USC School of Cinematic Arts

CTPR 450
Short Film Project and Script Development, Production and Post-Production Practice
Spring 2015, Section 18548

Prerequisite: CTPR 310 Intermediate Production
Corequisite: One of the following practicums:
CTPR 421 Practicum in Editing
CTPR 424 Practicum in Cinematography
CTPR 438 Practicum in Producing
CTPR 440 Practicum in Sound
CTPR 465 Practicum in Production Design

2 Units

- Open to Cinematic Arts Film and Television Production majors only –

Class Time: Tuesdays 10:00AM-12:50PM weekly

Location: SCI 106

Instructor:
Name: Professor Michael Peyser
Office: SCA 436
Office Hours: Tuesdays 4:50PM-6:00PM
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Student Assistant:
Name: TBD
Phone:
Email:

Course Description:
CTPR 450 is a lecture course for Cinematic Arts Film and Television Production majors.
The course will focus on creative development in preparation for both the Fall 2015 CTPR 480 and CTPR 484/486. Producing and writing faculty will provide instruction in ideation, project development, storytelling, screenwriting, and collaborative skills.

Through lectures and working on advanced SCA projects (CTPR 480 or CTPR 484/486), students in CTPR 450 will also be introduced to various assistant on-set production or post-production supporting roles in producing/assistant directing, cinematography, art direction, sound and editorial practice. Occasional weekend work on productions is required.

Students will express which discipline they prefer to train in, with the goal of achieving experience that will enable them to fill a key position on a future CTPR 480 or CTPR 484/486 project.

Class Overview:

Students will conceive and develop projects with instruction from Producing and Writing faculty. Students will initially present project ideas in summary short form. Students will then collaborate to create full drafts of scripts and project presentations. They will submit finished scripts and project presentations to the Fall 480 selection pool at the end of the 10th week of the semester.

A description of the selection process for scripts, directors, producers, and key crew will be determined and published in advance of the selection process. The final presentation pool for the Fall 2015 480 will generate up to six selected projects for production. Projects will be an array of dialogue narrative film, dialogue short form web or TV episodic, documentary, and alternative non dialogue-based cinema. Proposals for all these formats will be discussed and considered.

Students are not required to submit scripts of their own, but may develop with writers within the class, or any of the undergraduate SCA student body who has taken Writing and Production Division courses. (Please note: story and script collaborators will not necessarily be eligible to formally enroll in the next term’s 480. They would require the same matriculation of courses that are required to be eligible to be director, producer, or key crew.)

Students will read quality short scripts, watch quality short films, and discuss the audience and value of short film projects and platforms for presentation.

Students will learn both the roles of cinema production and the skills required for those roles through lectures and hands-on participation in the making of one short original dialogue-based narrative, documentary, alternative non dialogue-based, or web/TV production.

Students in CTPR 450 meet as a group once a week. They are also required to participate in the weekend shooting or editing days of their assigned 480/484/486 production, depending on which role they are filling on the production. Weekend work schedules for
assistants will be shorter than those of the key crewmembers they are assisting on advanced projects.

An informational meeting regarding CTPR 450 will be held for all CTPR 310 students in Week 13 of the proceeding semester. Once a student secures a position on a project, he or she will qualify for D Clearance for CTPR 450 for the following semester. Information regarding the selection process and deadlines will be available on the SCA Community Website: https://scacommunity.usc.edu/login/login.cfm?returnURL=%2Findex%2Ecfm%3FCFID%3D1421415%26CFTOKEN%3D69740099

**Class Goals:**

- To develop project ideas and scripts for the following semester’s CTPR 480.
- To provide intensive exposure to the development and making of a narrative, documentary, alternative, or web/television production in all its aspects.
- To familiarize students with the roles and skills necessary for professional cinema and television production and post-production.
- To teach students supporting roles in at least one production or post-production department involved in cinema and television production.
- To offer students the opportunity to learn and experience one or more of the interlocking esthetic and craft processes of building a unified narrative, documentary, alternative, or television production.
- To engage in the on-going dynamics of creative collaboration, specifically between the on-set activities of the production and the relationship with post-production departments.

**Schedule**

Throughout the course, the Producing and Writing faculty will meet collectively and in breakout sessions with students to nurture the development process.

Students will also attend some dailies screenings and editorial cuts of the 480/484/486 projects on which they are assisting. The 450 class will discuss the creative and collaborative skills essential to fulfilling crew roles.

Projects and scripts will be crafted and revised in multiple stages of development. Producers, directors, writers, and creative crew are encouraged to collaborate in the creation of quality projects for the selection pool.

**Course Requirements/Grading Criteria:**

It is required that students attend weekly class, develop projects and scripts, and fulfill required crew assignments.
## Final Grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Deadlines (including story and script development)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam/Project Evaluation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Satisfactory progress in this course will be based on each student’s effort, attitude and quality of work in fulfilling the course agenda of discussions, and on-set production & post-production skills.

Students’ attendance, commitment, participation, and ability to work with others will also figure significantly in their grades. The faculty will further note students’ ability to meet deadlines, act professionally, respect people and property, and collaborate.

Attendance is required during all classes and assigned shoot or edit days. You must inform your SA and the lead instructor of an absence BEFORE you miss a class or a shoot.

The only acceptable excuses for taking an incomplete in the course are personal illness or a family emergency. Students must inform their instructors and present verifiable evidence in order to take an incomplete before final grades are due. An incomplete may only be assigned after the Week 12 withdrawal deadline.

Every unexcused absence will reduce your grade by 1/2 grade point – i.e. from A to A-; two tardy arrivals are equivalent to one absence. The SA will take attendance at the beginning of class every week.

## Reading:

Find required reading below. Materials relating to production and post-production skills will be circulated by instructors. Additional materials for reading in the script and story development process will be provided online by the lead SA.

**Required Reading**


*Save the Cat! The Last Book on Screenwriting You’ll Ever Need*: Blake Snyder, Michael Wiese Productions, 2005

**Recommended Reading**

*Shooting To Kill*: Christine Vachon & David Edelstein, Quill paperback, 2002

*Let the Credits Roll: Interviews with Film Crew*: Barbara Baker, McFarland & Company 2003

*Masters of Light: Conversations with Contemporary Cinematographers*: Dennis Schaefer, Larry Salvato, University of California Press, 1984

In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing, Walter Murch, 2nd edition, 2001

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct
Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards, https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity http://equity.usc.edu/ or to the Department of Public Safety http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems
A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information http://emergency.usc.edu/ will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.