CTPR 556 – ADVANCED EDITING   Spring 2017
USC SCHOOL OF CINEMA - TELEVISION

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Class Meetings: Monday, 6pm – 10pm
Location: SCA 362

Office: SCA 428
Hours: Monday 10-12 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Welcome to this "bridge class" – the bridge between USC and the outside world. The class is designed for those of you who would like to develop deeper editing skills that will prepare you for a deeper understanding of, or a career in, editing. Because the prerequisites for this class are CTPR 535, CTPR 546 or CTPR 547 you will have already explored the basics of storytelling, primarily learning through the editing of a short film or numerous pre-shot scenes. Now, it is time to move into a deeper examination – both aesthetically and technically – of the various facets of editing and assistant editing *in a longer form* and see just what this world of editing is all about.

Through editing, as well as a more in-depth examination of the tools available to the modern film editor, we will learn just how integrally today's film editors are part of the total film production process. We will move beyond the shorter forms of editing that you have spent your time here at USC learning, and move into longer length thinking. You will learn how to prepare your films for distribution, both for your own reels and for those of you who wish to move into this as a career. We will almost definitely discuss how online distribution and the tech world is affecting the *editing* world today. You will hear speakers from alternative forms of media creation and distribution, so that you can open your mind up to the idea that not all of your work needs to be edited for a big screen or major network. Finally, we will work with a professional Career Consultant, to learn how to build a resumé and look for work in today's job market.

CLASS FORMAT:

The plan for this course is for all of us to work at editing a single low-budget independent feature, a film which was shot in 2012 and was released in the US in 2013. The film, directed by James Franco and edited by Curtiss Clayton, is CHILD OF GOD, based on a Cormac McCarthy novel. The filmmakers have graciously given us *all of the original footage* so that we completely re-edit our own version of the film and, in the process, learn how to see how editing something long form presents similar and different challenges than editing a scene or a short film.

We will be joined on many weeks by Franco, who will be able to give an entirely different sense of this complex story from both the director's and actor's perspective. I trust that this will give a great view of the way that I prefer to edit a film – from the character's perspective.

Because Franco is teaching with me in the class, we hope to have access to his filmmaking team to talk about how they made their own decisions. While they may have nothing to do with our choices, being able to talk with them about our common experiences will, I hope, enrich the class.

Each of you will be assigned one of up to twelve continuous sections of the film. You will then edit a scene or so each week, which you will assemble into a long segment of the film. Part way through the semester, we will assemble all of these segments into a complete film and begin to make copious changes in the overall movie. In fact, we will completely emulate the editorial process of most films and television shows.

Unlike most of your previous editing experiences at USC, you will be editing by yourself. This will put certain restrictions on the class – for one thing, we will not be able to screen every scene edited every week until we assemble them into the entire film. However, at this point in your career at USC (and it *is* a career), you should be able to give yourself your own re-editing notes, and we will be developing this ability in you. One of the skills that a film editor needs to have is the ability to look objectively at his or her own work.

The other complication that this class structure will impose is the added responsibility to make sure that our completed film doesn't feel like twelve different people edited it. It is important to learn that, even though editors need to bring their own artistry to a film, we are almost always editing in the service of someone else's vision of the story. To that end, we will determine, in advance, a style and editing plan for the film, which Franco and I will then guide as a director would. Every week I will try to post my notes for you on the review and approval site PixelFlow. I also will be posting items on a blog at http://ctpr556.wordpress.com (which you will need to register for -- I will give you details on that later).

Scheduling is also an art that good editors and assistants must have, and we will devote a portion of this class to the construction of good *post-production schedules*, both for ourselves and for films and television productions.

After a two week of discussing the film and reading the script (this will be complicated by the Monday holiday in the second week), each subsequent class will be devoted to two main tasks – the main one is that we will be looking at some of the scenes that we have edited during the preceding week using either the Avid Media Composer, or Adobe Premiere. In addition, for many weeks, I hope to have guest speakers who will raise our understanding of CHILD OF GOD team, or people from other parts of the business visit us as well – an assistant editor will discuss organization and job hunting, a composer will talk about how to talk music and work with it in your cuts, and a Visual Effects Supervisor will help guide us in integrating our editing work with VFX houses. With luck, we will also have a trailers editor/producer visit. It is this combination of editing and listening that will make us better editors and assistants.

As part of the progression of this class, after all of the scenes have been edited, we will do rudimentary sound editing work utilizing the tools built into Avid. Like the picture editing, this sound editing will be accomplished out of class time. We will be able to add music during the course of the editing process and will be finalized during the post-picture editing phase as well.

