

USCCinematicArts

**CTPR 385 (18511R)**  
**Colloquium: Motion Picture Production Techniques**

**Units: 4**

**Fall 2018 - Thursday - 4:00- 6:50 pm**

**Location:** RZC Stage E

**Instructor: Dave O'Brien**

**Office:** SCA 410

**Office Hours:** By appointment only

**Contact Info:** dpo@usc.edu, 213.610.0667

**Student Assistant: Jonatas Da Silva**

**Contact Info:** jdasilva@usc.edu, 757.359.8736

## Course Description

From idea and script, to shooting and editing, you will learn the fundamental components of motion picture production while collaborating with classmates on short form digital video projects.

The class will take a very hands-on approach and introduce you to both the creative side (script analysis, working with actors, visualization, etc.) and the basic technical side (camera, lights, editing, etc.) of the filmmaking process.

Through class exercises, analysis of past films and completion of your own projects you will begin to understand how the many layers of cinematic storytelling - technical, aesthetic, and emotional- work together to reach an audience.

## Course Notes

- All projects will be shot on the Canon XA-20 camera and edited in Avid Express DV.
- Include a mandatory and readable USC credit at the end your other credits:  
    **“Student Produced at the University of Southern California, 2018.”**
- Video projects must be uploaded to Google Drive, BE LABELED WITH LAST NAMES OF ALL GROUP MEMBERS (if applicable) and NAME OF THE ASSIGNMENT and the link must be posted to Blackboard by ALL THREE MEMBERS. **Check to insure your project has uploaded and plays properly. Extensions will not be granted based on failed uploads and it is UP TO YOU to insure proper labeling.**

## Equipment and Facilities

The School will provide:

- **Semester-long checkouts** - Canon XA-20 cameras, one per group of three students. Students will also have access to basic light and sound kits and edit on Avid Xpress DV, even if you own other editing software, because the University provides support for this software. It will also be easier to get help from classmates if you're in the Avid lab, using the same type of equipment.
- **Weekly checkouts** – With consent of instructor, you will be able to check out a basic light kit and basic audio kit. Light kits will be reserved for final projects only.

You will provide/purchase:

- A good set of headphones: Production Students should consider Sony MDR 7506 headphones (about \$80), everyone should have headphones that cover their ears well because the edit lab can be noisy and you must be able to hear subtleties as you mix your sound tracks. **HEADPHONES MUST COME WITH A ¼” ADAPTER TO WORK IN THE LAB.**
- 16 GB SD Memory Card. About \$20 at Target, Best Buy, Office Depot or online, shared with trio.
- Hard drive (about \$120) and flash drive (about \$10) for use in AVID LAB, shared with trio.
- Any related supplies for each production such as prop or wardrobe purchases or rentals, location rental fees and food for actors and crew. These expenses will vary depending on the scope of your project, but should not exceed roughly \$50 per student for any of the first two projects or \$100 per student for the final project.

## Description and Assessment of Assignments

Your overall grade for 385 will be based on your personal growth as a filmmaker, your willingness to explore themes and techniques, your mastery of craft and your development in relation to your classmates. It will be measured with a variety of assignments (see following assignment page).

You will be graded A through F (including pluses and minuses) upon completion of the course. Grades of "Incomplete" are given for medical emergencies only. Emergencies are narrowly interpreted.

## Projects/Assignments

1. **Individual – Participation:** This class requires your full participation. Attendance at every class session is expected except in the case of emergencies. Participation includes arriving on time, remaining engaged and offering suggestions, ideas and feedback.
2. **Individual – Top Hat Questions:** In 385, we will use Top Hat, a classroom response system. You will be asked to respond in class to questions using your smart phone or tablet, and sometimes outside of class. The cost of Top Hat for one term is \$26.
3. **Individual - Scene Breakdown Assignment:** Each student will choose a scene NO LONGER THAN 3 MINUTES and submit a digital copy of that scene (either find on YouTube or come prepared to show with exact start time) along with storyboards illustrating the shots used in creating the scene.
4. **Individual – Editing Assignment:** Each student will be provided with material from a popular scripted television show to edit into a completed scene.
5. **Group - Coverage Project**
  - 2 page scene, 2-3 minutes from existing screenplay
  - 2 actors, 1 location
  - One trio member serve as Director, one serves as Producer/Cinematographer, one serves as Production Sound/Editor
6. **Group - Mini-Documentary Project**
  - 1-5 minute mini-documentary on a subject of your choosing
  - Focus on SHOW rather than TELL
  - One trio member serve as Director, one serves as Producer/Cinematographer, one serves as Production Sound/Editor
7. **Group - Final Scripted Project**
  - Students will work in trios to write an original or adapted script of no more than five pages for a 3-7 minute short film that could be produced with limited budget, no more than three actors and a limited number of locations for consideration for the final project.
  - One trio member serve as Director, one serves as Producer/Cinematographer, one serves as Production Sound/Editor

## Grading Breakdown

Assignment	% of Grade
Participation (discussion, feedback to other students, etc...)	15
Top Hat Participation	5
Coverage Project	20
Documentary Project	30
Final Scripted Project	30

In each of the three projects, you will be graded 1/3 on Effort, Attitude, Collaboration and Timely Delivery, 1/3 on your personal performance and growth in your work and 1/3 on the overall creative outcome of the work.

