

USC School of Cinematic Arts
CTPR 335 Motion Picture Editing, Section 18501
Class Meetings: Monday 7pm-10pm
Location: SCA 362 or Avid Labs

Instructor: Rick Shaine
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Office Hours by appointment

SA : Kazu Takeda
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Syllabus subject to change

Editing feels almost like sculpting or a form of continuing the writing process
-Sydney Pollack

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Motion Picture Editors are story tellers who use images rather than written words. They embellish these images with dialog, sound, visual effects, and music to tell their stories. The basic vocabulary of an editor is the dailies they receive, In this course we will learn how to analyze these raw dailies, how to make choices of what material to use, and how to arrange these selections into sequences which tell the story effectively, What story am I trying to tell? Why should I chose this reading of a line? Why juxtapose these two images? Why cut on this frame? Why use music for this part of a scene? When is it time to cut from this take to another angle? When is it appropriate to play an actors lines over someone else`s face and why? These are all decisions an editor must make and this class will offer the student some approaches and tools to make the choices needed to tell an effective story.

This class will be partly hands-on where you will learn the basics of how to use Avid Media Composer, the leading editing software in the motion picture industry. You will learn how to organize a project, utilize Avid functions and it`s many editing tools, and how to properly present your weekly assignments. The students will use Avid to complete editing exercises by using varied dailies provided from the SCA Library. By the end of the semester each student should be able to edit their own stories using their own editing choices.

We will also examine several examples of how different editors have used their editing skills to create effective scenes. This will enhance our understanding of how key movie and television scenes are constructed. It will also give reference points and examples when we face similar challenges as editors.

Editing is at the heart of all filmmaking. Writers, directors, and cinematographers all have to have an understanding of editing to be successful. In this class students will learn how to think like an editor, how to create editorially, and how to define their own point of view. Through feedback from the instructor and class the student will also learn how to assimilate outside input (a constant in editing) and refine their work.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

SCA approved and supported **Hard Drives**

NOTE: Check SCA Community website **BEFORE** purchasing a drive.

Here is how to navigate to get the proper hard drive:

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

Head Phones

You will have to purchase head phones with a 1/4" adapter for use in the labs.

RECOMMENDED READING

TECHNICAL:

Media Composer 6: Part 1 - Editing Essentials by Mary Plummer

Avid Learning Series

Provides Media that goes with each chapter, Good hands-on guide.

Published by Cengage Learning, at <http://www.courseptr.com/avid>

The Avid Handbook (3rd Edition) by Steve Beyes

Reference book for the intermediate Avid Editor.

The Avid Film Editing Room Handbook by Tony Solomons

Good introductory book for the Avid.

AESTHETIC:

The Lean Forward Moment: Create Compelling Stories for Film TV and the Web by Norman Hollyn

New Riders Press

A valuable perspective of story telling covering all aspects of the filmmaking process including editing.

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

In The Blink of An Eye by Walter Murch

Silman-James Press

An interesting personal view about the basis for editing decisions from a top film editor.

The Conversations: Michael Ondaatje, Walter Murch and the Art of Editing Film

A fascinating series of discussions about story telling and shaping performance in films.

First Cut: Conversations with Film Editors by Gabriella Oldham

University of CA. Press

In Depth interviews with a variety of working editors.

Selected Takes: Film Editors on Editing by Vincent LoBrutto

Another series of illuminating interviews.

The Technique of Film Editing by Karel Reisz and Gavin Millar

Focal Press

The standard traditional text explaining editing. It's comprehensive but a little dated.

When the Shooting Stops...The Cutting Begins by Ralph Rosenbloom and Robert Karen.
DeCapo Press

An interesting account of the editing process of a number of films Rosenbloom edited including “Annie Hall”, emphasizing the key role of the editor.

Dream Repairman; Adventures in Editing by Jim Clark
Another fascinating memoir by a great editor

Class Format

Each week will be a mixture of lecture, class discussions and hands-on training. Once editing assignments begin, a portion of each class will be devoted to viewing the assignments and feedback from the class and the Instructor.

The classes will be constructed to mirror the editing process. We will start with learning how to analyze a script, how to organize and analyze dailies in terms of the story to be told. Then move on to starting to edit, selecting takes, performances, camera angles. and learning what makes a good cut. We will investigate how to shape a performance, how to build an effective scene and tell the larger story. We will learn how to use other tools including sound, music and visual effects to enhance our story and shape its style.

The course will explore different genres including comedy, action, suspense, horror, and documentary to explain which editing techniques are useful in different kinds of films.

Class Assignments

Working in pairs, you will be given regular assignments from USC`s library of dailies from features and TV shows. At least half of most classes will be devoted to the screening and critiquing of scenes that you have edited the previous week. You will be asked to absorb notes and do revisions based on this feedback. Some weeks you will be assigned alternating roles as editor and director to simulate the relationship that exists in the professional world.

Bring your hard drive to class each week so you can show work in class. No quicktime files will be accepted.

At the beginning of the semester each student will be asked to select a scene from a feature film or TV show, which they would like to present to the rest of the class as an example of effective editing. We will determine a schedule in the first class for when each student will present.

Class Attendance and Protocol

Students will be expected to attend class regularly and be punctual. 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 and habitually late your grade will be affected. There will be no use of cell phones in class. If you need to use them please take a short break. Laptops may remain open only if they are used to take notes.

