

CTPR 290 CINEMATIC COMMUNICATION

**Spring 2017
(Section 18477D)**

6 units

Open to School of Cinematic Arts students only.

Class hours: 1:00 – 3:50 PM, Tuesdays / Thursdays

Location: SCA 310

Instructor: Miles Watkins

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Phone: (310) 666-1073

Office hours: By appointment

SA: Roma Kong

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Phone: (213) 925-7931

OVERVIEW

In this class students will learn to express their ideas through the language of cinema. The basic principles of cinematography, directing, editing, producing, and sound will be introduced, but the class does not aim to produce polished movies or moviemakers.

When you make narratives, we would like you to focus on the expressive potential of physical behavior; reveal emotions and ideas through what the characters *do* rather than say. Dialogue is used sparingly in 290; we make sound pictures, but not talking pictures.

Students are encouraged to explore alternative and non-traditional forms in Fictional Drama, Documentary, as well as Experimental and New Media.

The instructor and class will critique screened projects. The goal of these sessions is to provide constructive criticism that will improve the student filmmaker's understanding of the process and skills required to produce and consume movies.

By the end of the course, students should display basic competence in conceiving and developing movie ideas and in using the techniques of cinema and digital media to express themselves and communicate to audiences.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Understand and begin to apply the aesthetics of visual and aural communication through cinema.
- Use the creative interaction of image and sound for expressive purposes.
- Design and create cinematic structures.

- Introduce the basics of scriptwriting, producing, directing, cinematography, editing, and sound design, and their interrelationship in the creation of a cinematic project.
- Develop ideas into movies.
- Experiment with personal expression through cinema.
- Show skills in characterization and visual story telling.
- Recognize the potential of a variety of cinematic forms: experimental, documentary, animation, etc.
- Deliver and receive effective critiques of work in progress.
- Establish ethical standards for movie making.
- Show ability to collaborate, to both lead and take direction on a crew.

ASSIGNMENTS, AND PROJECTS

The individual projects will center on various themes that will change each semester.

Individual Exercise

1. One day shooting with available light and non-synch dialogue sound recording.
2. Write, produce, direct, shoot, create sound for, and edit exercise.
3. One week to edit exercise.
4. Maximum length 3 minutes, including credits.

Individual Project 1

1. One weekend shooting with available light and non-synch dialogue sound recording.
2. Write, produce, direct, shoot, create sound for, and edit project.
3. One week to edit project.
4. Length 3-6 minutes, including credits.

Individual Project 2

1. One weekend shooting with available light or light kit and synch dialogue sound recording.
2. Write, produce, direct, shoot, create sound for, and edit project.
3. One week to edit project.
4. Length 3-6 minutes, including credits.

Crew Project

1. One class day of shooting on location with lighting, and synch sound recording.
2. Serve in one crew position.
3. One week to edit project.
4. Maximum length 5 minutes, including credits.

It is the student's obligation to provide their actors with a copy of their work via the most up to date industry standards.

Written Assignments:

- Completed scripts for Projects 1 & 2.
- Complete a *Personal Critique* and *Crit on Crits* for Exercise , Project 1 and Project 2. Personal Critiques are due at time of screening. Projects will not be screened without them. Crit on Crits are due one week after the project is screened. Forms for both are at the end of the syllabus. All documents are to be TYPED and SUBMITTED IN DUPLICATE.
- Five-minute script for Crew Project

When doing your fictional projects, cast actors, when you want performances, not roommates, friends, and family—use the casting sources at SPO. Since you must operate camera, **you are not permitted to act in your own movies.**

WEEK-TO-WEEK:

The schedule changes semester to semester and section to section
(see accompanying individual section calendar)

ETHICS

It is extremely important that you protect your opportunity to learn and not hand it over to someone more experienced. **We expect you to operate your own camera**, plan your own lighting, etc. **You may not have people from outside the film school or in advanced classes crew or edit for you**; this is the equivalent of asking someone else to write a paper for you, which is a violation of academic integrity. We DO encourage you to help out on each other's shoots by carrying equipment, dressing sets, watching over safety, and so on; it's more effective and more fun!