When all sections of the film are complete and mixed, we will assemble the entire film into a complete releasable project. We will also learn how to export the film to a form that can be color corrected in Resolve. Some of you may be taking the CTPR 427 Color Correction class. If so, you may want to consider doing color correction at the end of the project.

A final component of the class will be developing job skills. Over the course of the semester, each of you will be developing a resume that accurately reflects your job skills.   The tools to develop this resume will be provided by a professional Career Consultant who will come during the semester. We will also discuss job hunting and career planning skills in class.

Another factor in job hunting is being aware of the job market and the skills you need in a changing industry. As a result, we will be discussing, on an irregular basis, topics raised by the evolving technologies – such as DRM, new distribution methods, et al. You will occasionally be asked to listen to podcasts which talk about these topics. One week I will be down in Las Vegas at the NAB annual convention. I will report on that for you.

During all phases of the class James and I encourage questions and comments. We all need to be challenged. That includes us.

Unlike other classes, I'm not going to ask every one of you to **turn *OFF* your cel phones** in class. In fact, if you can get on Twitter and bob around for relevant sites on your phone or on a laptop, I'd like you to share them with the class. Social media is a viable future for you, and we should embrace it and figure out how to use it better. Often, we will have questions about something during class. I want to be able to use social media and the web to help answer them. Today's editing rooms don't exist as a hermetically sealed bubble. We are all connected now.

THE FILM

I want to make sure that you are all aware that CHILD OF GOD is a difficult film with a difficult protagonist. Here is how Wikipedia describes the original Cormac McCarthy novel:

> *Child of God* established McCarthy's interest in using extreme isolation, perversity, and violence to represent normal human experience. McCarthy ignores literary conventions – for example, he does not use quotation marks – and switches between several styles of writing such as matter-of-fact descriptions, almost poetic prose, and colloquial first-person narration (with the speaker remaining unidentified).

It is a novel that challenges all of our conceptions about what comfortable storytelling is about. Franco will discuss with us what he hoped to get out of the film and his conception of the character. However, you should know ahead of time that, as a result, aspects of the film may present triggers that should make us uncomfortable including racism, sexism, perversity and more.

I hope to discuss this at our second class, but you should read the script and see if you will be comfortable working with this material and this character. While, as editors, we will often take films whose contents present some problems for us, we are always able to (within our financial needs) able to say "no" to a project that is wrong for us. I want to make sure that you are all committed to what is sure to be an interesting, fruitful but difficult editorial journey.

CLASS CALENDAR

The following calendar is approximate, depending on the availability of guests and our weekly post-production meetings. We will revise this calendar every week, if necessary, as part of our weekly post-production meetings.

Week	Date	Topic	Editing
1	1/9	Set-up of Class. Lean Forward Moment and Rule of Threes concepts.	Read script. Fill out survey at http://bit.ly/2h2qC3H
	1/16	MARTIN LUTHER KING BIRTHDAY. Post closed. No class.	I will assign scenes so you can begin looking at dailies and editing, even before our Week 2 discussion.
2	1/23	James and editor guest. What did you learn about the script? Break down characters and flow.	Begin editing
3	1/30	Assistant Editor guest.	View first scenes.
4	2/6	Guest – Post Production Supervisor	View recuts and next scenes.
5	2/13	Guest - VFX Editor. James attends.	View recuts and next scenes.
	2/20	PRESIDENTS DAY	No class
6	2/27	Stephen Meade – Internet Entrepeneur discusses networking	View recuts and next scenes. Have everything cut by next class.
7	3/6	Screen Editors Cut (v199). James attends.	Recut for Director's Cut
	3/13	SPRING BREAK	No class. Post open on reduced hours.
8	3/20	Screen Directors Cut (v299). James attends.	Recut for 2nd Director's Cut
9	3/27	Screen Directors Cut 2 (v399)	Start webisodes and post to website. Recut for Producer's Cut
10	4/3	Screen Producers Cut (v499). James attends.	Recut for Studio Cut

11	4/10	Screen Studio Cut (v599).
		     James attends.
			Prepare for locking on
			     Sunday
			 Start trailers

12	4/17	Trailer Producer – guest Screen trailers	Edit trailers Sound work

13	4/24	Norman possibly out of
		     town
		     James attends??
		
