

**USC School of Cinematic Arts**  
**SYLLABUS CTPR 499 [2 units] SPRING 2017**  
**SPECIAL TOPICS: WORLD BUILDING DESIGN STUDIO**

**Location** SCI L-104 Fridays  
**Time** 9AM – 11:50AM

**Instructor** Peggy Weil, Adjunct Faculty, pweil@usc.edu  
Office SCA 410 (*by appointment*)

**S.A.** Christopher Satola satola@usc.edu



L. Serafini, *Codex Seraphinus*

**Course Description**

World Building is a design practice integrating visual and scenario design in the construction of worlds as containers for narrative. World Building as an approach to narrative recognizes and documents interlocking systems of value and potential, creating conditions for choice, action and character across media to craft transmedia worlds. World Building encourages story development from diverse worlds and perspectives. The course welcomes projects across genres: documentary, drama, speculative fiction, fantasy and experimental immersive experiences.

3D modeling and visualization skills have emerged as essential tools for filmmakers from concept through production. In this course students will familiarize themselves with the basics of two 3D software tools, SketchUP and Cinema 4D Studio. Using these tools, students will create wireframe models to visualize scene and story development. 3D modeling and animation tools can also be applied to VR, AR and 3D-Stereo projects.

World Building practice integrates with the SCA Production curriculum. World Building projects developed may be developed in parallel with projects in other Production Department classes or applied to future projects.

### **Course Goals**

- Familiarize students with the concepts, work-flow, and tools of World Building.
- Acquire basic 3D Visualization tools: SketchUP and Cinema 4D Studio.  
*(No previous experience with 3D modeling necessary, software is on Lab computers.)*
- Clearly articulate visual and narrative elements of place, character and scenario.
- Create and document a comprehensive World Design in parallel with a current production project or as development of a future project. This document can be delivered with or without a completed script.

### **Course Structure**

The course is run as a workshop and is structured with three overlapping strands:

- Placemaking
- Embedded Narrative
- Visualization Labs

Students will keep an ongoing journal to document their progression as they focus from a broad concept to defining a specific scenario and characters. Visualization Labs will be introduced during weeks 2, 4, 6 and 8 with ongoing exercises enabling students to model their projects. The visualization exercises culminate in an opportunity to experience a portion of their worlds within a VR headset. There will be occasional posted readings and outside speakers. *\*The schedule is subject to modification due to availability of speakers and field trip destinations.*

### **Requirements and Grades**

Students are expected to come to class prepared and to participate actively in class discussions. Assignments must be submitted on time. With the inclusion of a lab component in this class, readings have been kept to a minimum, so it is especially important to engage thoughtfully with the contents of each assigned reading and exercise. Assignments are due, either posted on class drive or via email to class email by 9AM (class time) of due date.

Class begins promptly; excessive tardiness will be counted as an absence. The only acceptable excuses for missing a class or taking an incomplete in the course are personal illness or a family emergency (with authorized documentation). Students must inform the professor before an excused absence or it will be counted as unexcused. One unexcused absence requires a meeting with the instructor and may affect your grade; two unexcused absences will lower a student's final grade by one third (i.e. from an A to an A-).

This class is run as a workshop and, as such, requires thoughtful and attentive attention to all class projects. The Class Participation grade reflects quality as well as quantity, i.e., the ability to engage in constructive and meaningful critique of fellow classmates' work.

### **Grading**

10%	Class Participation	(10) points
20%	Journal	4 entries, each (5) points
20%	3D Modeling Exercises	4 exercises, each (5) points
20%	Maps and Documentation	4 assignments, each (5) points
30%	Final World Design & Presentation	30 points = (20) Presentation & (10) Final Revision

## Weekly Schedule

### PREPARATION FOR FIRST CLASS

Students must come to the first class with two concepts they wish to explore and communicate. Begin with observations and personal perspectives to articulate two compelling ideas or premises; two statements of intention and sensibility. Note that this assignment does not begin with story or character, but is rather to *explore an intention by creating a world* for narrative to emerge. Worlds may be fiction or non-fiction; present, past or future; local or universal. Concepts should reflect more than one of the above. Be prepared to present these ideas in less than one minute each.

