



CTPR 478: Practicum in Directing (18571)

Units:

Fall 2017 | Tuesdays | 7:00-9:50 PM

Location: SCE Stage 1

Instructor: Tim Kirkman

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Course Description

Throughout the course of the semester, directors will complete a variety of assignments, which will help them develop working methods for directing actors on screen. Our goal will be to increase awareness, sharpen the senses of seeing and hearing, clarify what the student wants from the actor, explore methods of getting it, recognizing whether it has truly been achieved, and learning the ways to adapt. Emphasis will be on communication between the director and performer, and the textual analysis of dramatic scene work. Through analytical preparation coupled with class exercises and rehearsal, the director should learn to communicate his/her concept to the actor and realize that vision incorporating blocking and camera.

Directors will complete two scene projects for the class. Both scenes will be TWO PERSON scenes. For the midterm scene, the instructor will provide a list of scenes from existing screenplays, and each student will choose one to direct. The midterm scene will be rehearsed with the actors in class before being shot outside of class. The final scene can come from a screenplay of the director's choice. The final scene must be approved by the instructor. A list of scenes will also be provided as an alternative. Both scenes will be shot on location, edited, and then screened for the class.

PDF versions of the screenplays for the midterm will be provided by the instructor. I advise you print out one copy that you can write on. Actors may be sent a PDF version that they can read on their computers. On the front of any hard copy, write the following using a "Sharpie": FOR EDUCATIONAL USE ONLY.

It is expected that all midterm scenes will be rehearsed outside of class prior to in-class presentations/critiques and that actors will have memorized their lines prior to the in-class midterm scene rehearsal.

Learning Objectives

Our goal is to discover the spontaneity of the moment while telling the story. No matter how good the script, how experienced the cinematographer, or how inventive the production designer, unless the actor engages the audience, the film will rarely succeed. Directors will learn how to find the structure of a scene and break it down into its component parts. Directors will discover how to use their most valuable asset, the actors, to enable them to create the performance and support the intent of the scene through creative use of camera. All students will actively participate in acting exercises, thereby gaining a greater understanding of the acting process.

Course Notes

Grading Type, if other than the assumed letter grade (i.e., Credit No-Credit or Numeric and/or In Progress). Note any unique characteristics of the course of operating procedure. Is the course Web-Enhanced (i.e. Blackboard), Blended or Online? If copies of lecture slides and other class information will be posted on Blackboard, note that here. If multimedia or technology-enhanced learning strategies will be used, please describe them here.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

If applicable, provide details of accessing course if not in a traditional classroom setting.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Required readings and supplementary materials. Where to access/purchase.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

- **"Open Scene"** - handed out and explained in class. Will be rehearsed outside of class. Students will interpret/direct as well as perform in an open scene. Each student will hand in answers to the UTA HAGEN QUESTIONS (see attachment) for only the scene that he or she is directing.
- **Midterm Video Project:** Students will select a two-person scene from a provided list. Students must read the entire script of the selected scene. Students will break down the dramatic values of the scene in writing (type-written), cast it, meet/rehearse with actors outside of class, rehearse the scene in front of the class with props and costumes, shoot and edit the scene. DO NOT WATCH THE MOVIE THE SCENE IS FROM.
- **Final Video Project:** Students will choose a two-person scene from a produced screenplay approved by the instructor, break down the dramatic values of the scene in writing (typewritten), cast it, rehearse it, shoot and edit it. DO NOT WATCH THE MOVIE THE SCENE IS FROM.
- **Weekly Readings:** will be assigned, and students will complete a short quiz demonstrating their understanding of the main concepts. Students may also be assigned at random to present a brief summary of the reading to the class.
- **Scene Projects:** Students will be assigned short in-class video assignment(s) that will be screened in class.
- **Casting Scenes:** Students are advised to hold auditions and cast the best actors available. The purpose of this class is to improve your ability to work with actors, (performers who assumedly take their craft seriously) not to have a good time with your roommate or drinking buddy (unless, of course, they happen to be actors who take their craft seriously).
- **NOTES REGARDING VIDEO PROJECTS**
 1. Directors are responsible for payment of the insurance for usage of school equipment.
 2. All projects should be presented in class on DVD or flash drive.
 3. You can use your own equipment or the school can provide cameras. You must give them proper notice before you can get a camera (consult with our student assistant).
 4. The school may be able to provide rehearsal/audition space. Consult with Operations at SCA.
 5. Directors are responsible for finding locations and obtaining permission to shoot there.
 6. While the on-camera mic may work in a controlled interior environment, you must use a boom mic if recording outdoors or in a compromised interior location.
 7. The directors may edit their projects in the AVID lab after going through orientation. If they have access to outside sources (e.g., AVID, Final Cut Pro, etc.), they may use them. It is your responsibility to ensure that your final cut will transfer properly and will be viewable on our machines. Questions regarding equipment or the schedule should be addressed to the Student Assistant.
 8. All directors are required to make a DVD (or provide a digital file) dupes of their edited scenes for the actors.