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Cinema school is intense. One important aid in coping is managing one's time, energy, and health. This translates into: scaling projects to do-able sizes; having back-up ideas, locations, equipment and actors in case of problems (weather, accidents, camera break-downs, etc.); realistically estimating time; protecting time to eat and sleep!

If you are feeling stressed out, please talk with your instructors or SA. USC also provides a Student Counseling service which has helped pull many students through rough spots; you can reach them at (213) 740-7711. Chances are that as the semester progresses you will be amazed at how much you are capable of and how quickly you are becoming a seasoned filmmaker.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

Final grades will be issued only upon completion of all required movies and documents; grades will be calculated on the following percentages:

Individual Exercise	10%
Individual Project 1	20%
Individual Project 2	20%
Crew Project (Final Exam)	25%
Documents*	15%
Class participation	10%

*The 15% of the overall grade for Documents is based solely on the percentage of times the student's scripts, Personal Critiques, and Crit on Crits are delivered at the requested time. Blank or nonsensical documents will be considered late.

We do not grade "on a curve." Each student's grade reflects his or her individual work during the semester. Attendance and punctuality will also influence your final grade. You will be graded down one notch (e.g. B to B-) for every three unapproved absences and/or every five times you are late for class. If you are absent, the circumstances of your absence must be approved by your directing faculty.

Turn your phone all the way off during class. This applies to **ALL PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES** (known or unknown throughout the present or any expanded universe). This is under grades because the success of this class is depends on every student's full presence. Or, as Ram Dass said, "Be *here* now." Students will receive a downgrade of one notch for violation of this policy more than two times.

Recommended Texts

Producing and Directing the Short Film and Video, Second Edition, Peter W. Rea and David K. Irving. Focal Press, 2001

The Bare Bones Camera Course for Film and Video, Tom Schroepel. Allworth Press.

Practical Moviemaking; A Handbook for the Real World, Joe Wallenstein, McFarland & Company

The Avid Media Composer Cookbook, Benjamin Hershleder, Packt Publishing,

<http://tinyurl.com/avidmc-book>

Avid Editing, Sam Kauffman and Ashley Kennedy, Focal Press (with DVD of practice materials)

The Healthy Edit: Creative Editing Techniques for Perfecting Your Movie, John Rosenberg, Focal Press, 2011

Recommended Viewing

DVD: *Visions of Light, The Art of Cinematography*

DVD: *The Cutting Edge: The Magic of Movie Editing*

SAFETY

All students MUST attend the SCA Safety Seminar and present proof of attendance to their instructor before any equipment may be issued.

Students must adhere to the USC School of Cinematic Arts Safety Guidelines as well as professional, ethical and safety standards that will protect everyone on the set. They can be found at [https://scacommunity.usc.edu/resources/physical production/pdf/SafetyRulesHandout.pdf](https://scacommunity.usc.edu/resources/physical%20production/pdf/SafetyRulesHandout.pdf)

The following policies are applicable to CTPR 290.

1. Motor Vehicles

With the exception of POV shots from inside a closed automobile, no moving motor vehicles are to be used in CTPR 290 productions. POV shots do not include using a motor vehicle as a dolly to record staged action.

All work involving non-moving motor vehicles must be done on private/non-commercial property.

