

**CTPR 421 INTERMEDIATE EDITING**  
USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS

**Fall 2015**

**Section 18528D**

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**Class Meetings:** Tuesday, 4 - 7 p.m. (SCA 310)  
**Genius Bar:** Friday, 11am-1pm (SCA B148) with John Rosenberg

**Office Hours:** Monday 10-12 and by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Editing is much more than putting images together. At its best, it is the conscious action of bringing out a film's text and subtext, to fulfill a larger vision. In this class you will learn how to read a script **for story**, analyze the shot footage **for story**, and put it all together to **fulfill that story** (whether that comes from you or someone else).

This course will focus on the brain processes that make the difference between picture editing and *great* picture editing. It will cover both the theory and the technique of editing. You will edit or re-edit, nearly every week, a series of scenes that are designed to gradually expand the types of editing experiences that you have. The accumulation of these editing experiences should give you an overview of the complete process -- aesthetic and the practical -- teaching you to how to make *informed* editing choices.

The main goal of this class is to prepare you – both aesthetically and technically – to assume a role as editor on a CTPR 480, CTPR 479/486 or CTPR 484. Because I believe that there are plenty of tools, both here at USC and in the world, to learn the technical, we are going to be concentrating largely on the aesthetic through process that will make you an editor worth hiring to *shape a story*. This should help you get a valuable job in the outside editing world, as well as at USC.

In addition, you will be given a working knowledge of how to organize an editing room and operate the various tools that you need to make your editing decisions. The bulk of your hands-on editing tutoring will be given in two main places -- by Reine-Claire Dousarkissian during her classes during weeks two and 11 (as you start and finish the 480 process), and by John Rosenberg who will be holding weekly Avid Genius Bars for your questions on Fridays in room B148 between 11am-1pm. These sessions are just for you and you should take advantage of them – both to help build Avid skills but also to deal with the specific questions that come up during your specific films.

You will also be given assignments with the tutorials on lynda.com (available at <http://itservices.usc.edu/lynda>). You will start out in these Lab classes learning all of the technical aspects that you will need for this class. As the semester continues you will begin to learn skills that may take you beyond what you do in this class, but are essential if you are to work in any capacity in an editing room today.

Projects will be edited using the main non-linear digital editing system used in features and television today -- the Avid Media Composer, version 8.4. You will be given a background in some assistant editor techniques – synching (in the Avid), multicam, digitizing, creating EDLs/AAF, and organizing and media management. You will also get an overview of the entire filmmaking process from the point of view of the editing room. But more important than learning the nuts and bolts techniques of how to

prepare your footage for editing, you will learn how to prepare *mentally* for editing: how to look at a scene for optimum editing in order to best bring out your artistic ideas. You will discover editing principles and aesthetics that you can use no matter which format you edit with and what format your project is intended for (television, feature, documentary, etc.).

During your time in this class you will be editing in pairs, learning as many techniques as possible in order to prepare you to undertake the editing process in other USC courses and in your post-school careers, on films edited either by you or by others. You will be expected to edit your projects outside of class time and bring them into the class to present and discuss with others.

Because of the amount of material we need to cover, the 15 weeks (note that our last class happens during finals week on so don't make plans for that night) time period for our classes will get pretty intense. **Be prepared for some classes to go past the official finish time.**

### CLASS FORMAT:

The class is structured to give you an overview of how a film is made from the point of view of the editing process (and, recently, more and more things are being made the responsibility of the editing staff). Along the way, therefore, you will get a sense of the entire flow of film editing – including its thought processes, technical needs, scheduling, and politics.

The first week will be an introductory week in which I will discuss a large variety of topics including how the class will work, the process of editing, the nuts and bolts of the editorial process, and present a few pieces of film for examination. We will introduce or refresh the concepts of the “Lean Forward Moment” and the “Rule of Threes” that you might have learned in CTPR 295 and 310 (or CTPR 335, if you've taken that) and which you've learned by reading my book cover to cover, right? We will start to pave the way for their expansion. We will also discuss variations on the syllabus that we may want to make.

After that, our weekly meetings will generally include a presentation in which I will discuss different aspects of editing, using film clips to illustrate the topics. Over the course of the semester, these talks will provide a more or less complete discussion of the thought processes and techniques of the editing process, from picture editing to sound and music across a wide spectrum of projects.

