

CTPR 335 Editing Syllabus Spring 2011

USC School of Cinema/ Television

Instructor: Tina Hirsch A.C.E.,
email: thirsch@cinema.usc.edu
SA: Caitlin Starowicz phone: (310) 849-9266, email:
starowic@usc.edu

Class Meetings: Monday 7:00-10:00 PM,
Location: SCA 259

Course Description

This course will use lecture and discussion to examine the role of the editor in the filmmaking process. It will afford hands-on experience with Avid Media Composer as well as practice executing someone else's changes. It will also provide an introduction to the theory, technique, art and craft of editing.

Students will learn the basic tasks and vocabulary of the editing room. Editing exercises will focus on story-telling, visual and aural literacy as well as the dramatic build of a scene, the psychology of the characters, emotional beats, and the effect of sound and music, rhythm and pacing.

The object of the class is to provide the student with the organizational, analytical and practical editing tools to prepare them to undertake more advanced editing courses at USC. Plus an idea of what to expect in the professional world.

Class Format

Class work will consist of:

1) A written and oral film analysis by students of a three to five minute film clip of their own choosing. One or more of the scene analyses will be presented in class each week. The object of the analysis is to discover the editorial choices that make the scene work. Each student will be expected to bring a tape or DVD of the scene as well as his or her written report. The report should include the names of the director/s and editor/s of the film.

2) Conceptual editing projects (an online editing project, sound and image exercises, etc.) in order to discover the effect of juxtaposition of images and how these images are altered with the addition of sound.

3) Editing assignments, using professional dailies, on Avid Media Composer, which will be done during non-class hours and presented for analysis during class. Students will analyze each other's projects.

4) Some actual examples of professional editorial challenges and solutions via film clips during class. (depending on class size/time)

5) All students must complete the lab tutorial before the second meeting of class (1/24/11).

Editorial Assignments

You will output your assignments as QuickTime movies on an external drive – a thumb drive is fine.

Each QuickTime needs to be labeled:

LASTNAME_TITLE_CUT#_DATE

Example: **HIRSCH_VISITOR_CUT#1_4/12/11**

When you output your work make sure that you select the proper screen ratio which, for the most part, will be 4x3.

THIS is not an Avid Media Composer class. I will be giving you tips and tricks, but there will be no actual Avid instruction.

You will spend most of your time in this class cutting film. I will be giving you changes to execute. You will be in a model of a professional cutting room. I will not lecture you on theory or history, nor will I be giving you examples of good cutting. You will learn how to cut as most of your predecessors did, by doing it, examining your work and the work of your classmates.

Make sure that whatever drive you use, is clearly labeled with your name, class number and section so that when you lose it, it can find you ;-). Drives left behind in the classroom will be turned in at the front desk in the basement.

Each assignment must identified with a title card as follows:

Student's name
Class number and section
Project title and version (ie: first cut/re-cut)
Date of the output

NOTE: You are not allowed to post any of your class exercises anywhere on the internet!!! The material we use in class is copyrighted.

Class attendance and participation:

Students are expected to attend every class and to be punctual. They are encouraged to engage in discussions, ask questions, and give their opinions. These contributions are crucial to both the collaborative and learning processes and will play a part in determining your grade.

All assignments must be turned in on time and specific schedules and deadlines met. An important element of success in filmmaking is the ability to meet deadlines. Showing up for the beginning of class, organizing your time and anticipating and planning for disasters is essential. Turning in assignments after their due date will affect your grade.

Students are required to assemble and maintain a three-ring binder that will hold your syllabus, handouts, reference material, schedules, lined script pages, etc. It will serve as a basic tool for the class. Your final exam will be based on this material.

If you need to miss a class you are responsible for getting any information covered in the class and for all handouts. This information must be obtained from either a classmate or the SA.

I would like to be informed, via email, by the preceding Sunday evening if you will be absent from class and why.

Also note that you must turn off all cell phones and pagers before entering class. There will be no "text messaging" or game-playing during class. Anything that causes you to be distracted during class will detract from your grade. If I see that you are using your computer for anything other than class work, you will not be allowed to bring it to class.

Neither food nor beverages (other than water) are allowed in the SCA building. I will strictly enforce this rule. No exceptions.

Grades will be based upon the following:

- 1) The quality of your work on, and the completion of all assignments including editing projects and all re-edits. (Because of the nature of the assignments, about 70% of your grade will be

based on your editing work and the improvements you are able to achieve in your re-cuts.)

- 2) Class participation.
- 3) A written, and oral analysis, of a scene from a film of your own choosing (about 2% of your grade).
- 4) Meeting scheduled dates for the above projects (about 5% of your grade).
- 5) Prompt arrival at all class meetings (about 2% of your grade).
- 6) Final exam (about 20% of your grade).