	Theme	Discussion	Presentations	Assignments	Due
<b>Week 1</b> 1/13/17	OBSERVATION INTENTION  PLACEMAKING	Overview Observation & Environment	Pitch and discuss concepts, Begin to focus projects.	<u>Journal 1</u> Project concepts Reference Material <u>Journal 2</u> Define & commit to project, Intention	WK2  WK 3
<b>Week 2</b> 1/20/17	VISUALIZATION I	SketchUP Intro	<u>Journal 1</u>	<u>3D Modeling 1</u> SketchUP exercise: 3 views of evocative space in .mov file	WK4
<b>Week 3</b> 1/27/17	DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTATION	Week 3 Dates	<u>Journal 2</u>	<u>MAPS1</u> 1 <sup>st</sup> Macro Map: ID conditions, zones, resources, circulation, limits  <u>Journal 3</u> Production Plan Identify topics for research	WK4  WK5
<b>Week 4</b> 2/3/17	VISUALIZATION II	Cinema 4D Intro	<u>3D Modeling 1</u>  <u>MAPS1</u> maps	<u>MAPS2</u> Identify 3 spaces within world to investigate  <u>3D Modeling2</u> 1 <sup>st</sup> Cinema 4D ex	WK5  WK6
<b>Week 5</b> 2/10/17	RULES POSSIBILITY SPACE	Story evolution from environment	<u>Journal 3</u> <u>MAPS2</u> 3 spaces	<u>MAPS3</u> Select space for development, Sketch w/rough dimensions	WK6

	Theme	Discussion	Presentations	Assignments	Due
<b>Week 6</b> 2/17/17	VISUALIZATION III	Cinema 4D cont.	<u>3D Modeling2</u>  <u>MAPS3</u> sketch	<u>3D Modeling3</u> Draft Micro Model  <u>3D Modeling4</u> Micro Model,cont.  <u>MAPS4</u> 2D Micro & Macro Maps, Documentation for Draft Presentations	WK10  WK12  WK10
<b>Week 7</b> 2/24/17	CHARACTER & SCENE DEVELOPMENT I	Character as product of world	Character research: Vertical Dive	<u>Journal 4</u> Character Research Write 3 brief scenes in the space in treatment form.	WK9
<b>Week 8</b> 3/3/17	VISUALIZATION IV Cinema 4D cont.	Visiting Speaker: Pre-Viz	Lab: Progress on 3D Modeling assignments 3&4	Ongoing work on Draft Presentations	
<b>Week 9</b> 3/10/17	CHARACTER & SCENE DEVELOPMENT II	Character as product of world, cont.	<u>Journal 4</u> Chars	Plan for revisions	
<b>Week 10</b> 3/24/17	DRAFT PRESENTATIONS: MACRO		<u>3D Modeling3</u> <u>MAPS4</u>	Plan for revisions	
<b>Week 11</b> 3/31/17	TRANSMEDIA DESIGN	Visiting Speaker TBD			
<b>Week 12</b> 4/7/17	DRAFT PRESENTATIONS: MICRO		<u>3D Modeling4</u>	Prepare files for Field Trip VR	WK13
<b>Week 13</b> 4/14/17	IMMERSIVE WORLDS	Visit MxR Lab	View worlds in VR headsets	Prepare Final Presentation	
<b>Week 14</b> 4/21/17	Presentations & Crit		Final Presentations Group 1	Revisions	5/5
<b>Week 15</b> 4/28/17	Presentations & Crit		Final Presentations Group 2	Revisions	5/5
<b>Finals</b> <b>5/5/17</b>	Final Revisions Due				

## FINAL PROJECT / WORLD DESIGN

The final project is a compilation of the semester's assignments into a WORLD BIBLE documenting visual and story aspects of your world with written and visual components. The in-class presentation may be in the form of a slide presentation including still images (reference material/maps/diagrams/illustrations) and moving images created from one of the two 3D modeling packages, SketchUP or Cinema 4D. The final deliverable on 5/5 is the in-class presentation accompanied by the written documentation – and revised in response to comments.

### World Bible Components:

- Title
- Tagline (1 sentence description)
- Genre / Time Period / Location
- Brief (One Paragraph) Introduction
- Table of Contents

List of documented areas of world/culture pertinent to genre/story

*(not all worlds will cover all topics, choose those critical to understanding your world)*

- General Geography / Resources
  - History / Mythology / Religion / Hierarchy
  - Government / Economics / Transportation / Laws
  - Communication / Arts / Language
  - [Magical or outside of Earth]
  - Causality / Physics / Magical rules / Creatures / Super powers
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- Map: Macro  
Overall view of world showing context: adjacent worlds/kingdoms/nations/burbs with relevant boundaries, major features and movement relevant to story.  
[Revised Assignment MAPS3]
  - Character Sketches  
[Revised Assignment JOURNAL 4]
  - Brief Treatment: one scene, one to three characters  
[Revised Assignment JOURNAL 4]
  - Map: Micro  
Selection of one or two areas for scene development. Sketch showing adjacencies, ingress, exits, affordances of site.  
[Revised Assignment MAPS4]
  - 3D Visualization of Scene:  
Basic model of one scene, shown with one or two camera moves.  
[Revised Assignments 3DModeling3 and 3DModeling4]

## 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](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/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](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.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PLEASE NOTE:</b> <b>FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED</b> <b>IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS</b> <b>COMPLEX</b></p>
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