		 Screen trailers	

14	5/1	Screen original cut of film. James attends.	Finish trailers.. Do mix and grading.
	5/7pm	All materials delivered	

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Beginning with the second week of class, you will be required to edit a new scene and/or re-edit previously edited scenes every week. You should have your cuts, properly prepared for screening, ready at the subsequent class where we will try and watch them. You will create Quicktimes of your scenes for the class discussion, though we will normally screen the material directly off of the Unity Isis. You will also be required to upload your cuts to a review and approval service that we will be using, called PixelFlow. At our weekly screenings, the class, James and I will give criticism so you can re-edit the scenes for a possible second screening the following week. My comments will be given verbally during the class. **Any new scenes that you edit should be added to any adjacent scenes (if any) so you can see the effect of one scene against the others**. It's the Rule of Threes made evident!!

Note that this will be, more or less, YOUR version of the film, not James' or mine. We will give notes to try and wrangle this into one film, rather than a series of disconnected short segments, but it will be up to all of you to determine what you want from the film. Note that we will determine much of that in our second meeting.

As a rule, once we get deeper into our cuts, we will rarely have the time for our guest speakers, to screen our edited scenes and give feedback. At times, I will have to take the scenes home with me and within several days, have the notes done and posted on the web site. This will enable everyone to see notes for

everyone, which is crucial in maintaining a consistent look to the film. Please label your timelines and your output DVDs or thumb drives with your name and the sequence name for me to view, as well as slating the cuts. We will discuss this more during the class.

Your SA will give you a run-through sometime in the second week. You should have all had Avid Labs as part of your pre-requisite classes but this run-through will be required for all of you before you can start editing. This will be especially necessary because we will be working with shared storage in some more high-end professional ways than you have in the past, in a multi-editor mode.

In addition to editing your individual sequence, you will be responsible for a few other tasks in this class:

1. Building a usable resumé for your work. This will be part of the work that you will do with the career consultant, but you will be responsible for the bulk of it.

2. You will also be responsible for one other task – either creating a trailer for the entire film, working as a music supervisor, color correcting a portion of the edited film, creating any VFX that will be needed, or being the sound designer/mixer. We will discuss each of these roles in more detail as we get deeper into the semester.

You will also be required to sign a Non Disclosure Agreement, in which you promise not to use this material outside of this class, not to take it off campus, or to use it on your reels.

You will be not be required to purchase any textbooks for this class, but I strongly recommend several books anyway: <u>Behind the Seen: How Walter Murch Edited Cold Mountain Using Apple's Final Cut Pro and What This Means for Cinema</u>. This rather verbosely titled book, written by Charles Koppelman, is actually, once you get past the hoo-hah of the Final Cut-ness of the title, an excellent description of how and editing room functions. Following the path of the editing process, from pre-production throughout most of the editing, we learn what previews are like, what workflow in an editing is like, and many more things. You can buy this at Amazon at http://amzn.to/uB8t9X.

A second book is my own: the new edition of <u>The Film Editing Room Handbook: How To Tame The Chaos of the Editing Room</u> (available from Amazon and for the Kindle). It is an overview of the entire filmmaking process from the point of view of the person who organizes the editing room—usually the assistant editor. We will talk about many of the tasks that the assistant must perform, and the text will be a good companion to those discussions. You can get it at Amazon at http://amzn.to/vdgMmr, where you can also get a Kindle version.

An iBook version, for iOS devices, is available through the iBook store or at http://bit.ly/tPkpiz.

I am recommending that you get subscriptions to two magazines designed for editors – the Cinemeditor (published by ACE, the honorary editor's organization) and The Editors Guild Magazine (published by the union of film, sound and music editors, as well as a number of other job categories. Both of these magazines will not only be a great resource for you for the interviews and technical articles, but they also start to be a resource for suppliers and contacts that can help you move into the Hollywood and New York film industry.

I am also recommending Gabriella Oldham's *First Cut: Conversations with Film Editors* is a great collection of interviews with a large number of editors.

And, just because I like to stretch out my recommendation list, I am also highly recommending your purchase of another book — Michael Ondaatje's interviews with editor Walter Murch – *The Conversations: Walter Murch and the Art of Editing film.* This is an incredible series of interviews with one of the top film and sound editors in the art form today. Ondaatje met Murch while on the set of THE ENGLISH PATIENT (which was based on Ondaatje's novel). The two bonded and began a series of wide-ranging conversations which included discussion about the intersection of writing and editing, the thought process of editing a scene, the intertwining of all of the components of filmmaking and much more.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We are incredibly fortunate to have this material and script donated to us by Franco and the producers of CHILD OF GOD. In exchange we have agreed to keep everything relating to this film in confidence. That means that you cannot post anything anywhere outside of this class. No script, no dailies, no cuts, etc. This also means that you cannot use your edits in this class on your reels. Please keep this pledge so that future Advanced Editing classes can continue to get footage.