Grading Breakdown

ACTIVE participation of students is essential. This entails thorough preparation of exercises and scenes. Grading will be based upon the extent & thoroughness of preparation, all written assignments, the presentations of scenes, and the growth evidenced during the semester.

25%	Class participation, attitude, commitment, discipline, attendance (class exercise work, journal, rehearsal work, critiques)
15%	Open Scene (including analysis)
10%	Quizzes
20%	Midterm Scene (including production book)
30%	Final Scene (including pitch & production book)
100%	

Grading Scale (Example)

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Assignment Rubrics

- **Due Dates:** Missing deadlines is generally regarded as unacceptable in the Industry, and so it will be in this class. If you know ahead of time that unavoidable circumstances will prevent "delivery," you must notify Instructor immediately, and the circumstances must be documented. Likewise, if an unavoidable calamity prevents timely "delivery," it must be a genuine emergency and again must be documented. Unexcused missed due dates will result in reduction of 2/3 of a grade for each full class period past the original due date.
- **Formatting.** All papers must be turned in as hard copies. Emails not accepted.
- **Attendance/Absence:** It is expected that you will attend class, and if you are unavoidably going to miss class, Instructor MUST be notified in advance in writing (e-mail). Justifications must be verifiable. You will be permitted TWO unexcused absences. Beyond that, you will receive a reduction of 1/3 OVERALL COURSE GRADE per unexcused absence. SA will keep track of attendance.
- **Late Arrival:** If you are later than 10 minutes, you will receive a HALF ABSENCE. The SA will keep track of late arrivals (and by how long). So, please be on time.

Safety

Your personal safety and that of your cast and crew is vitally important as you plan and shoot your projects. You are responsible to read the Safety Rules for Student Productions Handbook and abide by the policies that apply to CTPR 478 (refer to <http://scacommunity.usc.edu>). If you have any questions or concerns, please check with your directing faculty before shooting. Violation of any safety policies may result in disciplinary action such as confiscation of footage, lowering of your grade, failing the class, appearance before the Academic Discipline Committee and even expulsion from the University.

Hazardous Shooting Conditions

The following require a Hazardous Shooting Conditions Form (which can be found on the SCA Community website in the Student Production Resources Section): Stunts, special effects, animals, breaking of glass, fire (including candles and smoking), prop weapons, minors, nudity, fog machines, and water work. Working with children require hiring a welfare worker with no exceptions. Additionally, actions that might seem safe under normal circumstances (e.g., hurrying down stairs or crossing an uncontrolled street) may not be under production circumstances. Faculty Sign-Off sheets are required for all Hazardous shooting conditions prior to production. Never leave equipment unattended and take extra care when shooting at night. And never store equipment in a car, not even in the trunk.

FAIR USE GUIDELINES

In order for this class to use copyrighted material, we need to adhere to the following:

• Auditions

When casting and putting your casting notice up on any public forum, you will not be able to enter the title of the piece or the name of the writer if it is an already published screenplay. In place of the title of the screenplay your scene is from, you can call it anything you want that will draw attention--just boil your scene down to a couple of words that describe the essence of the scene (e.g. "The Confrontation," "Worlds Apart," "The Final Decision," "Make or Break"-- etc.) and then make the character and scene descriptions (use the real characters' first names) very specific and compelling. Be sure to mention that the scene will be filmed, that they will receive a copy, and that it will be workshopped in front of the class and professor. Note that this is the official policy of USC School of Cinematic Arts and is intended to protect our right to use the best of the professional screenplays for our scene work.

• Screening of Scenes

A. The version of the edited scene you screen and distribute to crew and actors must have the following line "burned in" (like a subtitle) at the bottom of the image from first frame to last: Classroom Exercise, Not Intended For Distribution. The text needs to be in a font and size that makes it readable from a reasonable viewing distance. Place it at the bottom of the frame so that it is as minimally distracting as possible.

B. Please note that I cannot screen any scene that does not adhere to these guidelines.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1 8/22	Fill out paperwork. Orientation. A, B, C screening groups will be assigned. Generate email list. <u>Discussion</u> : "Open Scene". Assign groups of three for Open Scene. Assign days for Class "Directors." Assign 1 Michael Shurtleff Guidepost for each student	<u>Meet</u> : All students meet and rehearse with your Open Scene group. <u>Written</u> : Type out answers for the UTA HAGEN QUESTIONS (see attachment) <u>Choose</u> : A scene from provided list which will be emailed. <u>Reading</u> : Weston: Intro + Chapters 1 and 8.	
Week 2 8/29	Students present First Half Open Scenes with costumes and props <u>Topic</u> : Auditioning/ Casting approaches.	Midterm scene auditions process under way. <u>Reading</u> : Weston: Ch. 2 and 3	
Week 3 9/5	Present Second Half Open Scenes with costumes and props; in-class auditioning Exercise	<u>Reading</u> : Weston: Ch. 4 and 7	
Week 4 9/12	<u>Topic</u> : Screenplay vs Scene Analysis; In-class breakdown of scene; Evolution of American Acting Training.	<u>Reading</u> : Weston: Ch. 9 (re-read ch. 1 before you meet with your actors.)	
Week 5 9/19	<u>Topic</u> : Acting Approaches/ Techniques Subtext, Rehearsal Process, Set Protocol	<u>Reading</u> : Weston: Ch. 10	
Week 6 9/26	<u>Presentation</u> : Group A presents REHEARSAL WITH ACTORS of scene with COSTUMES AND PROPS. <u>Written</u> : Turn in typewritten answers for scene breakdown		

Week 7 10/3	<u>Presentation:</u> Group B presents REHEARSAL WITH ACTORS of scene with COSTUMES AND PROPS. <u>Written:</u> Turn in typewritten answers for scene breakdown		
Week 8 10/10	<u>Presentation:</u> Group C presents REHEARSAL WITH ACTORS of scene with COSTUMES AND PROPS. <u>Written:</u> Turn in typewritten answers for scene breakdown	<u>Reading:</u> Weston: Ch. 5 and Ch. 6	
Week 9 10/17	<u>Presentation:</u> Group A SCREENS edited assigned scene in class. <u>Discussion:</u> plan for second half of semester		
Week 10 10/24	<u>Presentation:</u> Group B SCREENS edited assigned scene in class. <u>Discussion:</u> selection and use of location as first step to visual approach.	Final Scenes selected and approved.	
Week 11 10/31	<u>Presentation:</u> Group C SCREENS edited assigned scene in class. <u>Topic:</u> Staging the Actors		
Week 12 11/7	<u>Topic:</u> Working With the Camera		

Week 13 11/14	Possible Final Scene Rehearsals (TBA) <u>In-Class: Camera Exercise</u> (S.A. Reserve cameras)	Take-home quiz - will be e-mailed	
Week 14 11/21	<i>No class.</i> <i>Thanksgiving Holiday.</i>		
Week 15 12/5	Groups A and B SCREEN Final Scenes + Hand in final paperwork		
FINAL 12/12	Group C SCREENS final scenes + Hand in final paperwork	PLEASE MAKE DUPES FOR ACTORS AND ENCLOSE LETTER (see attachment)	Date: For the date and time of the final for this class, consult the USC <i>Schedule of Classes</i> at www.usc.edu/soc .

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>