- a.If you have scripted a moving automobile shot film you must use a “Poor Man’s Process” technique on private property or on University property. Your faculty will instruct you how to do this.
- b.You may not place a camera or a crew member on a street.
2. Minors (actors under 18 years of age) require the presence of a studio teacher and legal guardian, along with valid work permits.
3. No guns of any kind may appear in a 290 project. Productions are only authorized to use rubber knives, swords or bayonets. Squibs are not allowed.
4. Stunt coordinators are mandatory for any action that could in any way injure your actor.
5. USC Insurance never covers any vehicle of any kind.
6. Jib arms, cranes, scissor lifts, camera cars are not allowed on student projects.
7. No creature may be harmed during the filming of any USC Student Project. The American Humane Society must approve use of all animals.
8. The use of motor boats/speed boats is prohibited, as are helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft.
9. Students are authorized to use 290 light kits and practical lights (300 watts and under) only. No lights are to be rented or donated from vendors. Generators are not permitted.
10. Fire is limited to the use of LED candles and cigarette lighters. Candy Glass (a special stunt glass) must be used when glass, plates, mirrors, etc. are broken as part of a stunt or when these objects present a possible danger to an actor.
11. The maximum shooting day for USC projects is 12 hours. The minimum turn around time before the next shooting day is 12 hours.
12. No open-toed shoes on sets, stages, or around any heavy equipment.
13. Students may not go beyond the 50 Mile Studio Zone.

Failure to follow these policies may result in:

1. Confiscation of the student's film.
2. Lowering of the student's grade. Serious violations will result in a grade of F for the project.
3. Suspension of the student's production number.
4. Class failure.
5. Appearance before the SCA Academic Violation Committee of both peers and faculty members.
6. Appearance before the University Judicial Affairs Committee.

All students must consult with the instructor on any shot that might raise a safety issue. The hazardous shooting form can be found online at:

https://scacommunity.usc.edu/resources/physical_production/hazardous_form.cfm

You must have Hazardous Shooting Conditions Forms, signed by your instructor and the Head of Physical Production, prior to shooting in any situation or location that might be considered dangerous or when using weapons, projectiles, or stunts. This process must be completed by the Thursday before shooting. If you cannot complete the process before shooting, you must cancel whatever would require the form. Students are expected to work with others in the class whenever on location. Everyone (crew and cast) is responsible for safety on the set.

Do not store equipment in your car, even in a locked trunk. It is not insured for loss if stolen from a vehicle.

EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

All 290 projects MUST be shot on the camera provided to students by the School of Cinematic Arts and edited in the SCA AVID labs. Use of personal or rented professional cinema equipment is prohibited in 290. No Exceptions.

Projects not shot on SCA camera and/or edited outside of the SCA AVID labs will be graded as an "F" and confiscated by the class instructor.

The School will provide digital cameras, tripods, and editing stations. Students must pay a Lab Fee of \$500 and also an Insurance Fee of \$300.

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 Cards for the camera**
 - Must have a Class 10 rating
 - Must pass minimum Class 10 requirement tests (transfer speeds minimum of 10MB/s)
 - Must be marked as SDHC (Secure Digital High Capacity)
 - This excludes both Micro and Mini SDHC, as well as SDXC.
 - Low failure rate

3. One of the following approved External Hard Drives:

The following is the list of SCA approved and supported hard drives. Any student purchased drive must meet the requirements below. Samsung T3 SSD Portable (bus-powered, USB-C**, laptop friendly), approximate retail price \$170 - \$370

- Glyph Black Box Plus (bus-powered, USB-C**, laptop friendly), approximate retail price \$99-\$120
- Glyph Studio (requires AC power), approximate retail price \$149
- G-Tech G-Drive Mobile USB-C (bus-powered, USB-C**, laptop friendly), approximate retail price \$130
- G-Tech G-Drive (requires AC power), approximate retail price \$230 and up
- G-Tech G-Drive Mobile USB-C Bus-powered, USB-C**, laptop friendly (Approximate retail price \$130)

Notes: The hard drives listed are recommended to have a drive speed of 7200rpm. Capacity: We do not recommend hard drives over 2TB.

**All of the "mobile" drives are USB-C, also known as USB3.1

Check SCA Approved Drives on Supported Hard Drive document at <http://knowledgebase.sca.usc.edu/> before purchasing a drive.

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

Setting can be found by clicking on "Menu"

Toggle down to REC/OUT SET then select "Exec"

Toggle arrow to the right and down to select "Rec Format" then select "Exec" then choose: HD 1080/24p FX and select "Exec"

To verify you've selected the correct format at the main screen select the "Display" button until you see HD 1080/24p FX on the viewfinder screen.

- 2. Access to lighting kits after the 5th week of classes**
- 3. Limited grip/electric equipment for the crew project.**

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 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 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/academicsupport/centerprograms/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

290 Editorial Syllabus

ORIENTATION MEETING – staff & SA led (See Calendar)

Meeting 1

Editing: - AVID LAB (No Editing Instructor)

Main function of Editing Lab in 290 is learning AVID functions.

Quicktimes of editing exercises may not be emailed to instructors.

Students will work individually on SCA approved hard drives.

Teachers should email students to remind them to purchase and bring USC SCA approved hard drives and headphones with ¼ adapters to class.

Lab Orientation: Tony Bushman:

Explains SCA Lab Rules, policies, procedures, important department contacts, safety information.

- Front Desk Procedures (signing in, checking out a workstation)
- SCA Lab Policies
- Locker Procedures
- Safety Procedures

Technical Orientation: Class SA:

Explains use of SCA Lab equipment, resources, and technical workflow information

- How to use the SCA Knowledgebase and access SCA documentation
- SCA Lab Policies
- Getting Help in the Labs
- SCA Lab Workstation Logins
- Using Lab Workstations
- Reformatting External Hard Drives
- Connecting to ISIS
- Using Classroom Exercises
- Avid Project Organization
- Class specific workflow training (e.g. NXCAM Camera Dailies Workflow)

MEETING 1 - with instructor (See Calendar)

Meeting 1

Editing in AVID Lab (With Editing Instructor)

Review Basic Avid editing functions:

-Students bring in dailies from the classroom exercises and use them as a working tool, during Avid function demonstration. 3hrs

-Basic Avid editing functions: marking ins & outs, three point editing, inserts & overwrites, lift, overwrite, match frame, track management, trim mode etc. etc.

-Organizing folders and bins in project window to conform with SCA work flow and industry work flow.

-Avid settings, Project setup, Project window and saving project,

-Backing up Project and Avid Files folders

-Homework assignment: Cut a scene from classroom exercises.

MEETING 2 – with instructor (See Calendar)

Editing in AVID Lab (With Editing Instructor)

-Review Basic Avid editing functions and introduce more advanced Avid editing functions.

-Students use their cut scene from classroom editing exercises as a working tool during Avid function demonstration.

-Match cutting, dissolves, fades, wipes; L-cuts, advanced trim mode.

-Simple VFX from Effects Palette.

(2.5 hrs)

Vagabond scout last ½ hour of class.

PERSONAL CRITIQUE

Movie-maker: _____

Date: _____

Title: _____

Project No: _____

NOTE: **TWO PRINTED** copies to be turned in with project.

INTENT: (How you want to affect us)

SYNOPSIS: (What we see)

STRENGTHS: (List by priority, one line per item)

WEAKNESSES: (List by priority, one line per item)

WHAT I WANT TO LEARN TO DO BETTER IS:

CRIT ON CRIT

Movie-maker: _____

Date: _____

Title: _____

Project No: _____

(Due ONE WEEK after screening)

THE MAJOR SUGGESTIONS IN THE CRITS WERE:

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

I AGREE/DISAGREE WITH THE SUGGESTIONS AS FOLLOWS:

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

BASED ON THE SCREENING AND CRITIQUES, IF I COULD CONTINUE TO SHOOT OR EDIT, I WOULD MAKE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES:

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Statement of Understanding

I have read and understand the policies and procedures outlined in the CTPR 290 Syllabus, and the Student Production Office Handbook, and have attended the SCA Safety Seminar.

I agree to conference with my instructors before creating any situation that might put my actors, crew, bystanders, or myself in jeopardy.

I am equally committed to protecting and enhancing the reputation of the USC School of Cinematic Arts through my actions.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____