

USC School of Cinematic Arts
CTPR 335 Motion Picture Editing, Section 18498
Class Meetings: Tuesdays, 7pm-10pm
Location: SCA 363 or 356 (see below for details)

Instructor: Yvette M. Amirian

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Website: www.ymamirian.com

Office hours: Tuesdays before class, 5-7pm, or by appointment.

I am also available via e-mail or Skype throughout the week.

SA: **Jason Piemnoppakao**

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Syllabus subject to change

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Picture Editors are story tellers. Unlike writers who use text, or lyricists who use words, we use visual images, dialogue, sound, special effects and music to tell our stories. How we use these elements and why we use them is important. *Why* should I cut at this frame as opposed to this one? *Why* is it more important to use off-camera dialogue as opposed to playing dialogue on-camera? *Why* should a music cue start at this point in a scene as opposed to that point? *When* to cut, *when not* to cut, *when* to stylize, *when not* to and *why*.

This class is about the “hows” (using the Avid Media Composer, editing techniques, the grammar and language of editing), and the “whys” (editing aesthetics, basic theory and concepts behind film editing.)

The class will partly be a hands-on course where you will learn the basics of how to use Avid Media Composer, the leading software in the motion picture post-production industry. Even though picture editing is fundamentally about storytelling, it is also a technical medium needing great organizational skills. Therefore, you will also learn how to organize a project, set up bins, manage media (footage, sound effects, music), create custom settings, and how to properly present your assignments each week.

Learning the basic concepts of editing is useful for all facets of filmmaking, especially if you want to be a writer, director, producer, or even a cinematographer—because after the shooting stops, it all comes down to the editor to put the pieces together to make a story. At the end of the semester, you should not only be able to analyze any piece of media from an editing perspective and understand *why* the editor made the choices he/she did, but you will also be able to cut your own stories using your own choices.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT:

SCA-approved and supported Hard Drives

*****You will be working with a partner on each project, to be decided on the first day of class. You DO NOT need the hard drive with you for the first class. Once you are paired up, you and your partner can decide how to split the cost of your drive.**

IF you already have a hard drive, or choose to purchase one before the start of class...

Check the SCA Community website BEFORE purchasing a drive, or to make sure the one you have is an SCA-approved drive.

ONLY SCA-approved hard drives will be supported, in the event of a technical issue.

Below is the navigation to SCA Community information on what hard drive to purchase...

<https://cinema.usc.edu/Laptops/> – Scroll down and click “HARD DRIVES”

Headphones

You will need to purchase headphones with a 1/4” adapter for use in the labs.

Again, you do not need headphones for the first day of class. If you are considering editing or sound work in the long term, I highly suggest investing in a solid pair of professional headphones. Here is a link to my favorites, which I have been using since my time as an SCA student. They also come with a 1/4” adapter...

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000AJIF4E/ref=oh_aui_search_detailpage?ie=UTF8&psc=1

Keyboard Cover

Although not necessary or required, I find that an Avid keyboard, or Avid LogicSkin cover, can be helpful when first learning the software. Here is a link to one you can purchase on Amazon...

https://www.amazon.com/LogicKeyboard-LogicSkin-Apple-Keyboard-Composer/dp/B005BLPZOE/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1501017387&sr=8-1-spons&keywords=avid+media+composer+keyboard&psc=1

In addition to Amazon.com, another good shop to order equipment from is B&H Photo: (<https://www.bhphotovideo.com>).

SUGGESTED READING

In the Blink of an Eye
by Walter Murch

Cutting It In Hollywood
by Mitchell Danton

“The Lean Forward Moment: Create Compelling Stories for Film, TV, and The Web”
by Norman Hollyn; New Riders Press

Foundations of Video: The Art of Editing with Norman Hollyn on www.lynda.com

CLASS FORMAT

Each week will be a mixture of lecture, film/TV clip viewings, class discussion/presentations, and hands-on training. We will alternate our time between a traditional classroom (SCA 363), and an Avid lab classroom (SCA 356, just across the hall). Please be sure to check the syllabus for each week's schedule, in order to know which classroom we will be in for that evening. We will also have guest speakers 1-3 times during the semester, dependent upon guest availability.

Once you begin your editing assignments, a portion of class time will be devoted to sharing individual editing assignments. An editor's work is scrutinized every day in the real world, so in this class you will be expected to show your work to everyone and get their notes, as well as provide your own insight to your peers. Your participation in this class contributes to your grade, both with your partner outside the classroom, and inside the classroom collaborating with your peers.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

There will be small editing assignments done in class, and five larger editing projects that deal with different editing theories and techniques. You will work in pairs cutting raw footage (called "Dailies") from Hollywood industry films and television shows. You will be asked to cut scenes together, show your first cuts in front of the class and get their feedback, then turn in revisions based on your notes. Part of this process will also be learning the technical skills necessary to work with Avid Media Composer more creatively and efficiently. All work will be done on your hard drive.

You MUST bring your hard drive to class EVERY week, so you can show work in class. Absolutely NO QuickTime files will be accepted.

There will also be a written scene analysis assignment, and various oral presentations throughout the semester.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PROTOCOL

Students are expected to attend class regularly and be punctual. Class starts promptly at 7:00 pm.

Excused absences will be granted, only in the case of rare extenuating circumstances, with an e-mail explanation prior to the class. If you are absent without a valid excuse and e-mail, or are habitually late, your grade will be affected.

There will be **NO USE OF CELL PHONE** functions in class. Laptops may remain open **ONLY** if they are used to take notes. Non-observance of the above will also affect your grade.

GRADING

Grading will be done on a standard scale with no curve:

A 600 pts.
A- 550 pts.
B 500 pts.
B- 450 pts.
C 400 pts.
C- 350 pts

Editing Assignment # 1 (Boston Legal)	50	points
Editing Assignment # 2 (500 DAYS OF SUMMER scene)	50	points
Editing Assignment # 3 (Action scene)	50	points
Editing Assignment # 4 (Action scene with style/VFX)	50	points
Editing Assignment # 5 (Promo or music video)	100	points
Scene Analysis/oral class presentations	75	points
Project Organization	25	points
Class participation	100	points
Final exam	100	points
Total of	600	points

Attendance: More than three unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your grade 50 pts.

Tardiness: Each unexcused tardiness is minus 5 points (tardiness is arriving after 7:15pm). If you KNOW you are going to be late, please e-mail me or Jason, so we can mark it as excused!

*****Participation is an important part of your grade:**

I would like everyone to be an active participant every week. Filmmaking and editing requires teamwork, collaboration, and the sharing of opinions on your work on a daily basis. So your contributions to the work of others are crucial to the learning process.

*****Do not hesitate to ask me for help, or to discuss conceptual ideas you have for your assignments:**

Editing, in the beginning, can be confusing... so please, do not let concerns or confusion over the technical stuff keep you from a rewarding and fun experience. Just ask me!

PRESENTATION of Editing Assignments

All of your editing assignments will done on your hard drive and shared in class; your SA and lab assistants can help with this process.

Project organization is 25 points of your total grade! As a professional editor and assistant editor, organization is essential to everyone's productivity and sanity. Every week, I will inspect your drives upon viewing your assignments. I expect all projects to be organized in the same format I teach you in class. Failure to do so will affect your grade. Proper project organization will be discussed during the first few classes.

Every assignment should have:

A Title Card at the beginning with all of the necessary information and be presented in this format:

- 2 seconds of black,
- 5 seconds of a Title Card that contains the following information:
 - Your name(s)
 - Project Name (i.e. *500 Days of Summer*, Scene 10)
 - Version (i.e. "First Cut," "Second Cut", etc.)
- 2 more seconds of black
- the editing assignment
- then finishing with 1 second of black at the end

RULES FOR USING SCA COMPUTER LABS

1) No food, drinks (including bottled water), gum, or skateboards in the labs, Edit or Sound Edit Suites. Violation of this rule will result in suspension of Lab or Edit Room privileges. Locker area is available for food and drink storage.

2) You must sign in at Front Desk with your Student ID and use station assigned. Any change must be done through Front Desk.

3) If you are having technical problems with your workstation, contact a Tech through the Front Desk or Help Desk.

4) Closing time is strictly enforced. Techs will give warnings when to begin saving. Please do not argue with them.

5) Lab Hours and Supported Hard Drive documents can be found at the Front Desk, Help Desk, and SCA Community.

6) Headphones with 1/4 inch adapters are required at each workstation. SCA does not supply headphones or adapters.

7) Users may be bumped after their station has been vacant for a period of 30 minutes.

8) For locker checkout, fill out locker form in B144. Lock must be approved before locker is assigned.

9) SCA Help Documents are located on each workstation desktop.

10) Please handle all equipment and computers professionally.

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 exams, or submitting any work that you or your partner have not done. 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 myself.

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 our 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.

WEEKLY COURSE PLAN:

The following is a rough outline of how the semester will progress. All material below is subject to change, dependent upon guest speaker and lab time availability.

*****ALL editing assignments will be done in pairs, on a shared hard drive*****

Week 1 (August 22)

*****CLASS IN SCA 363**

Lecture (7-8pm)

- Take care of registration
- Review the syllabus
- Discussion about the course

Practice:

-From 8-10 PM, we will have an introductory tutorial on using the SCA labs and Avid Media Composer in the editing Labs (ROOM B118)

- Proper project set-up, bins and folders/organization, transferring media, user settings, hard drive formatting and set-up

Assignment (to complete for next week's class):

- Purchase and format hard drive with your partner
- Editing in the LAB – Create/set up your editing project:**
- Create and label your project (Boston Legal)
- Create and label bins/folders (dailies, first cut, etc.)
- Bring hard drive with completed assignment to class

Week 2 (August 29)

*****CLASS IN SCA 356**

Lecture:

- Watch portion of "The Cutting Edge" – a documentary on the history of film editing
- Discuss log lines and scene analysis, beats, creating change
- Discuss camera angles (coverage) setups and slating
- The 180 degree rule
- The Kuleshov effect (example in class)
- The Lined Script (see printed examples)

Practice:

- Setting up a project (Editing Assignment 1: Boston Legal)
- Sub-clipping and organizing your dailies to prepare for cutting
- Start setting up/customizing your keyboard

ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):

- Write out a scene analysis for your Boston Legal scene (ask SA to email you copy of the script). This is an INDIVIDUAL assignment
- Pick a movie you like, write a log line for it
- Bring both to class to hand in; be prepared to share with the class in an oral presentation
- Editing in the LAB – Organize your project:**
- Find your scene for Boston Legal on classroom exercises partition
- Organize it: sub-clip dailies and organize them in "frame view"
- Bring hard drive to class with your organized scene bin, and be prepared to share with the class, along with your written scene analysis and log line.

Week 3 (September 5)

*****CLASS IN SCA 356**

Lecture:

- Approaching dailies: how to watch raw footage and understand the thought process of the editor, using the scene analysis
- Cutting a basic scene

Practice:

- Turn in logline/script analysis (be prepared to share with the class)
- Review project set up assignments
- Study dailies of Boston Legal scene
- Basic concepts of making your first cuts,
- Source/Record. Cutting in the timeline. Three-point editing. Working with splice, lift vs. extract, and basic trimming.

ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):

-Editing in the LAB:

- Start cutting your Exercise 1/Boston Legal scene (First Assembly)
- Bring your cut on your hard drive to class

Week 4 (September 12)

*****CLASS IN SCA 363**

Lecture:

- Finish watching The Cutting Edge
- Working with Sound and Music/Creating a sound design
- Watch and discuss examples of sound FX and music in feature films or TV shows

Practice:

- Review and watch editing assignments with class (Boston Legal first assembly)
- Discuss refining your cuts

ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):

- Refine your Exercise 1/Boston Legal cut (Editor's Rough Cut)

Week 5 (September 19)

Lecture:

*****CLASS IN SCA 356**

- More editing techniques: trim mode, scrolling, match cut
- Introduction to sound and music editing
- L-cuts, checker boarding, dialogue editing

Practice:

- Watch refined Boston Legal editing assignments and give final notes

ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):

- Prepare AVID project from Editing Assignment 2 dailies (500 Days). You will sub-clip these dailies, organize your project, and begin a first assembly of your scene.

Week 6 (September 26) *****CLASS IN SCA 363**

Lecture:

- Cutting genres – Horror and Suspense (view and discuss examples)

Practice:

- Avid project for Editing Assignment 2 will be inspected for organization, and first assembly progress will be viewed, notes given. Review adding music, checker boarding.

ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):

- Complete your cut of Editing Assignment 2. Add sound design and music. Consider this your final version to present in next week's class.

Week 7 (October 3)

*****CLASS IN SCA 363**

Lecture:

- Watch and discuss examples of action cutting in feature films or TV shows
- Discuss action cutting techniques
- Watch dailies of action scenes (Gladiator; Thor; ER), and analyze dailies for action cutting

Practice:

- Watch Final Versions of Editing Assignment 2

ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):

- Prepare AVID project from Editing Assignment 3 dailies (*Gladiator*); Begin assembling first cut of action scene.

Week 8 (October 10)

*****CLASS IN BASEMENT, B118**

Lecture:

- Working with Style/VFX – part 1
- Watch and discuss examples of feature film or TV shows – stylistic vs. formal

Practice:

- Watch 1st versions of Editing assignment 3, give notes, discuss ideas for adding EFX/style/sound and music.

ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):

- Address notes given in class; Continue working on your Editing Assignment 3, start adding EFX/style/music/sound design to your cuts to turn it into Editing Assignment 4 – focus more on sound/music for now.

Week 9 (October 17)

*****CLASS IN SCA 356**

Lecture:

- Working with Style/VFX – part 2
- How to use the EFX pallet and other stylistic techniques

Practice:

- Watch 1st versions of Editing Assignment 4, give notes, discuss more ideas for refining/adding EFX/style.
- Using the AVID effects palette
- Stylistic techniques
- Work on sound and music editing, adding EFX/style in lab

ASSIGNMENT

- Address notes given in class; Continue adding EFX/style/music/sound design to your cuts.

Week 10 (October 24)

*****CLASS IN SCA 363**

Lecture:

- Comedy Editing – show clips and examples. **Possible guest speaker*

Practice:

- No practice/viewing of assignments

ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):

- Address notes given in class last week; Continue adding EFX/style/music/sound design to your cuts (Editing Assignment 4 – Final version to be presented next week!)

Week 11 (October 31)

*****CLASS IN SCA 356**

Lecture:

- Intercutting
- Promos, Trailers, and Music Videos (view and discuss examples)

Practice:

- Watch final versions of Editing Assignment 4

ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):

- Start preparing/cutting Editing Assignment 5 – be prepared to present a pitch/idea/sub-clips/assemblies in class.

Week 12 (November 7)

*****CLASS IN SCA 363**

Lecture:

- Documentary Film & Television (view and discuss examples, **Possible guest speaker*)

Practice:

- No practice/viewing of assignments

ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):

- Continue preparing/cutting Editing Assignment 5 – be prepared to present a pitch/idea in class on 04/11. Make sure you have gone through the classroom exercises and pulled (sub-clipped) pieces to present as part of your pitch/assembly; be prepared to pitch to the class!

Week 13 (November 14)

*****CLASS IN SCA 356**

Lecture:

- Multi-cam editing for (sitcoms, reality TV, etc.)

Practice:

- Basics of grouping, cutting from groups, working with multi-cam footage
- Review current state of Editing Assignment 5; discuss ideas/pitches

ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):

- Put together a 1st version of Editing Assignment 5.

Week 14 (November 21)

*****CLASS IN SCA 356**

Lecture/Practice:

- View 1st version of Editing Assignment 5, give notes, work on editing in class

ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):

- Address notes/finish cutting your promo or music video/Editing Assignment 5

Week 15 (November 28)

*****CLASS IN SCA 363**

Lecture/Practice:

- Review for the final/Last class
- Realities of the editor's job – the challenges, the usual behavioral mistakes first-time editors make and how to avoid them, the psychological aspects of working with the director and other creative people, how to run the room, how to get the job and keep it.

Practice:

- View final versions of promo or music video/Editing Assignment 5.

ASSIGNMENT

- Study/Prepare for Final.

Week 16 (December 5): ******STUDY WEEK – NO CLASS******

Week 17 (December 12)

-Final Exam – 7-10pm, SCA 363

*****IMPORTANT*****

ALL STUDENTS MUST BE PRESENT ON THIS DAY, 12/12, AT 7PM FOR THE FINAL EXAM. ABSOLUTELY NO MAKE-UP DATES WILL BE ALLOWED. THIS IS A VERY STRICT SCA POLICY THAT I AM NOT ALLOWED TO CHANGE.

*****PLEASE MAKE YOUR TRAVEL PLANS FOR WINTER BREAK ACCORDINGLY!!!*****

STUDENT SURVEY:

Name _____
Major _____ Email _____

The following is not graded. My intention is to understand everyone's capabilities and interests coming into the semester.

* What kind of editing experience have you had at USC or elsewhere? Please be specific.

* Are you familiar with any editing software? If so, please list which ones.

* Why did you choose to take this course?

* Name three things you hope to learn in this course.

* List your five favorite films... and why (this doesn't have to be about editing).

* List your five favorite TV shows... and why (this doesn't have to be about editing).