NOTE: I grade on a curve.

In addition, you will be graded on your progress during the semester, including your ability to communicate and work constructively with others.

Unexcused absences and other disrespectful behavior will count against you.

If you are in danger of failing, you will be notified in writing. We will 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 other serious emergency.

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

Academic Integrity

The School of Cinema-Television expects the highest standards of excellence and ethics from all of you. It is particularly important that you avoid plagiarism, or submitting any work that you have not done. Violations of this policy will result in a failing grade and be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

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 me or the SA 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.

Suggested Reading: (please note: some books can be purchased used at Amazon.com)

AVID AGILITY, Working Faster and More Intuitively with Avid Media Composer, Steven Cohen.

Avid Agility can be purchased at Amazon.com. It was written for Media Composer v. 5.

MAKE THE CUT- *A Guide to becoming a successful Assistant Editor in Film and TV*, Lori Jane Coleman A.C.E. and Diana Friedberg A.C.E. , Focal Press

FIRST CUT, *Conversations with Film Editors*, Gabriella Oldham, University of California Press Berkeley and Los Angeles

SELECTED TAKES, *Film Editors on Editing*, Vincent LoBrutto, Praeger Publishers, New York

DVD:THE CUTTING EDGE: *The magic of Movie Editing*: available for purchase on line at: <http://www.ace-filmeditors.org/newace/home.html>

Note also this site has information about ACE student editing contest and internships.

COURSE PLAN:

Please note that this course plan is **subject to change at any time**. Flexibility is a necessity in the filmmaking process. Circumstances change on a dime and the successful filmmaker needs to change with them.

Session 1: Jan. 10, 2011: Introduction to the Course.

The Power of Editing: Screening of a rejected half-hour comedy pilot and the re-cut version that sold it.

Assignment # 1: Preliminary Editing Assignment. An instruction sheet will be handed out during class.

Assignment #2: Select a three to five minute scene from a motion picture of your choice to examine from an editorial standpoint. Prepare to present the scene and analyze it in front of the class. The object of the analysis is to discover the editorial decisions that make the scene work. The first presentation of the scene analyses will be in Session 4 (2/7).

Session 2: Jan. 24, 2011: LAB TUTORIAL: given by Lab Technicians and SA.

The class will be held in the lab and focus on lab procedure and some basic Media Composer information.

Avid MC Assignment #1: Cut Visitor scene 11. Due Feb. 7

Session 3: Jan. 31, 2011: Visitor and online editing assignments due.

Go over cuts of Visitor and suggest changes.

Screen students online editing assignment.

LECTURE: Some things you should know about editing.

Avid MC Assignment #2: Cut NYPD Blue.

Session 4: Feb. 7, 2011:

Go over NYPD Blue and suggest changes

Presentation of scene analyses.

Avid MC Assignment #2a: Re-cut NYPD Blue

Session 5: Feb. 14, 2011:

CLASS DEMONSTRATION: Tips on editing music.

Go over NYPD re-cuts.

Presentation of scene analyses.

Avid MC Assignment #3: Take a piece of music and cut it down to a minute or a minute and a half.

Session 6: Feb. 28, 2011:

Go over music cuts and give suggestions.

LECTURE: Discuss the contribution of music. Show example of temp score vs. final. How composers can miss the mark.

Presentation of scene analyses.

Avid MC Assignment #4: Cut SHAPES AND COLORS to a piece of music. One to one and a half minutes long.

Session 7: March 7, 2011:

Go over Shapes and Colors assignment.

LECTURE: Some lessons to be learned.

Avid MC Assignment #5: MAIN TITLE SEQUENCE: Balloon montage including titles. Scored with any music you think appropriate that resolves at end of sequence.

Session 8: March 21, 2011:

Run Balloon montages.

Scene analyses.

Avid MC Assignment #5: In From the Night.

Session 9: April 4, 2011:

Go over In From the Night and suggest changes.

Scene analyses.

Avid MC Assignment #5a: Re-cut In From the Night.

Session 10: April 11, 2011:

Go over changes In From the Night.

Scene analyses.

Avid mc Assignment #6 Labor of Love

Session 11: April 18, 2011:

Go over In Labor of Love and suggest changes.

Scene analyses.

Avid mc Assignment #6a Labor of Love

Session 12 April 25, 2011:

Go over Labor of Love.

Scene analyses.

READING ASSIGNMENT: Review all handouts to prepare for final exam.

Session 13: May 2, 2011:

Cram for the exam. Go over all questions to be covered on the exam.

General catch up of assignments and scene analyses if necessary.

NOTE: Because this class is given during study week, attendance is not mandatory.

Session 14: May 9, 2011

8:00 PM Final exam.