

**USC Spring Semester 2018  
CTPR 327**

**MOTION PICTURE CAMERA - COURSE OVERVIEW**

Introduction to the theory and practice of motion picture photography. Students work in groups to shoot in class exercises on HD. The emphasis is on controlling the image through the use of camera placement, lens selection, movement, lighting and composition. Open to all undergraduate students.

***Three Class Sections***

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**Tuesday**                      **6:30p – 9:30p**                      **Soundstage #3**  
Instructor:                      *Gary Wagner*                      310-339-9626 Cell  
exit.now@mac.com

Office Hours:                      *SCA ??*                      *by appointment*

Student Assistant:                      *???*                      *???* Cell  
*???*

3 Units

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**Wednesday**                      **6:30p – 9:30p**                      **Soundstage #3**  
Instructor:                      *Tristan Whitman*                      310-714-0563 Cell  
tristanwhitman@sbcglobal.net

Office Hours:                      *SCA 419*                      *by appointment*

Student Assistant:                      *Lars Struck*                      305-588-3590 Cell  
struck@usc.edu

3 Units

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**Thursday**                      **6:30p – 9:30p**                      **Soundstage #3**  
Instructor:                      *No class*

Office Hours:

Student Assistant:

3 Units

“Art is the lie that makes us realize the truth.”

Pablo Picasso

**Course Objective:** To learn how to operate camera and lighting equipment and to begin to "see" light, manipulate it and to accurately record the images you pre-visualize on HD Video.

**Course Description:** Cinema-TV 327 is an excellent introduction to the creative and technical challenges of motion picture photography. The content of the course will emphasize learning how to express ideas, moods, story and character using basic photographic and lighting principals to control the images you create to express ideas, mood, story and character.

**What to expect from the course:**

You will be exposed to a wide variety of cinematic challenges that will enable you to develop your "eye". You will learn how to expose HD, as well as how to manipulate the light, camera and content of your "scenes" into a meaningful, conceptual presentation. If you commit to this learning process you will finish the course with a basic competence in these areas and should have a more refined idea concerning how best to pursue your development in filmmaking and in particular, cinematography. This is an ideal introduction to motion picture photography for aspiring cinematographers, as well as for those interested in directing, editing, art directing, writing and producing. The first few class meetings will be lectures designed to give you the basics to get you going. The remainder of the meetings will be photographing in-class "Scene Projects", the guidelines for which I will provide. Equipment is not available outside of class periods.

**Safe Conduct.** The stage is a place where people can be seriously injured or equipment damaged beyond repair. Pay attention.

**Dress Code:** The sound stage is an industrial work environment. All students must come to class prepared for physical work. You must wear long pants and close toed shoes. Shorts, skirts, dresses, sandals and flip flops will not be allowed. If you come inappropriately attired, you will be asked to leave and will be marked absent. I also strongly suggest you bring leather palmed work gloves.

**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 of the 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.

### **In-class Scene Projects:**

Cinematography is first "seeing" reality, interpreting that reality, then recreating our interpretation of that reality on HD. Having the in-class projects based on existing works gives you the framework and context to overcome challenges while you create the photographic images you want. There is no reason to become unduly absorbed in the exact contextual details (i.e. acting, art direction, costumes, etc.) of the scene to the point of forgetting what the class is about - learning about cinematography. This is not a class in set design or props – we can use our imagination. \*No weapons, real or otherwise will be allowed in your scene projects.

The Scene Projects will consist of shooting HD on the stage. Depending on the number of people in the class we will form 2-3 groups. Each person will be assigned specific crew responsibilities within the group and will rotate those responsibilities for each weekly exercise. Crews will shoot 3 or more shots for each exercise. The results of those exercises will be viewed and discussed the following class period.

I will provide you with specific guidelines for your in class projects. You will be required to work with your individual groups outside of class to create your shot list and a detailed plan for each in class project.

Each week, the cinematographers are to come prepared with still images of the scene they wish to emulate, a copy of their script, shot list, story boards, floor plan and a brief synopsis describing the visual intention of the scene (what it should look like).

**Demonstrations:** Throughout the semester I will demonstrate use of equipment and various lighting techniques. I may also screen a number of clips to help illustrate various cinematic concepts.

### **Readings:**

Throughout the semester I will refer to information and articles in these sources. You will be expected to have working knowledge of the material.

Recommended Readings will be from:

**The Bare Bones Camera Course for Film and Video** by Tom Schroeppel

**The Filmmaker's Eye: Learning (and Breaking) the Rules of Cinematic Composition** by Gustavo Mercado

Current Articles of interest: to be Emailed

### **Required:**

- Weekly Handouts and/or downloadable PDF files will be emailed by SA

## Grading:

Quiz	25 points
Notebook Assignment	20 points
Participation	10 points
Scene Projects (prep, shoot & wrap)	20 points
Final group project	15 points
Final written	10 points
Attendance	Each unexcused absence lowers grade one step. (i.e. from an A to an A- or from an A- to a B+)
Tardiness	Two late arrivals to class = one unexcused absence

1. Quiz is a written individual quiz that tests your understanding of the material presented through lectures and reading assignments.
2. Notebook is an individual assignment. **NO LATE NOTEBOOKS ACCEPTED!!**
3. Participation is essential to the collaborative process of filmmaking. It is essential that each of you participate in this class. Your thoughts, questions and ideas are valuable to the class as a whole.
4. Scene Projects. This portion of the class will be graded both individually and for the group. Each cinematographer must submit the paperwork (described above) for their scene.
5. Final Project requires the participation of all the students in the class. (The instructor reserves the right to change this to an individual written exam.)

## Attendance

For an absence to be excused, you will need to provide me with a doctor's note or other form of verifiable evidence pertaining to a personal or family emergency.

**Missing a Quiz or Exam, Incompletes:** The only acceptable excuses for missing a quiz or exam or for taking an incomplete in the course are personal illness or a family emergency. Students must inform the instructor **before** the quiz or exam and present verifiable evidence in order for a make up to be scheduled. Students who wish to take an incomplete must also present documentation of the problem to the instructor **before** the final grades are submitted.

## 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.

"Amateurs concern themselves with equipment, professionals concern themselves with schedules, and masters concern themselves with light."

# Course Schedule

*(This schedule is subject to change as necessary and at the discretion of the instructor)*

<b>Class</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Class 1 January 10	Introduction to Class Class Overview, Assign Readings, Lecture on Mechanics of Camera & Exposure Color Temp and Color
Class 2 January 17	Review Mechanics of Camera Building the Camera System, Loading and Care Read: Class 1 & Class 2 PDF Downloads (Camera)
Class 3 January 24	Demonstration: Stage Safety, Electrical Distribution Introduction to Grip and Lighting Equipment Lecture: Use of Light Meters, Building the Image, Exposure Latitude Assign: Notebooks - Due Class 9 Read: Class 3 PDF Downloads (Exposure & Latitude)
Class 4 January 31	Shoot #1 Exposure Latitude Reading –Class 4 PDF Downloads (Color and Color Temperature)
Class 5 February 7	Lecture: Space and Lenses Shoot #2 A Sense of Place Reading –Class 5 PDF Downloads (Lenses)
Class 6 February 14	Lecture: Depth of Field Shoot #3 Depth of Field Reading – Class 6 PDF Downloads (Depth of Field) – review for quiz
Class 7 February 21	Shoot #4 re-create scene from Movie/TV (Shooting for Coverage and the Line) Reading – Class 9 Download article
Class 8 February 28	<b>Quiz</b>
Class 9 March 7	<b>Notebooks Due!</b> Lecture: Quality of Light Shoot #5 Hard Light/Soft Light Reading – Class 11 Download article
Class 10 March 14	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
Class 11 March 21	<b>Notebooks Due!</b> Shoot #6 Motivated Source Lighting Reading – Class12 Download – article
Class 12 March 28	<b>Lecture: Shooting Product shots</b> Shoot #7 Shooting Products Reading – Class 13 Download - article
Class 13 April 4	Shoot #8 Product shot/commercial Reading – Class 14 Download - article
Class 14 April 11	Shoot #9 Night Exterior workshop (entire class) Led by Instructor
Class 15 April 18	Shoot Final Project #10 Mixing Color Temperatures
Final Class Mtg April 25	Screen Final Project
Final Exam Thursday May 2	Final written Exam