

USC School of Cinematic Arts

John C Hench Animation & Digital Arts

CTAN-592 Virtual Cinematography

Units: 2

Semester: Fall 2017

Course Type: Lecture

Location: SCB205

Day and Time: Thursdays 7 - 9:50 p.m.

Instructor: Gil Zimmerman

Contact Info: gzimmerm@usc.edu

Teaching Assistant: Erik Dumas

Office Hours: By Appointment

Contact Info: dumasbro@usc.edu

IT Help: DL-Animation Support

Contact Info: animsupport@cinema.usc.edu

Course Description

Although as avid filmgoers we have experienced the craft of cinematography, very few of us have been exposed to the techniques used to create the visual stories cinematographers tell. This course will introduce students to these tools starting with an historic overview of the development of film language and continuing on through the building blocks of cinematic storytelling: shot types, path of action, continuity, character blocking, camera blocking, camera rigs, editing, optics, lighting and production design.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of course, students are expected to gain a working knowledge of film language and cinematic technique in both an intellectual sense but, more importantly, in a practical sense enabling them to apply these tools to their own film projects.

Suggested Reading

The Five C's of Cinematography by Joseph V. Mascelli

The Visual Story: Creating the Visual Structure of Film, TV and Digital Media by Bruce Block

In the Blink of an Eye by Walter Murch

Course Notes

Each lecture will be presented in Keynote, the slides of which will be posted on Blackboard.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Most assignments will take the form of either shot-by-shot analysis of scenes reviewed during class or short Maya-based staging studies.

Grading Breakdown

Grades will be based on class participation, mid-term exam and final project. Criteria for grading will include conceptual clarity, creativity, and the application of concepts discussed in class to assigned projects. Grades will be allocated as follows:

Class participation:	15%
Homework (6 @ 5% each):	30%
Midterm Exam:	20%
Final Project:	35%
Total:	100%

Assignment Submission Policy

Written assignments are to be turned-in during class hours unless previously agreed to by instructor. Movie clip-based assignments may be posted to an established folder online.

Additional Policies

Assignments are expected to be turned in on time unless previously agreed to by instructor. Students are expected to notify instructor via email if they think they may be unable to attend class.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

8/24	(Week 1)	Course overview, class introductions and Great Film openings <i>Featured films: Harold and Maude, The Big Lebowski, Raising Arizona, Mad Max</i>
8/31	(Week 2)	Production Pipeline, Workbook & Previsualization: Historical review and current state of industry <i>Featured films: Tarzan, Puss in Boots, How to Train Your Dragon</i>
9/7	(Week 3)	What is Cinematography? Maya Camera Technique <i>Featured films: Battleship Potemkin, Metropolis and Birth of a Nation</i>
9/14	(Week 4)	Cinematic Technique 1: Shot types <i>Featured films: Frankenstein, It Happened One Night, The Lady Vanishes, Ninotchka</i> <i>Homework: Shot Types and focal length</i>
9/21	(Week 5)	Cinematic Technique 2: 180 Degree Rule & Stationary Blocking <i>Featured films: Shadow of a Doubt, The Philadelphia Story, The Third Man</i> <i>Homework due: Shot Types and focal length</i>
9/28	(Week 6)	Cinematic Technique 3: Path of Action; Motivated Blocking & Continuity <i>Featured films: Rear Window, Some Like It Hot, Sunset Boulevard</i> <i>Homework: Blocking a Basic Scene</i>
10/5	(Week 7)	Cinematic Technique 4: Camera Movement & Shooting Strategy <i>Featured films: Diving Bell and Butterfly, True Grit</i>
10/12	(Week 8)	Midterm Exam
10/19	(Week 9)	Cinematic Technique 5: Visual Style & Production Design <i>Featured films: Seven, Brazil, Making of Monty Python and the Holy Grail</i>

- 10/26 (Week 10) Cinematic Technique 6: Lensing & Lighting**
Featured films: The Assassination of Jesse James, Touch of Evil, In Cold Blood
- 11/2 (Week 11) Cinematic Technique 7: Editing**
Featured films: Pulp Fiction, Diving Bell and Butterfly, American Beauty
- 11/9 (Week 12) Real World Cinematography: How to Apply Cinematic Technique**
Featured films: How to Train Your Dragon
- 11/16 (Week 13) The Final Project - Lab 1: Intro & Applying what you've learned, part 1**
- 11/23 (Week 14) Thanksgiving Break (Nov. 22-26)**
- 11/30 (Week 15) The Final Project - Lab 2: Applying what you've learned, part 2**
 Lab: Preliminary review of final project
- Dec. 2-5 Study Days (No class scheduled, but feel free to contact instructor with questions)**
- 12/8 Final Exam 7-9 p.m. Final Project Due**

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 Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. 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>.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu/>

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. <http://dsp.usc.edu>

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. <https://diversity.usc.edu/>

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, <http://emergency.usc.edu>

USC Department of Public Safety – 213-740-4321 (UPC) and 323-442-1000 (HSC) for 24-hour emergency assistance or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. <http://dps.usc.edu>

PLEASE NOTE:

FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX