

CTPR 508, PRODUCTION II, ORANGE-18884

MASTER SYLLABUS

Units: 6

Fall 2020 | Monday/Wednesday | 8:00-10:50am & 2:00-5:50pm

Location: All classes, meetings and production online.

FACULTY ADVISORS

Producing (Lead): Scott Kroopf
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Directing: Bayo Akinfemi
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Cinematography: Kenneth Zunder
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Editing: Reine-Claire
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Sound: Simon Coke
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STUDENT ADVISOR

Prod/Dir (Lead): Emily Meyers
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Cinematography: Lilith Mo
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Editing: Amber Jones
Contact Info: amberjon@usc.edu | 972-333-3812

Sound: Colin (Hang) Ren
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Course Coordinator: Pablo Frasconi
Contact info: pfrasconi@cinema.usc.edu | 213-740-7244

ZOOM GUIDELINES: You must turn video on unless you have made a previous arrangement with your instructor. Participation is essential. Please mute yourself unless you have a question or comment. Only post chat messages relevant to the lessons. While it's important to stay hydrated, please refrain from eating during zoom sessions. Try to find a quiet space. Consider your background and avoid sitting in front of a window which may either be too bright and distracting or properly exposed and you'll be a silhouette. We want to create a more direct sense of engagement with each student and among students.

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COURSE OVERVIEW

Production II (CTPR 508) is a course in beginning film production skills while working in a three-person crew --or “trio.” The course will provide experiences in developing skills in the six disciplines: producing, directing, cinematography, production design, editing, and sound -- including sound recording, sound editing, and sound design. Above all else, 508 is a course in communication and collaboration. All instruction this semester will be ONLINE via ZOOM.

Students will work in trios to make three 6-minute HD projects as they continue to develop skills in visual and aural storytelling. The focus of the class is to communicate ideas, story-beats, feelings, moods and emotions through the design of visual and aural elements. All approaches to cinema may be pursued --in addition to narrative fiction-- including non-fiction, imagistic, and experimental.

Fiction film scripts must be 5 pages maximum, with no more than two pages (40% cumulatively) of dialogue. Non-fiction films must be prepared with a treatment, shot list, and interview questions (if relevant to film’s approach). Observational non-fiction films must be prepared with a statement of intent, locations, and potential on-camera subjects. Experimental and imagistic films must have statements of intent and storyboards.

Trios are formed randomly by the department and are assigned at the end of the previous CTPR507 semester. Students will work in these specific roles on each project:

1. Director, Sound Designer, Sound Editor
2. Producer, Production Sound Recordist, Picture Editor
3. Cinematographer, Production Designer

Students will work in all three of the above roles during the semester, rotating project-to-project.

Fiction Projects Note: It is not necessary to write an original script for 508, you may adapt (or have someone else adapt) a pre-existing work, as long as you obtain the rights. However, it is required that you function in the all of roles listed in the previous paragraph. Again, students or other individuals outside of your trio may not be engaged to function in any of those roles, except as noted in the “Safe Bubble” protocols.

All production this semester will use the USC SCA “Safe Bubble” protocols described at the end of this document.

CTPR 508 will help you develop these skill-sets:

Producing: Team leadership and collaboration; resource allocation and management; development, including script breakdowns, call sheets, production scheduling, casting and

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locations; guiding the production team through all phases of production; working within the budget; creative problem solving.

Directing: Story interpretation and adaptation: developing a comprehensive aesthetic approach to the goal, central idea, and theme of the project; including: story-beats, character arc, directing dialogue and behavior that reveals character; shot lists and shot breakdowns; casting, rehearsals, and working with actors in a fiction piece.

Cinematography: a series of interior and exterior lighting workshops on ZOOM. Students will work in crew rotation, learning the skills of each position, while they work in teams. Students will be exposed to several different scenarios and techniques to help them tell their stories visually. This discipline is meant to hone the students' skill with lighting, color temperature, composition, lens choice etc. This component will ultimately focus on visual storytelling. The assigned Cinematographer will DP each production, but camera operation will be performed by the actor or an individual in the actor's "Safe Bubble."

Editing: Working directly with scenes from the students' films, this component will focus on scene and story structure: how are story-beats revealed? How does the audience connect with the story and characters? How are the elements of "surprise" and "reveal" engaged? We will focus on matching visual action, visual fluidity, pacing, transitions, montage, time manipulation and time ellipses; fulfilling the producer's and director's vision; collaboration among the filmmaking team will be foremost.

Sound: Creative use of sound in the Sound Design; Production Sound recording, booming, mixing, and miking techniques; Sound Editing principles and practices for Dialogue, FX, Foley; Programming Foley and limited ADR, if necessary; working with a composer to develop an effective soundtrack; directing the mix; and all-around collaboration with the filmmaking team.

Production Design: Collaborating with the Director and Producer, the Cinematographer will also act as the Production Designer. He or she will be responsible for the overall visual concept of the film including sets, locations, graphics, props, lighting, costumes, etc. Crew from outside the trio may work in the art dept in accord with "Safe Bubble" protocols.

COLLABORATION

At the core of the 508 experience is collaboration. A functional three-person team involves open communication, shared responsibility and mutual trust. You will be expected to work as an equal with your partners, resolve disagreements in a constructive manner, and make sure that all three of you have a full opportunity to take responsibility in turn for all the roles in this hands-on filmmaking experience. If you feel this is not happening in your trio, talk to your partners. If this is not successful, contact the producing instructor. At no time can you usurp your trio-mates responsibilities. Use these moments to develop the collaboration and communication skills that will help you in your career for the rest of your life. It's not always easy, but it is what you must do to thrive in this course and in a career creating media.

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It's assumed that students have no more than the minimal 507-level experience, and the course is designed for experientially *learning by doing*, as well as through instruction. Trios are required to shoot over two weekends even if they could manage with one - there should be a learning curve from week to week as a result of seeing dailies and getting feedback. The need to learn on the job is one of the main reasons everyone is urged in 507 and again in 508 to choose and design limited-scale, focused, yet creatively challenging projects that can succeed, both as learning experiences and as cinema, without requiring advanced technical proficiency.

Trios should plan their three productions together before the semester begins. All trios should think of their three films as “our films,” as opposed to each film as “my film.” No one should ever make a trio partner feel that they are letting down the trio because they are learning on the job; that's what they're supposed to be doing.

Each trio will select a name which can be used for class identification purposes. This name cannot be used for presentation credits on projects.

Decades of students have formed trios in this class, made great films, and gone on to flourishing careers. The success of each trio depends on all three of you working together in creative collaboration. Should you find yourself unable to work collaboratively with your trio-mates, all three of you risk failing, with a real possibility of one or all of you being asked to leave the class. Because a production period for each project is only 5 weeks, it is entirely possible to fail this course in just the first few weeks of the semester during the very first project. Once an individual or trio gets into this kind of trouble it becomes impossible to recover from the disruptive impact on the trio and other class members and earning a failing grade for the course is entirely possible during any week of the three 5-week productions. The result is that any student receiving that grade will not be allowed to continue in the MFA Program at the School of Cinematic Arts. The possibility of this kind of circumstance arising is very low. Just keep in mind that one cardinal rule: Collaboration.

JOURNALS

Each Monday by 9AM you will e-mail the producing and directing instructors a copy of your journal for the previous week. A lot of your most important learning will happen experientially outside of the classroom. Journals are a way to be more conscious of all aspects of the learning process, more observant and more self-aware. They should not be dry, factual reports but rather a chance to reflect, analyze, vent, and track the creative development of your work. They become a record of your creative ideas (one that can be valuable to refer back to) and what you have accomplished (it's easy to forget, once a film is finished, all the work that went into it, and all the problems — artistic, logistical and emotional — that were confronted and overcome.

The journals are private, seen only by the producing and directing instructors (this restriction doesn't apply if there are safety or legal implications). You can discuss anything. The instructors will only respond to something in a journal if you add a note addressing the

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instructors and asking for a response (e.g., “please help me with this problem”). Occasionally, if several students are encountering the same problem or concern, the instructor might address the generic issue in class so long as it can be done in a way that is entirely anonymous. Students may address additional journals and questions to other faculty if they are specifically commenting on (or need feedback) about specific disciplines: directing, cinematography, sound & editing.

PROJECT, ETHICAL AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

1. You have complete creative freedom in this class. There are only four simple, but inviolable, requirements:

- 1) Make sure everyone is safe and treated ethically.
- 2) Do your own assigned work.
- 3) Stay within the guidelines and equipment used.
- 4) Cut your projects to time.

2. We recommend that each project shoot no more than 125 minutes total. (23:1)

3. Shooting must take place on the two shooting weekends, a maximum of two days per weekend. Any non-weekend shooting must be justified by compelling reasons (e.g., location or actor availability), be approved by the producing instructor in writing in advance and must not interfere with the classes of anyone on the set. However, minimal pickup shots - e.g., inserts - when they can be done with little investment of time and effort, there's room left on a card, funds in the budget, there's a clear story value, and they will not impose an undue burden on the editor, can be done with prior written approval from producing faculty. Pickups must be performed by the trio. **[Note:** Pickups are distinct from re-shoots.]

4. All cinematography related equipment used in CTPR 508 Virtual Productions must be discussed and approved by lead and cinematography instructors. Download and complete the “Production I & II Equipment Planning Form” on the SCA Community website in the Production Documents Folder in the new section *Students Productions* in the subsection *Policies: Cinematography & Equipment*.

5. Editing should be done on the Editor's laptop at home. Editors must backup each project on their own drive and in the cloud (Google Drive or ONEDRIVE).

<https://itservices.usc.edu/office365/onedrive/>

6. It is an Academic Violation for directors to edit the films they directed.

7. The limit on final running time is invariable and there are no exceptions (see General Guidelines #1 below).

All students are expected to understand and abide by the USC School of Cinematic Arts guidelines. All students are equally responsible at all times for production safety.

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GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. **Maximum length** is strictly set at 5:30 minutes plus 30 seconds of credits which may be super-imposed over a single shot with one audio track for credits.
2. **The emphasis** should be placed on visual and aural expression.
3. **Deadlines:** Given the short semester, the deadlines set out in the class schedule are immutable except under extreme circumstances. Dates for, principal weekends, screenings, picture lock, mixing are firm since there is simply no possibility to play catch-up given the tightness of the schedule.
4. **Loss & Damage:** During the first full crew meeting each crew will determine how they will handle any loss and damage that might occur during the shoot. Each crew will decide if the individual responsible for the loss or damage is financially liable or if it will be split between crew members.
5. **Sunday shoots** must wrap by 10pm if there is an 8am class on Monday.
6. **Crews must be given 10-hour turn around** between shoots. SAG requires that actors have a 12-hour turnaround.
7. **All 508's must use original music** or music from the USC cinema music library. Any deviation will only be considered by petition.
8. **All cast members** must be available for scheduled shooting days during production. It is also advisable to check additional availability in the event that weather or other circumstances forces a change in the production schedule.
9. **No proprietary credits** are allowed (i.e.: A film by) on films. All works must display:
© 2021 University of Southern California.
11. **The use of minors** is strongly discouraged, due to both the cost of required on-set studio teachers and the limited shoot times minors can work. Minors can be included in no more than 50% of scenes (by page count). Student Producers must file child work papers with Office of Physical Production in compliance with California State law.
12. **Use of special effect** prosthetics and extensive special effects makeup is strongly discouraged due to impact on the budget and limited amount of shooting time.
13. **Green Screen** (or any other color) may be used with permission.

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14. Adobe After Effects, Photoshop, other visual effects work and front/rear screen projection are unsupported. Trio producers must seek approval of these processes with their faculty, but these processes are not taught or supported in 508.

- Due to scheduling constraints, visual effects are discouraged by the faculty
- A VFX shotlist and schedule must be approved by producing and editing faculty prior to shooting.
- VFX must be created by a trio member other than the editor, or, with permission, by an outside entity.
- No shot substitutions after picture lock all work must be done according to editorial technical specifications.

15. **Dailies:** After syncing “Circled Takes,” the director and editor will select 10-12 minutes of dailies; the editor will create an AVID timeline for in-class dailies screenings.

16. **Campus:** You may not shoot on campus. See “Safe Bubble” document for location guidelines.

17. **Shooting in a moving vehicle:** Simple POV shots from inside a closed automobile with a smartphone may only be used in CTPR 508 this semester with faculty approval. No other equipment may be used in a shoot involving a moving motor vehicle. The driver must be a member of the Cinematographer’s bubble.

18. **Minors** may only be used in 508 films if they are in the student or actor’s “Safe Bubble” domicile.

