 8 (March 3)**

**AVID LAB**
- Work on sound and music editing
Assignment:
- Oral presentation discussion for Midterm
- Continue working on your cut of Gladiator or ER

Week 9 (March 10)

Lecture:
- Working with Style/VFX – part 1
- Watch and discuss examples of feature film or TV shows stylistic vs. formal.

Practice:
- Watch editing assignments
- Using the AVID effects pallet. Discussion of VFX. Software.
- Stylistic techniques

Assignment:
- Continue working on your cuts of Gladiator or ER

MARCH 16 – 21 SPRING BREAK.

Week 9 (March 24)
- Working with Style/VFX – part 2
  - **Class will be held in AVID LAB**
  - How to use the EFX. pallet and other stylistic techniques

Assignment:
Add EFX and style to your Gladiator or ER scenes (or any other scene from the classroom exercise partition)

Week 10 (March 31)

Lecture:
- Documentary Film & Television

Practice:
- Watch editing assignments of VFX/Style

Assignment:
- Continue refining your cut of Gladiator or ER

Week 11 (April 7)

Lecture:
- Cutting genres – Multi-cam editing for sitcoms, Horror and Suspense - *Possible guest speaker

Practice:
- Watch editing assignments
- Working with multi-cam footage

Assignment:
- Continue refining your cut of Gladiator or ER
- Cut a promo or music video

Week 12 (April 14)

**Lecture:**
- Intercutting, Promos and Music Videos

**Practice:**
- Watch editing assignments

**Assignment:**
- Cut a Promo or Music video

Week 13 (April 21)
Lecture:
- Intercutting, Promos and Music Videos

Practice:
- Watch editing assignments

Assignment:
- Finish cutting your promo or music video

Week 14 (April 28)
- Last class
- 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.

Practice:
- Final viewing of all editing assignments.

Assignment:
- Study for Final.

Week 15 (May 5)
- Study Week

Week 16 (May 12)
- Final Exam

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
(an article written by Nancy Forner on her 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.

**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.

**LoButto, 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.
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.

* Are you familiar with any editing software? If so, please list which ones.

* Why did you choose to take 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).