GRADES:

The primary component of your grade will be your weekly editing assignments. This involves several factors. The first is your ability to complete these assignments every week, whether they are original edits or recuts. The second is your ability to verbally present a cogent case for every editorial choice you have made during the editing of your scenes. Your thoroughness, completeness and attention to detail any instructions will all contribute to your grade.

You will also be graded on your ability to work within the larger context of an entire film, rather than simply the scenes that you are editing. Attention to consistent theme and style, as well as the ability to interact well with all of your fellow editors is of large importance to me. You will, therefore, be judged on your ability to work constructively with others, to accept criticism and to refine your work on the basis of that criticism.

Part of my expectation of your work is that your Digital Cuts/Outputs will all be screenable in our facilities just as a professional editor would need to screen his or her own cuts. That means that you will have **checked your work before coming to class**, labeled the uploads and thumb drives properly, and provided a slate, bars and tone, and a countdown leader and tail leader for each sequence. Off-camera voices, sound drop outs, and unrendered or missing media will, after your first cut of each scene, affect your grade.

Since film editors are judged on their ability to complete their work in a timely manner, you will likewise be responsible for completing each stage of every project on time and in a professional manner. Late weekly class assignments and the final project (*especially* the final project) will be reflected in your grade.

In lieu of a final exam you will be responsible for completing (with all sound and music and special effects) your portion of CHILD OF GOD. This final project should reflect all of the analyses and critiques that we have been working on during the course of the entire semester.

You will also be responsible for creating a resumé for our Career Consultant..

Prompt attendance at **and participation in** all class meetings is also a factor in your grade. The participation aspect can't be stressed enough.

In short, then, your grade breakdown will be as follows:

40%	Weekly assignments
20%	Final cut of your section, including temp music and sound effects
20%	Additional Job -- Trailer/Sound Supervision/VFX Supervisor/Music Supervision, Grading, etc.
10%	Resumé creation and revision
10%	Attendance, participation in classes

If you are in danger of failing you will be notified in writing about mid-way through the class. We can then work together to come up with a plan to enable you to pass.

There will be NO incompletes granted except in the case of severe medical or serious emergency. Editors can't be sick; they lose their jobs if they are.

It is your responsibility to be aware of USC's add/drop and withdraw deadlines.

PRESENTATION OF EDITED MATERIAL:

The surest way to drive me absolutely up a tree is to bring material to class that wasn't prepared properly, so we get to watch you fiddle with out-of-sync picture, or bad audio. As I mentioned above **all material must be properly prepared for screening in class.** It will be your responsibility to make sure that your sections are complete, with sound, and in viewable condition. You should check your outputs before leaving the Avid editing station (***making sure that no material will be offline on our classroom computer***), or as Quicktime files on a computer. **You should also have one minute of bars and tone at the top of each output**, as well as a proper slate and countdown, as described on SCA Community. We will emulate professional procedure in the creation of this material.

You will also be instructed on the best way to organize your bins so we can screen off of the Isis as well.

We will frequently need to screen your cuts outside of class, so everything must be properly slated. This means your name, our class number (CTPR 556), and the date. You should also list the content of the file and the total running time, from the first frame of action to the last (not including the lengths of the leaders).

TRAINING

Lynda.com has some good tutorials on Avid Media Composer 8.0, as does Kevin P. McCaullife at "Let's Edit MC" (http://bit.ly/2iq1D9e). You should use them to refresh your memory of this. Students who have taken 535 in the last year will have some experience with it. For others, this will be your first experience. It will not be your last.

A refresher on the concept of the Lean Forward Moment and story analysis can be found on Lynda.com at http://bit.ly/14qwYyS. We will be going over a number of these concepts the first week, but this will be good for those of you who need a refresher.

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 quiz, 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 the SA or with me. There are also online guides for you on the USC website. One place to start is at http://bit.ly/f1HtlJ

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 Dana 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.

REQUIRED READING

The only required reading is the script that we will distribute. Please do not share this script with anyone. It is for this class only.

RECOMMENDED READING:

The following books are good sources for aesthetic and technical information about editing.

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 cutting. If you've ever tried to plan shots for a group of eight people around a dinner table, you'll appreciate the book. TECHNICAL

Colman, Lori and Friedberg, Diana. *Make the Cut: A Guide to Becoming a Successful Assistant Editor in Film and TV*. This is a great overview of what it takes to become a good assistant in high-end features and television. Along the way it accents what we'll talk about in this class, in terms of looking for work and preparing yourself for that job.

Dmytryk, Edward. *On Film Editing*. Also valuable from the same author are *On Screen Writing, On Screen Directing*, and *On Screen Acting* and *On Film*. AESTHETIC.

Hampe, Barry. *Making Documentary Films and Reality Videos*. I haven't actually read this book, but I have had it recommended to me. It covers the pre-production, shooting and editing of documentaries.

Hollyn, Norman. *The Lean Forward Moment*. This book addresses the very issues that we talk about in this class from the point of view of how to shape story points. It discusses it not just from the editing perspective, but from the point of view of most of the filmmaking crafts. 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.

Murch, Walter. *In The Blink of an Eye, A Perspective on Film Editing*. AESTHETIC

Ondaatje, Michael. *The Conversations: Walter Murch and the Art of Editing Film*. This is an incredible series of interviews with one of the top film and sound editors in the art form today. Described above. AESTHETIC.

Reisz, Karel, and Millar, Gavin. *The Technique of Film 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

RECOMMENDED ON THE WEB:

Avid Screencast. No longer creating new episodes, but a fantastic series of how-to vidcasts devoted to the Media Composer. Christian Forster really knows his stuff and has a great sense of humor as well.

Avid Technology Podcast – Interviews with filmmakers and software designers such as Jabez Olssen, editor of King Kong, and Phill Avanzatto, lead animator at PURE.

Creative Cow Boris Podcast A pretty good series of how-to videos using one of the biggest series of plug-in available today, from Boris. Professional copies of Media Composer ship with Boris. Educational versions do not.

Creative Cow Final Cut Pro Help. This is pretty much what it seems like – a very good series of tutorials on aspects of the entire Final Cut Suite, including Motion and Soundtrack Pro.

Creative Planet's Digital Production Buzz – Interviews authors, filmmakers and people involved in post production and production.

Creative Screenwriting Magazine. No longer publishing, but old episodes are still available online. USC alum Jeff Goldsmith interviews screenwriters of all levels of film. A great resource for the people who do the original writing of the script (since editors do the "final rewrite").

The Cutting Room. A series of interviews devoted exclusively to editing. Its accompanying website, "The Art of the Guillotine" is well worth exploring as well. This is rapidly becoming a go-to destination for editors.

Digital Production Buzz. A weekly podcast/radio show devoted to all things digital production. Three or four interviews on every program, as well as something called Buzz Shoutout, which enables you to pitch your services. Hosted by FCP guru/trainer Larry Jordan and LAFCPUG Poohbah Michael Horton.

FCP Tips. Short video podcast with tips and tricks on Final Cut Pro.

5 Things. A particularly techy/nerdy, but very valuable and very current podcast from Michael Kammes in which he takes a topic every episode and examines five questions/facts that you need to know about the topic.

Hollywood Reinvented. Editor Larry Jordan (not the same Larry Jordan as in the Digital Prodcution Buzz) has an increasingly broad site which deals with creating content and editing. He has video interviews with a number of interesting editors.

KCRW's The Business. A weekly half-hour program about the entertainment business. Usually some good discussion about issues involved in production or distribution.

MacBreak Studio. A series of short tips on how to use many of the tools that Apple makes for media creation – Final Cut, Motion, Aperture and much more. Note that this is not the same as MacBreak Weekly, which is a sometimes interesting, often bloated, talk show about all things Macintosh.

Photoshop User TV. Let's face it, editors need to know Photoshop. This show is, perhaps, very high end for some, but it gives you a great sense of what you can do in Photoshop and how far you can push it.

The Q&A with Jeff Goldsmith. The successor to the Creative Screenwriting podcase.

redCentre @ fxguide. Put together by the people at fxphd, this is a very interesting news and opinion show about the Red, specifically, and file based media, in general. Mike Seymour is well worth listening to.

Scriptnotes. Amazing podcast by Craig Maizin and USC alum John August, about screenwriting and "things of interest to screenwriters." Because writing and editing are so similar, there are usually topics of interest to editors inside every episode. Highly recommended.

That Post Show. A really interesting series of discussions, hosted by Kanen Flowers, about post production, in general. It often gets into really specific topics – such as the differences between the various NLEs – but also spends a lot of time talking about aesthetics. Highly recommended.

This Week In Media. This podcast, along with one of Leo LaPorte's podcasts "This Week In Tech", is a great series of discussions about topics that should be of interest to you – "Who Uses VHS?", distributing movies on iTunes, the Red Camera, and more. Hosted by Daisy Whitney, Alex Lindsay and Tim Street, this is well worth your while.

Understanding Adobe Photoshop. A series of great podcast tutorials by Richard Harrington on aspects of Photoshop.