19. **Violations of course guidelines**, the Student Code of Conduct, or University Academic Integrity, may result in one or more of the following: faculty lowering final grade; referral to the SCA Academic Violations Committee; referral to USC Student Judicial Affairs and Community Conduct.

<https://sjacs.usc.edu/>

ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING

All class sessions will be Zoom recorded and made available for asynchronous viewing until end of the grading period in early December. Students enrolled in this course from outside the U.S. Pacific Time Zone will still be expected to participate in real time assuming that the official class time falls between 7am and 10pm in their time zones. Wherever possible faculty will be understanding and make accommodations to ease the inconvenience of asynchronous learning.

Students from outside the U.S. Pacific Time Zone for whom the class falls between the hours of 10pm and 7am may still be required to complete certain components of the course synchronously. These components will be announced at the beginning of the semester and students with concerns about meeting these requirements should discuss them with their faculty at that time.

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REQUIRED TEXT:

Hoser, Tania (2018). *Introduction to Cinematography: Learning through Practice*, Routledge.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Chubbock, Ivana. (2005) *The Power of the Actor*, Gotham.

Holman, Tomlinson. (2001) *Sound for Film and Television*, Second Edition (Book & CD-ROM), Focal Press

Kagan, Jeremy. *Keys to Directing*, www.keystodirecting.com

Mercado, Gustavo. (2010) *The Filmmaker's Eye: Learning (and Breaking) the Rules of Cinematic Composition*, Focal Press.

Moss, Larry. (2005) *The Intent to Live: Achieving Your True Potential as an Actor*, Bantam.

Weston, Judith. (1999) *Directing Actors: Creating Memorable Performances for Film and Television*, Michael Wiese Productions.

Vachon, Christine & Edelstein, David. (2002) *Shooting to Kill*, Quill paperback.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

Students are graded in their overall growth and collaboration in these five disciplines:

Producing: 20%

Directing: 20%

Cinematography: 20%

Editing: 20%

Sound: 20%

Each discipline's 20% includes 5% *specifically for collaboration*.

In this way, with input from all 5 faculty, collaboration counts for 25% of your total 508 grade.

Please note: If you exhibit poor collaboration in all disciplines and receives "0" for that 5% portion from each of 5 faculty, it will effectively lower your grade by 25%.

Timely attendance is mandatory and failure to attend all class sections from beginning to end may affect grades. Any absences must be pre-arranged through the student assistant for instructor's approval. Students must notify their partners immediately by phone or text (and faculty within 24 hours) of any delays—including those caused by medical reasons. Doctor's notes must be provided to Producing faculty by the next class meeting.

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PRODUCTION DIVISION ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Faculty may lower student's grade by one notch (A to A-) for one absence. Two absences will result in a student's grade being lowered by one full letter (i.e.- A becomes B). A third absence will result in a student's grade being lowered by one, additional full letter (i.e.- B becomes C). A student's grade will be lowered by one full letter for each additional absence. Two late class arrivals equate to one full absence.

If a student misses class due to an emergency, the student must contact the professor prior to class or contact the Production Office at 213-740-3317.

Students will have mid-term conferences with informal grades and evaluations; students in danger of failing will be notified at that time.

DORNSIFE/THE WRITING CENTER

Students whose primary language is not English should check with The Writing Center at Dornsife which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. <https://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/for-non-native-speakers/>

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 Standard" 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, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Safety:

All students are expected to abide by USC School of Cinematic Arts Safety Guidelines. Violations of any of the safety guidelines may result in disciplinary action ranging from confiscation of footage to expulsion from the University.

Stressful Times:

These are stressful times in our country, and Graduate School in and of itself is stressful. I encourage you to take care of yourself and your fellow students. USC provides opportunities for Mindful Meditation <http://mindful.usc.edu> and Mental health counseling is available at the Engemann Student Health Center, 1031 W. 34th Street, 213-740-9355.

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Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

Student Health Leave Coordinator – 213-821-4710

Located in the USC Support and Advocacy office, the Health Leave Coordinator processes requests for health leaves of absence and advocates for students taking such leaves when needed.