Grading

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

A 600 pts B- 450 pts

A- 550 pts C 400 pts

B 500 pts C- 350 pts

Editing Assignment #1 (Boston Legal) 50 points

Editing Assignment #2 (Roswell) 50 points

Editing Assignment #3 (Action Scene) 75 points

Editing Assignment #4 (Documentary Intro)	100 points
Final Editing Assignment (Crimson Tide)- Counts as Final Exam	200 points
Scene Analysis and oral class presentation	75 points
Class Participation	50 points

Weekly Course Plan

Class 1 (Aug. 21)

Introductory Lecture About Film Editing
 Show excerpts from "The Cutting Edge"
 Show some examples of significant editing
 Prepare for Avid Lab

Students introduce themselves
 Why interested in editing?
 Choose editing partners
 Select dates for presentation

Class 2 (Aug. 28)

Why and how to organize material
 How to analyze script
2nd half of class in Avid Lab (Room B120)
 Set up project (Boston Legal)
 Sub-clip and organize dailies for editing
 Copy current project to hard drives

Assignment; Receive script pages for Boston Legal and write Scene Analysis and be prepared to present it in class

Class 3 (TBD-make-up for Labor Day)

Meet in Lab (Room B120)
 How to analyze dailies/ director`s sensibility
 View sample lined script pages
 Discuss camera angles
 How to select takes
 Starting to edit/ What does 1st cut try to accomplish?

Learning basic Avid functions: Source/ Record, Timeline, Splicing, Extract, Trim
Assignment: Make 1st cut of "Boston Legal" for next class

Class 4 (Sept 11)

Shaping performance
 The lean forward moment (examples)
 Playing dialog over someone else (examples)
 Pre-lapping sound and dialog
 Pacing
 Editing beats

Students show their cuts and receive feedback
Assignment: Refine cuts of "Boston Legal" based on input from instructor and class

Class 5 (Sept 18)

Different editing styles for different genres
 In this class we will discuss Comedy. (examples)

Show 2nd cut of "Boston Legal" and get final notes. These do not have to be shown in class but can be shown individually to the the instructor.
Assignment: Complete a first cut of the 2nd Editing Assignment, either "Roswell" or "500 Days of Summer".

Class 6 (Sept 25)

Meet in Lab (Room B120)
 The importance of Sound
 How sound effects can contribute to the success of a scene.
 The impact of stylized sound (examples)

Watch 1st cut of Editing Assignment 2
 Learn sound functions of Avid
Assignment: Respond to notes from screening of cut and add sound design for next class

Class 7 (Oct. 2)

Music, the most important single element after a film is cut.
How music functions in a film both as a temporary and a final element.
We will look at examples to see how music is placed and what it adds to a scene which previously had none.

Class 8 (Oct 9)
Explore Action Editing
Show examples of great action sequences

Class 9 (Oct. 16)
Meet in Lab (Room B120)
Working with visual style:
Visual fx, color, speed alterations, creating moves, etc.
Watch a scene before and after vfx are added

Class 10 (Oct. 23)
Cutting Suspense and Horror
How to build tension and create jumps. (examples)

Class 11 (Oct 30)
Meet in Lab (Room B120) for 2nd half
Editing Documentaries
How to find the stories and select material (examples)

Class 12 (Nov.6)
Film openings - how they set the tone for the movie (examples)
Constructing a Montage, what is it? And how is it used? (examples)

Class 13 (Nov. 13)
Meet in Lab (Room B120)
Discuss how to approach Final Assignment

Class 14 (Nov 20)
Discuss the make-up and politics of the edit room

Class 15 (Nov. 27)
Students present chosen scenes from movies
PRESENTATION OF EDITING ASSIGNMENTS

Watch revised cuts of 2nd editing assignments
Assignment: Do a second cut of editing assignment responding to notes, refine sound and add music. Balance the sound.

Watch final cuts of 2nd editing assignment
Watch dailies of "Gladiator" and discuss the cutting possibilities.
Assignment: Do a first cut of an action scene and start to add music and sound fx.

Watch the first cuts of action scenes
Learn about the Avid Effects Pallet, how to change speeds, create movement in a shot, and other Avid effect functions. Learn about the capabilities of the Sapphire add-on.
Assignment: Do a second cut of the Action Sc. refining the music and sound and adding visual fx.

Watch the action scenes progress
Assignment: Do a final cut of the action scene finalizing all elements.

Presentation of final action scene cuts
Assignment: View documentary dailies from either "Sahara" or "Rain Forest". From these create an idea for a short (under 2 minute) introduction for a documentary with your own narration and music. These intros could be as diverse as documentaries, personal memoirs, or tone poems.

Present a one paragraph idea for your documentary introduction in class and hand them in.
Assignment: Complete your documentary intros

Screen documentary Intros
Screen dailies for final editing project
Assignment: Begin edit of Crimson Tide

Screen rough cuts of final projects
Assignment: Refine edits, add sound, music, vfx.

Screen final projects

All of your editing assignments will be 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 the necessary information to be presented in this format:

2 seconds of black

5 seconds of Title Card that contains the following information:

-Your Name

-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 CLASS

- 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 and Edit Room privileges. A Locker Area is available for food and drink storage.
- 2) You must sign in at the front desk with your student ID and use the station assigned. Any changes must be done through the front desk.
- 3) If you have a technical problem with your work station contact a tech through the Front Desk or Help Desk.
- 4) Closing time is strictly enforced. Techs will give warnings when to start saving.
- 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" adapters are required for each work station. You must supply your own headphones.
- 7) Users may be bumped if their work station has been vacant for more than 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 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" or confer with your SA or Instructor.

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 Instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. Their phone number is (213) 740-0776.

