

## **CTPR 294: Directing in TV/New Media, Fiction, and Documentary Fall 2015**

4 Units

Concurrent enrollment: CTPR 295 Cinematic Arts Laboratory  
Wednesday 2-4:50 pm

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### **Fictional Narrative SCE Stage 2**

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### **Documentary SCA 214**

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### **TV/New Media SCB 104**

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SA: Steven Robbins  
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Professor: Andre Belgrader, School of Dramatic Arts  
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## **Course Objectives:**

CTPR 294 has three components that overall introduce Production students in the School of Cinematic Arts to the major aspects of contemporary cinematic practice. Each component is explored for 5 weeks. Three different instructors will guide students through each aspect.

- 1) Fictional Narrative Practice.
- 2) Documentary Practice
- 3) TV/New Media Practice.

Students will participate in exercises, lectures, and discussions in each of the three components.

### *Fictional Narrative Practice*

This 5 week seminar will expose each student to the fundamentals of directing a narrative film. Classes will include basic film theory and grammar, example clips from films and practical directing techniques. Each directing student will stage a scene from a published screenplay, shoot on location and show an edited cut

### *Documentary Practice*

The student will learn the unique characteristics of documentary, how to find cinematic material in the world around the student, how to cover a scene while it is happening, and how to film an interview. The student will learn how to reveal character through action and the unique elements of cinema.

### *TV/New Media Practice*

Students will learn how to create a sizzle reel for a web series. The focus will be on the importance of developing a clear tone and establishing a strong voice. Students will learn how to harness their creativity and to thrive in a workshop environment.

## **Projects:**

For each of the three components, students will complete exercises, making a total of six: one in narrative, three in documentaries, and two in TV/New Media. Students will screen cuts of the exercises for feedback. NOTE: All cuts will be screened from the Avid project. At the end of each rotation, the director will turn in a compressed file of the final cut.

Directing the Fictional Narrative:

- One in-class scene (performed with actors in the classroom),
- One filmed exercise (a scene, on location, with two actors). The instructor will

provide scenes.

Directing the Documentary:

- Street Corner and Interview exercises
- One ‘mini-documentary’

Directing TV/New Media:

- 3 page pilot script
- 2 minute sizzle reel for webisode

NOTE:

During the course, each student will assume a major role in directing one project from one of the three components. The directors for the various components are randomly chosen before the semester begins.

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### **Course Structure and Schedule:**

Students in CTPR 294 and CTPR 295 are divided into three groups (Silver, Gold, and Platinum) which rotate at five-week intervals through the three components of the CTPR 294. See the attached schedule for your group. It is important to be aware of the schedule for both CTPR 294 and CTPR 295, as they are interrelated.

The rotations for groups in CTPR 294 are:

|                                |                                                           |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Silver Group (18487):</b>   | <b>TV/New Media to Documentary to Fictional Narrative</b> |
| <b>Gold Group (18486):</b>     | <b>Documentary to Fictional Narrative to TV/New Media</b> |
| <b>Platinum Group (18488):</b> | <b>Fictional Narrative to TV/New Media to Documentary</b> |

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**Schedules for the five weeks of each of the components:**

**Fictional Narrative Component**

WEEK 1

**I) Introduction to Visual Storytelling:**

Directing - Guiding the coalescing of all filmmaking components toward a single  
VISION

Vision, leadership, organization, communication

The Triangle of production - Vision rides on the rails of your resources and time

Resonating Images: American Beauty and Raging Bull

Composing the Film - Witness/Summer Hours

Composing the frame

composing the shot, scene and sequence

Tension and Release

Contrast

Plasticity of Time

Motion Pictures: Motivated Staging/Camera Movement/Editing

Montage - Kuleshov

Mise en scene - theatrical tradition vs. film - composition, sets props actors, costumes,  
lighting - positioning and moving objects and actors

Renoir - All directors work between two polarities - those that place the camera first and  
place the actor in front of it and those that follow the actor with the camera.

POV

A sense of PLACE - City of God. Location, location, location.

Wide and tight - Pre-visualization, coverage, progression, shaping intensity

The Event of the scene

**II) Story Structure - Introduction of Action and Obstacle, Progression**

Exposition - intro character/s and situation (what's at stake?)

Development of conflict - action and obstacles

Resolution - climax

## WEEK 2

### III) Scene Analysis

Director Actor grammar - a language of action, less is more, doing, the actors instrument, "truthful behavior under imaginary circumstances"

character vs. characteristics

Directors preparation - Immersing yourself in the world of the story RESEARCH - inspirations from other sources i.e. painting, photography, music, poetry, films

THEME - What am I making a film about?

Beat to Beat breakdown

shotlist, storyboards

Preparation allows you to create better circumstances for others to create in. It allows you to offer more freedom to others contributions because you know where you are going. If an actor, DP or designer makes the journey richer and more interesting, you will recognize it if you are prepared.

### IV) Casting/Auditioning - In class practicum

Casting breakdown - describe what attributes you are looking for in each character in a way that baits the hook for an actor.

Casting services: Now casting etc.

pictures and resumes

reels

Casting appointments - presenting yourself professionally, directions and details,

Setting up the room - sign in sheet, picking sides, windows, camera, table, etc.

The Audition - Two truths: the truth of the character, the truth of the actor

"selectively pouring yourself into the vessel of the character"

Make them comfortable

Quality - that ineffable thing that someone brings with them

Technique - moment to moment, preparation (action, physical, intellectual and emotional life)

Workability - conduit open, collaboration

Call backs

Chemistry

## ALL SCENES ASSIGNED AND CAST

### WEEK 3 and 4

Students rehearse scenes with actors in class and receive feedback from instructors. They shoot their scenes on location over the weekend.

### WEEK 5

View cut scenes.

## **Documentary Component**

**Week 1) Lecture/Discussion: Documentary defined. How does it differ from fiction?**

**Bring Three Documentary Ideas to First Class (person, place, or process)**

**Styles of documentary.**

What is a documentary?  
Screening of short sample films.

In Class: Students come up with  
three documentary ideas for a 3-4 minute film  
about either a person, a place, or a process.

Outside Class: Students shoot Street-corner exercise.

**Week 2) Lecture/Discussion: How to conduct a good interview.**

Bring cameras to class.  
SA get 3 boom kits

In Class: Students critique ideas, settle on one,  
Plan their approach for shooting.  
Demonstration: Documentary Style Coverage, working as a  
documentary team.  
The interview.

Outside Class: Students begin shooting. Shoot a key element of  
project (interview or scene)

**Week 3) Lecture/discussion/demo: How to structure reality.**

Filmmaker/subject relationships. Documentary  
Ethics.

In Class: Students screen and critique dailies

Outside Class: Students edit film

**Week 4) Lecture/discussion: How to 'SHOW,' not 'TELL.'**

In Class: Students screen and critique first cuts

Outside Class: Students finish edit.

**Week 5) Lecture/discussion: Wrap up**

In class: Students screen revised cut

## TV/New Media Component

### **Week 1**

Introductions.

Schedule and course overview/concept of class.

Screen webisode examples(Broad City/High Maintenance/New Form Digital).

Lecture: How to harness creative ideas, Intro to Character/Story in the short form.

*Homework: Create a pitch for a webisode pilot; either in the written form of an overview(1 page) or an on camera edited(1 minute) piece.*

### **Week 2**

Workshop pitches.

Lecture: Directing the short form; tone & voice, beats, coverage and pacing.

Screen examples of webisodes for tone, voice, coverage, pacing.

*Homework: Create a 3 page pilot script.*

### **Week 3**

Workshop scripts; well developed characters/consistent tone/strong voice.

*Homework: Shoot sizzle reel for webisode. Create rough cut.*

### **Week 4**

Screen rough cuts; critique/discuss.

*Homework: Final edit on sizzle reel.*

### **Week 5**

Screen sizzle reels; critique/discuss.

Q & A and overview of process

## **Equipment and Facilities:**

The School will provide digital cameras, tripods, and editing stations.

### **Students will provide their own:**

1. **Headphones (required) for Avid lab.** We recommend Sony MDR 7506, which are available at the USC *Bookstore*.
2. **SDHC Memory (16 GB) cards for NXCAM.** (Class 10 rated) **SCA APPROVED SDNC CARDS:**
  - Kingston 16GB SDHC Flash Card: Model # SD10V/16GB
  - SanDisk Extreme 16GB SDHC Flash Card: Model # SDSDRX3-16GB-A21
  - SONY 16GB SDHC Flash Drive: Model # SF16NX/TQ
  - Lexar Professional 133x 16GB SDHC Flash Card: Model #LSD16GCRBNA133
  - PNY Professional Series 16GB SDHC Flash Card: Model # P-SDHC16GB10-EFS2
3. **One of the following approved External Hard Drives:**
  - G-TECH: G-RAID (4-8TB RAID)
  - G-TECH: G-DRIVE (2-4TB Single Drive)
  - Western Digital: My Book Studio Edition II (2TB RAID)
  - Glyph-Technologies: GT-050Q (1-4TB Single Drive)
  - **Check SCA Community website BEFORE purchasing a drive (Avid Help Documents)**

**A second drive or 16GB flash drives are highly recommended to back up material in the case of drive failure.**

### **The School will provide:**

1. **Sony NXCAM HD Cameras and tripods.**

**N.B. WITH THE NXCAM CAMERA, THIS SETTING IS THE ONLY SETTING THAT WILL ENABLE YOU TO EDIT YOUR FOOTAGE ON AVID:**

### **HD 1080/24p FX**

Students in CTPR 294 and CTPR 295 will be divided into pods of three and share a camera package. Each student must pay a lab fee of \$75 for CTPR 294 and \$225 for CTPR 295, and an insurance premium of \$300 for CTPR 294.

## **Grading:**

Each of the three components contributes 1/3 of the final grade. The grades for the individual components are determined as follows:

### **Fictional Narrative Component:**

|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Class Participation              | 25% |
| Organization and Communication   | 35% |
| Fictional Narrative Filmed Scene | 40% |

### **Documentary Component**

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Class Participation | 10% |
| Collaboration       | 30% |
| Documentary Project | 60% |

### **TV/New Media Component**

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Class Participation       | 10% |
| TV/New Media Series Pitch | 20% |
| Pilot Script              | 20% |
| Sizzle Reel               | 50% |

This is a production class. Students should plan to not miss class; students must discuss all absences with the instructor in advance. If a student is sick, the student must call or email this information to the instructor or SA before the class. Each unexcused absence will reduce the student's grade one increment; e.g. B to B-. Two unexcused latenesses will be counted as an absence.

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## **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 Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. 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/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the Department of Public Safety <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men

<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage [sarc@usc.edu](mailto:sarc@usc.edu) describes reporting options and other resources.

### **Support Systems**

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs [http://sait.usc.edu/academic-support/center-programs/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academic-support/center-programs/dsp/home_index.html) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

### **Disruptive Student Behavior:**

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.

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## **SAFETY SEMINAR – MANDATORY ATTENDANCE**

All students are required to attend the safety seminar in order to obtain a Production Number. The production number covers, actors, equipment, stages, insurance, additional equipment, locations, on and off campus permits, audition rooms and access to SCA facilities for filming (Courtyard, class rooms, bathrooms, stairwells).

Three seminars are offered at the start of every semester:

Friday, August 21, 3:00pm in Norris Cinema Theater.  
Monday, August 24, 6:00pm in SCA Gallery.  
Tuesday, August 25, 6:00pm in SCA Gallery

There are NO MAKE UP seminars available beyond these dates.

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### **Required Reading (TV/New Media Section)**

Directing Actors by Judith Weston, (1996) Michael Wiese Productions

Action! Acting for Film and TV/New Media by Robert Benedetti, (2001) Pearson Education Company

### **Suggested Reading**

The Sitcom Career Book by Mary Lou Belli and Phil Ramuno, (2004) Backstage Books

TV/New Media Production Handbook 7<sup>th</sup> edition by Herbert Zettl

Basic TV Technology 3<sup>rd</sup> edition by Robert L. Hartwig, Focal Press

Lighting for Video 3<sup>rd</sup> edition by Gerald Millerson, Focal Press

The Artist's Way by Julia Cameron, ISBN 0-87477-694-5; Jeremy P. Tarcher/Perigee Books; paperback

Writing Down the Bones by Natalie Goldberg; ISBN 0-87773-375-9; Shambala Publications, Inc., paperback

Fearless Creating by Eric Maisel; ISBN 0-87477-805-0; Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam Book, paperback

Writing Your Life by Deena Metzger; ISBN 0-06-250612-9; Harper San Francisco, paperback

Developing Story Ideas by Michael Rabiger, ISBN 0-240-80398-1;  
Focal Press, paperback

Kazan by Jeff Young

Film Directing Fundamentals by Nicholas Proferes

Shot By Shot by Stephen Katz

A Director Prepares by Anne Bogart

The Visual Story by Bruce Block