<https://policy.usc.edu/student-health-leave-absence/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

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Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support & Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

ombuds.usc.edu

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

SPECIAL INFO:

USC COVID-19 Resource Center: <https://sites.usc.edu/coronavirus/>

Student Emergency Info and USC Health's 24/7 line: 213-740-9355

USC COVID-19 24-hour hotline: 213-740-6291

Student Affairs Basic Needs Office:

basicneeds@usc.edu

<https://coronavirus.usc.edu/support-funds-faqs>

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VIRTUAL PRODUCTION AND SAFE BUBBLE DEFINED

Student film production continues during this pandemic, including quarantine or lockdown conditions. Because of the current situation in Los Angeles County, filmmaking in Fall 2020 will be done with Virtual Production. This will provide a safe environment for the students and cast. It will also be in compliance with SAG's regulations working with their members. Students will receive instruction in the crafts and artistry of traditional filmmaking as well as new virtual production while collaborating to make their films.

Filming plans during the time of coronavirus are subject to change.

Virtual Production:

- Pre-production will be done completely online.
- Production is filmed remotely with students fulfilling their roles from their homes. Each student will work on computers from their separate homes. The communication between the students and the performers is through Zoom, Facetime or another remote service. Actors** in their own homes will perform and assist in lighting and recording sound. Performers will capture the performance with smartphones or approved personal or rental cameras as directed by the students. If the director chooses not to use professional actors, they may cast themselves and/or their own housemates.
- Additional photography, such as establishing shots and B-roll, may be shot in the students' own houses or approved safe locations. Projects may also include stock footage, still photographs, self-generated VFX and animation.
- Post-production will be done completely online: picture editing on Avid, sound editing on ProTools, remote color grading on Avid, and sound mix.
- Workflow will be modified to support different cameras available to students & actors.
- As with any SCA production class, students will follow current safety and health guidelines for LA County, USC and SCA.

Bubble Definitions:

Student **Safe Bubbles** are zones within which safe contact normally occurs for each participant. These are your housemates (people with whom you live and interact without a mask or physical distancing on a daily basis). Each student has their own **Safe Bubble**. They must not meet in person with other students.

- Each actor in a film is also in their own **Safe Bubble**. Students may not interact in-person with their actors. Unless actors live with one another, they will not have any in-person interaction with each other.

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- Note: When you cast an actor, you are also casting a location (their house, yard, apartment, stairway, etc.) available to that actor for production as well as others in the actor’s bubble – their roommate, housemate, spouse, etc.
- Students will sign a **Bubble Lock Agreement** signifying who is in their Bubble at the beginning of the semester. Actors will sign a Bubble Lock Agreement certifying that everyone in their Bubble has been in it at least 14 days prior to the start of production; thereafter actors will not be able to add anyone to their Bubble.
- Students will cast, rehearse, block and shoot remotely as defined above.
- Actors may use their own faculty-approved equipment. Students may furnish actors with production gear purchased or rented (from SAG approved houses). Students may use your own faculty-approved gear when filming, and/or may send actors their gear directly. All equipment sent must be sanitized and transferred back to students or sent to another actor for additional filming. Equipment transfer will follow SCA guidelines.
- Physical location work must be approved by your producing faculty on a case-by-case basis and comply with COVID Precautions (i.e. masks & physical distancing) and conform with all LA County Dept. of Public Health Guidelines & SCA Safety Rules.

**“Actor” also refers to “Documentary Subjects.”

COVID SAFETY COMPLIANCE UNDERSTANDING AND AGREEMENT

Due to concerns regarding the spread of COVID-19 in California and around the world, USC and the School of Cinematic Arts (SCA) have taken a strong stance regarding the need for safe and mindful behaviors among all members of the SCA community. Medical authorities agree that even the young and healthy are capable, if infected, of becoming ill, or of being non-symptomatic, unconscious vectors of the disease’s spread.

The health and wellbeing of all community members has to be our paramount concern as we return to learning and collaborating together. We understand that attentiveness to the concerns of all SCA community members – students, staff and faculty, including those with underlying health conditions—is simply an extension of the key principle of creative collaboration that has guided our school for decades. We’re all in this pandemic together and need to behave accordingly.

All of SCA’s production work, whether “Virtual” or “in-person, will be governed by rules laid out in each course syllabus. Compliance with these regulations will be monitored by faculty in conjunction with SCA designated COVID Monitors. The rules follow the guidelines in SCA-COVID Production Protocols, which follows SAG/DGA and other industry protocols, and are being interpreted by a SAG-certified SCA COVID Advisor.

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Students indicate their agreement to abide by these regulations by enrolling in the production program fall semester 2020.