At least half of each class will be devoted to the screening and critiquing of the scenes that you will have edited, in pairs, during the preceding week. The class and I will generally give you re-editing notes and you will return to the editing room during the next week for a second cut. If necessary, we will meet once or twice in the editing rooms where you and I will get some hands-on experience together. We will generally not have time to go through all of the edits, but each team (you will be editing in pairs) will be responsible for their recuts every week, even if we didn't discuss them in class. (I will try to give notes on Critique – our review and approval software).

A final component of our classes will be a discussion of the politics of editing – from working closely with directors, producers and writers, to interactions with the studios and the preview process.

Just like movie theatres and playhouses, I'm going to ask every one of you to **turn off all cell phones** before coming to class. Ringing phones and buzzing pagers are really disruptive in class and just plain rude to me and your fellow classmates. Unlike movie theatres and playhouses, I have no problem if you keep your laptops or smartphones/iPads/tablets/phablets etc. **open and active** during class. I don't want you to be on a distracting site, however, and will try and work hard so our content is interesting and valuable enough to keep you away from that. I warn you though, if you do use your laptops, phones or tablets, I am occasionally going to ask you to do research online during the class, and you may have additional notes to add during the discussion that you get from the web. I also love

it when you take notes, either written or on that laptop. In fact, if there's one thing that I've found is that you folks never take enough notes. ***Please take notes in class. Please please please.***

During all phases of the class I encourage questions and comments. We all need to be challenged. That includes me.

**WEEKLY COURSE BREAKDOWN**

*Please note, that this breakdown is liable to change several times during the course of the semester, depending on the availability of guest speakers or the progress of your own work.*

1	8/25/15	Intro To The Editing Thought Process Loglines, Rule of Threes, Lean forward Moment. ----- Workflow options (online/offline, vs all online; codecs, how Avid fits in a workflow, other NLEs) Slates and template material	How to Think Like An Editor. Script analysis. The Rule of Threes and The Lean Forward Moment. Your favorite short films. Editing as re-editing. Lined Scripts Select partners
2	9/1/15	Avid Editing Lab #1	<p><b>1) Understanding Workflow from Input to Output</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offline/online</li> <li>- central drive (ISIS workspace) versus local drive ( external hard drive)</li> <li>- backing up original dailies from cards then copying to workspace</li> <li>- understanding format and frame rate,</li> <li>- scheme organization for cards</li> </ul> <p><b>2) Creating and working within the Avid project:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creating the project organization/naming convention with folders and bins and correlating it with he original dailies,</li> <li>- project settings</li> <li>- user settings</li> <li>- customization of the keyboard and workspaces</li> </ul> <p><b>3) Ingesting and synching original Dailies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- linking to AMA</li> <li>- Transcoding for the edit</li> <li>- synching with slate and with timecode. (Note: they will eventually do it with 546 films, which they will not have chosen yet)</li> </ul> <p>AMA vs. Avid Media</p> <p><b>4) making a QT movie for viewing dailies and cuts.</b></p> <p><b>Editor Skills</b> (review of Avid interface and editing process) Keyboard shortcuts</p>

3	9/8/15	Examining the Cut ----- Slating/template material, naming conventions	Examining the individual cut. How shots can be restructured. Pulldown When to cut. When not to cut. The L-cut. Examining a script for editing (more detailed discussion of Script Analysis) Lining the script pages. Organizing an editing room. The politics of the editing room The Rule of Threes reinforced. Loglines, scene analyses and Lean Forward Moments Logline #1 assigned. <b>(NOTE: Add/Drop period ends September 11<sup>th</sup>)</b>
4	9/15/15	Examining The Scene, Trusting The Audience/Viewing Dailies ----- Synching multicam (demo), Individual keyboard layouts	How scenes can be constructed. Trusting an audience. Synching dailies – an overview. How to organize an editing room in a film world. Academy Leaders. Proper naming conventions. <b>Logline #1 due.</b>
5	9/22/15	Examining The Sequence ----- Troubleshooting. Resources for help. Cleaning up.	Restructuring and rearrangement. Dailies notes. Television, features, and other forms of politics. Preparing dailies for the eventual DI. Script Sync
6	9/29/15	Music Design ----- Music spotting session Advanced Keyframes DAE	Using music to tell a story. Spotting music and Lean Forward Moments. What music can do to accentuate your scene and script analysis. What everyone does for music in film. Moving towards a final mix. Musical style.
7	10/6/15	Sound Design/Post Post Production (Finishing) ----- Sound spotting session Filters etc.	Midterm evaluation Spotting effects. How to use sound to fulfill your scene and script analyses. Pre-mixing, final mixing. Doing the DI Lab work, cutting negative, etc. Post scheduling.
8	10/13/15	Opticals and Visual Effects Sapphire and other plug-ins FX palette	Manipulating the film image within the context of the script analysis. Traditional opticals, CGI. Blue Screen and how to use it. How an editing team works with creation and editing of optical effects.
9	10/20/15	The Action Sequence Lab and finishing processes. Grading.	Creating an action sequence. How a scene analysis may differ in an action sequence. How it doesn't.
10	10/27/15	Humor in Editing	Structure in comedy editing. Rule of Threes as it applies to comedy. Setting up beats.

11	11/3/15	Avid Lab #2	<p>1) <b>Preparing for online:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- adding bars and tone, slates</li> <li>- cleaning up video and audio tracks</li> <li>- adding final titles and end credits</li> <li>- adding final VFX,</li> <li>- video mix down,</li> </ul> <p>2) <b>Preparing turn over for picture:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- linking back to AMA</li> <li>- transcoding to high resolution.</li> </ul> <p>3) <b>preparing turn over for sound:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AAF export</li> <li>- Adding visible timecode</li> <li>- JPEG QT movie.</li> </ul> <p><b>ALSO - Editor Skills</b>                  Extra tools (3D Warp, Fluid Morph, etc.). FX palette and the FX editor principles using basic effects such as dissolve, fluid morph, motion (timewarp), green screen (if need be)</p>
12	11/10/15	Job Hunting. Resume work Trailer editing	<p>Preparing a career plan.                  Building a resume.                  Logline #2 assigned</p>
13	11/17/15	POSSIBLE GUEST LECTURER Documentaries	<p>Telling a story with real footage.                  How it is the same as the dramatic footage we've been studying, how it is different.                  Style in documentaries.                  Storytelling in documentaries Music videos                  Guest speaker??                  How to look at longer formats.                  Cutting longer form vs. shorts. Examining the sequence for your final project.                  Refining loglines.                  Looking at web videos, wedding and event videography and a host of new formats for our stories.                  How does this affect the editing process?  <b>Logline #2 due</b></p>
14	11/24/15	Alternative Distributions	<p>Structure in less-obviously structured material.                  Museum films. Films as art.                  Scripts and analysis</p>
15	12/1/15	Commercials. Post Production. Guest Speaker?? Style. Wrapping Up. Looking Ahead	<p>Working in very short form.                  Freelance life.                  What is style?                  What do I mean when I talk about creating and living within a style?                  Editing difficult material.                  How to look at longer formats.                  An introduction to Advanced Editing                  A look back and a look forward</p>
	12/8/15	Study Days	
	12/14/15		Final projects due

12/15/15 (tentative)	480 Screenings in Norris	You are required to come to this screening.
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### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Beginning with the first week, you and your partner will be required to edit and/or re-edit a scene every week. You will present it at the next class, and accept criticism from your classmates and me so you can re-edit the scenes for a screening during the following week. My comments will be given **verbally** during the class. You won't get a written critique. Frequently we will not have time to view all cuts, so you will be required to post the cuts on Critique, an online review and approval site.

Twice during the semester you will be required to create a logline for a film (you can find a further explanation of this in Chapter One and Two of "The Lean Forward Moment,") but don't worry, we'll talk about what this means when the assignment is given out. You will be expected to hand in this logline at the beginning of the following class.

You will be required to attend the two classes taught during regular class time by Reine-Claire Dousarkissian in the Post Production area (room TBA). While there you will learn the techniques that good editors and assistant editors need to know about the editing process, and be able to ask questions that arise during the editing of your own scenes. *Attendance will be taken there like any other class.*

At the end of the semester you will assemble a few consecutive scenes from a film that you will be editing into one long sequence with music and sound effects. The Monday of finals week, you will hand in that Quicktime or DVD. I will provide you with written notes later that week. I expect you to attend that final class, even though it is during the final exam period, since there will be some discussion and hopefully a guest speaker.

Students will be required to attend and participate in all classes. **ATTENDANCE WILL BE TAKEN AT EVERY CLASS.** Written explanations will be necessary *in advance* for all excused absences. **Unexcused absences will be reflected in the course grade.** In addition, students will be expected to be at class on time; *lateness will also be reflected in your grade.* Please make use of my e-mail address or phone service number above if you have an unavoidable problem. If you cannot make the class or will be late, let me know by the evening before the class. [Sorry for all of the bold facing, underlining and italics, but this section cannot be emphasized enough. Responsibility is an important skill for an editor.]

Since film editors are judged on their ability to complete their work in a timely manner, you will likewise be responsible for completing each stage of every project on time and in a professional manner.

### CRITIQUE:

At some point early on in the semester (once the roster settles down), we will start to use an online review and approval system named Critique. I'll talk more about that in class, but this is a system that is in use at the major studios so we can all provide notes to each other online. You will need to create an H.264 Quicktime output at a bandwidth no greater than 1.1Mbps in order to use this password protected service.

Note: We will frequently screen your scenes right off the Isis shared storage system, but you will still be required to bring a backup to class. At times we may use the Critique as well, so leave enough time

on Tuesday before class to clean up your cut, create a quicktime export for class and a second one for Critique.

#### READING:

There are two books that I am going to highly highly recommend to you – just short of required. They will work on both sides of the class, the aesthetic and the technical.

Sam Kauffman and Ashley Kennedy's book AVID EDITING ([http:// amzn.to/1wQnhlW](http://amzn.to/1wQnhlW)). This book goes over many of basics of Avid Media Composer, with the exception of the latest 8.0 changes, and you should use it in combination with the lynda.com courses.

The other nearly-required book is my own THE LEAN FORWARD MOMENT (<http://bit.ly/h5aZe7>). This book takes the theories we will be discussing about storytelling and shaping story and goes into detail on them for every craft – not just editing. But it will be very important in pushing your understanding of loglines and the other concepts we will talk about.

For a deeper dive into Avid, three great books for technical knowledge of the tool, are AVID UNCUT by Steve Hullfish (<http://www.amzn.to/1FMbfDB>), Steve Cohen's AVID AGILITY (<http://www.amzn.to/14qRBvo>) and the slightly out-of-date but still super valuable, AVID MEDIA COMPOSER COOKBOOK by Ben Hershhelder (<http://www.amzn.to/1xhBdnU>)

In addition to the textbooks mentioned above, the following books are good sources for aesthetic and technical information about editing. I will occasionally refer to them.

Avid Learning Series. This is a series of books which are associated with the Avid Certification. There are several which take what you've learned in this class and extend them (there are also books on ProTools which I recommend). They are published by CENGAGE Learning, at <http://www.courseptr.com/avid>. I particularly like the "Professional Effects and Compositing" and the "Effects Essentials" titles. TECHNICAL

Arijon, Daniel. *Grammar of The Film Language*. A very detailed, thorough and incredibly tedious (but valuable) look at how to block a scene to create the best shots for editing. If you've ever tried to plan shots for a group of eight people around a dinner table, you'll appreciate this book. TECHNICAL

Case, Dominic. *Film Technology in Post Production*. TECHNICAL

Crittenden, Roger. *Fine Cuts: The Art of European Film Editing*. AESTHETIC

Davis, Richard. *Complete Guide To Film Scoring*. We will be discussing film editing and music during one of our classes. This is a good companion for those of you who want to dig deeper into the topic.

Dmytryk, Edward. *On Film Editing*. A great discussion of editing, from a personal point of view. Also valuable from the same author are *On Screen Writing*, *On Screen Directing*, and *On Screen Acting* and *On Film*. AESTHETIC.

Hampe, Barry. *Making Documentary Films and Reality Videos*. I haven't actually read this book, but I have had it recommended to me. It covers the pre-production, shooting and editing of documentaries.

Koppelman, Charles. *Behind the Seen: How Walter Murch Edited Cold Mountain Using Apple's Final Cut Pro and What This Means for Cinema*. Despite its pompous title, this is a really great book which describes what it was *really* like in the editing room on COLD MOUNTAIN, from the prep work that

Murch typically does before a film is shot, through the later previews. Rather than a book about Final Cut (though it does talk a lot about that) it is more a look at the real world of editing. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. AESTHETIC and PRACTICAL.

LoBrutto, Vincent. *Selected Takes: Film Editors On Editing*. A wonderful series of interviews with some of the top editors of the past and present. AESTHETIC.

Murch, Walter. *In The Blink of an Eye, A Perspective on Film Editing*. A transcription of some lectures that Murch gave, in which he introduced his hierarchy of reasons to make an edit, and much much more. Personally, I find that this material is much better covered in the Michael Ondaatje book below. AESTHETIC

Oldham, Gabriella. *First Cut: Conversations with Film Editors*. This is the book I mentioned above. An incredible series of interviews with some of the top, most thoughtful, editors around. THIS IS A HIGHLY RECOMMENDED text. AESTHETIC

Ondaatje, Michael. *The Conversations: Walter Murch and the Art of Editing Film*. This is an incredible series of interviews with one of the top film and sound editors in the art form today. Far more accessible and interesting than *In The Blink of an Eye*, it goes over many of the real world concerns in shaping characters and filmic story telling. AESTHETIC.

Pepperman, Richard D. *The Eye Is Quicker: Film Editing: Making a Good Film Better*. A profusely illustrated discussion of film editing, using frame grabs from well-known movies, to make general points about different styles of editing. AESTHETIC.

Rabiger, Michael. *Directing: Film Techniques and Aesthetics*. A very detailed study of the issues in directing. Its discussion of editing is very valuable for what it reveals about the storytelling mind, from the director's point of view.

Rosenblum, Ralph. *When The Shooting Stops... The Cutting Begins*. Rosenblum, a veteran film editor who cut many of Woody Allen's early films, talks about his experiences both in and out of the editing room. More raconteurial than instructional, it does give a nice sense of the style of a colorful editor -- both in terms of editing and politics. AESTHETIC.

Thompson, Roy. *The Grammar of the Edit*. AESTHETIC.

Truffaut, Francis. *Hitchcock/Truffaut*. A series of interviews done by then-critic Truffaut of the master director, Alfred Hitchcock. It is here that his incredible theory on surprise vs. suspense is mentioned. AESTHETIC.

#### **RECOMMENDED ON THE WEB:**

Adobe Creative Suite Podcast. Delves into all aspects of the Adobe Creative Suite (duh). Hosted by Terry White, a CS5 and 6 trainer, this often goes into Photoshop and Web publishing, as well as Premiere.

Art of the Guillotine. Great website that publishes interviews with film editors, as well as news about editing.

Avid Screencasts – Unfortunately no longer publishing, the archive of past shows is a treasure trove of great tips and techniques on all things Avid.



Digital Production Buzz – Interviews authors, filmmakers and people involved in post production and production. Hosted by Larry Jordan, Final Cut guru.

Creative Screenwriting Magazine. An awesome podcast, which is unfortunately no longer publishing.. USC alum Jeff Goldsmith interviews screenwriters of all levels of film. A great resource for the people who do the original writing of the script (since editors do the “final rewrite”).

Creative Cow also publishes a number of other podcasts and website devoted to filmmakers. It is the essential source for troubleshooting. One of their authors, Kevin P. McAuliffe, has does a great series of videocasts on Media Composer.

KCRW’s The Business. A weekly half-hour program about the entertainment business. Usually some good discussion about issues involved in production or distribution.

MacBreak Studio. Steve Martin and Mark Spencer do tutorials, generally on elements of Final Cut and its related applications. Steve is owner of Ripple Training, one of the top tutorial sites.

That Post Show. A great show by Kanen Flowers which discusses topics of interest to post professionals at all budget levels. Sometimes the show is technical, sometimes it deals with work issues, sometimes it deals with aesthetics. It’s always worth it.

The Terence and Philip Show. Discussion between two top post professionals – Terence Curren and Philip Hodgetts. They talk about issues affecting the industry, in general, and often focus on post production. Always a good place to go, after NAB to find out what trends and technologies to watch out for.

## **OFFICE HOURS AND OUT OF CLASS CONSULTATION**

My office hours are on Monday (10-12) though I am available at many other times. I will also return emails in a more-or-less prompt manner. The best way to reach me is my email address -- hollyn@usc.edu. I am particularly bad about picking up phone messages, so please try email first.

## **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 our quiz, submitting any work that you or your partner have not done, and looking into the soul of the person next to you (\*\*Sorry, that was an old Woody Allen joke.\*\*). 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" and/or confer with your SA or me.

## **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 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.