## Assignment Submission Policy

### DEADLINES

The attached 385 Class Calendar outlines all assignment deadlines. Assignments are to be turned in at the BEGINNING of the class, even if you feel that it is unfinished. If for some reason you do not have a completed film by the deadline, we encourage you to show it as a “work-in-progress” with the opportunity to screen it for your instructors when it is complete. **Assignments arriving after the start of class will have a 1/3 letter grade penalty and will be presented at the instructor's discretion.** “Turned in” means, in most cases, fully uploaded to the class YouTube page or posted to Blackboard. **ASSIGNMENTS UPLOADED TO YOUTUBE MUST ALSO BE POSTED AS A LINK ON BLACKBOARD FOR ALL STUDENTS.**

Deadlines are an essential part of a group project. Being on time is part of the craft of producing films and we encourage you to work on your time organization skills if you have trouble meeting deadlines. Your work (or missed work) will have an impact on two other people and their group project grade.

## Production Division Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Two unexcused absences will result in a student's grade being lowered by one full letter (IE: A becomes B). A third unexcused absence will result in a student's grade being lowered by one, additional full letter (IE: B becomes C). A student's grade will be lowered by one full letter for each additional unexcused absence. Two late class arrivals equate to one full absence.

In order for an absence to be excused, the student must have approval from the professor and provide documentation at the next attended class session.

If a student misses class due to an emergency, the student must contact the professor prior to class or contact the Production Office at 213-740-3317.

## **Additional Policies**

### **PRODUCTION SAFETY**

You must attend the Safety Seminar before you can receive a production number (which enables you to check out equipment and edit in the lab. YOU MUST ALSO FOLLOW the regulations contained in the Safety Handbook. Consult with your instructors before placing yourself or others in a potentially dangerous situation. Find safe ways of shooting what you want to do. Failure to procure permits for stunts or to adhere to safe shooting procedures can have a range of consequences - from loss of a grade to suspension from USC. Most effects can be suggested more effectively through creative directing and editing than by actually showing the event on-screen.

**Any use of stunts or weapons in your projects requires a pre-production conversation with your instructors first and then with the Safety Consultant. Obtain this BEFORE shooting.**

### **CREW POSITIONS**

Several projects in this class require work in groups of three students and each will rotate through crew positions. On one project, one student will serve as Producer/Cinematographer, another will serve as Producer/Director and finally Production Sound/Editor. On the next project, each student rotates one position forward, for example the student who is Production Sound/Editor on the first project will be Producer/Cinematographer on the next. In this way, each student gets the opportunity to fill each role once and the workload is more evenly spread out.

### **ACTORS**

USC students can work with SAG (Screen Actors Guild) actors for their course projects without providing any monetary compensation. USC has an agreement with SAG, which does not apply to the independent projects that students do outside of USC.

In posting Casting Notices, CNTV students must describe their projects as USC projects, not “spec” or independent projects,” since this is against the USC SAG agreement. **Actors MUST be provided with tape copies of their work (in a timely fashion).**

### **USE OF MINORS**

If you want to use minors (actors under 18) in your films, you must conform to state regulations by limiting the number of hours they work and assuring their welfare by the presence of a licensed teacher/social worker. You can get details from SPO (Student Production Office).

**IMPORTANT:** If you have questions about any of these policies, **check first with your instructor &** then with Joe Wallenstein, Director of Physical Production (213.740.7126).

## Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics/Daily Activities	Deliverables DUE	Assignments
<b>Week 1</b> 8/23	<b>INTRODUCTIONS (45)</b>  <b>BASICS OF STORY (90)</b>  <b>INTRO COVERAGE PROJECT (25)</b>		<b>Coverage Project Script</b> Find a 2-3 page scene, one location, two actors that you could shoot as a team.  <b>WATCH Canon XA-20 Tutorial (:30)</b> <b>WATCH Focus on Narrative 1-4 Lynda (1:10)</b>
<b>Week 2</b> 8/30	<b>SAFETY MEETING (45)</b> Joe Wallenstein walks us through USC regulations <b>PRE-PRODUCTION (30)</b> <b>PREP COVERAGE PROJECTS(45)</b>  <i>GUEST?</i>	<b>Coverage Project Script</b>	<b>Complete Production Quiz &amp; Paperwork</b>  <b>WATCH AVID Editing Lynda (1:08)</b> <b>WATCH Working on a Film Set Lynda (2:13)</b>
<b>Week 3</b> 9/6 Meet in AVID Lab	<b>EDITING/AVID TUTORIAL PART 1 (120)</b> <b>SHOT SELECTION (40)</b>	<b>Review AVID Tutorial</b>	<b>Coverage Project Pre-Production</b> Prepare shot list, storyboard, find cast and location. <b>WATCH Pre-Production Lynda (2:13)</b>  <b>RESERVE AUDIO KITS</b>
<b>Week 4</b> 9/13 Meet in AVID Lab	<b>EDITING/AVID TUTORIAL PART 2 (90)</b> <b>CAMERA CHECK-OUT (30)</b> <b>CAMERA EXERCISE (30)</b>	<b>Coverage Project Shot List &amp; Storyboards, Cast, Location</b>	<b>Coverage Project</b> Shoot and edit your coverage project
<b>Week 5</b> 9/20	<b>REVIEW COVERAGE PROJ (90)</b> <b>DOC STORYTELLING (80)</b>	<b>Shot and assembled Coverage Project</b> <b>Ideas for Docs</b>	<b>Research and prepare Doc Pitches</b>  <b>WATCH Learning Doc Video 1 (1:38)</b>  <b>RESERVE AUDIO KITS</b>
<b>Week 6</b> 9/27	<b>DOCUMENTARY PREP (120)</b> <i>GUEST?</i>	<b>Doc Pitches</b>	<b>SHOOT DOCUMENTARY</b>  <b>Prepare Doc Dailies Assembly</b>
<b>Week 7</b> 10/4	<b>REVIEW DOC DAILIES (120)</b> <b>STORY/SCREENPLAY STRUCTURE (30)</b> <b>PRODUCTION AUDIO (30)</b>	<b>Doc Dailies Assemblies -</b> Dailies should be laid out in an exported sequence, include a portion of the best take of each shot, under 10 min total.	<b>SHOOT DOCUMENTARY</b> <b>Prepare Doc Dailies Assembly</b> <b>Prepare Doc Rough Cut</b>
<b>Week 8</b> 10/11	<b>REVIEW DOC DAILIES (100)</b> <b>REVIEW SCENE CUTS (60)</b>	<b>Doc Dailies Assemblies</b> <b>Doc Rough Cuts –</b> As much of the film as you can get cut together, no more than	<b>Doc Fine Cuts</b> <b>Ideas for Final Scripts</b> <b>WATCH Screenwriting Lynda (3:17)</b>

Week 9 10/18	REVIEW DOC FINE CUTS (90) WORKING WITH ACTORS (30)  <i>GUEST?</i>	Doc Fine Cuts Story Ideas for Final Script	Script Rough Drafts
Week 10 10/25	REVIEW SCRIPTS (90) CASTING (30) <i>GUEST?</i>	Script Rough Drafts	Scout/Photog Locations - Prd List of Production Elements - Prd Draft Shot List - Cin Post Casting Breakdowns - Dir
Week 11 11/1	PRODUCTION PREP (90) LIGHTING/SOUND (40) RUNNING THE SET (30)	Scouted Locations List of Production Elements Rough Shot List Casting Breakdowns	Casting Sessions – Prd/Dir Lock Locations - Prd Draft Haz Forms - Prd Final Shot List – Cin/Dir Draft Shooting Schedule – Cin  <b>RESERVE AUDIO/LIGHT KITS</b>
Week 12 11/8	GREENLIGHT MEETINGS (120) <i>GUEST?</i>	Casting Tapes Hazardous Shooting Forms Shooting Schedule Final Shot Lists Locked Locations	SHOOT 4/11-4/16 Editors Assemble Dailies
Week 13 11/15	REVIEW DAILIES SOUND DESIGN	Final Project Dailies – Dailies should be laid out in an exported sequence, include a portion of the best take of each shot, under 8 min total.	Prepare Rough Cut for next class
Week 14 11/22	<b>THANKSGIVING</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>	
Week 15 11/29 Meet at Camera Equipment Center	CAMERA RETURNS FACULTY EVALS REVIEW ROUGH CUTS	Final Project Rough Cut	Prepare Final Cut for Exam Time Producers and Editors insure all cast and crew get copies of final project
FINAL 12/6	Final Exam will be held 4:30-6:30 pm, Location TBA		

## 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 Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. 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>.

### Support Systems:

*Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255*

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

*Sexual Assault Resource Center*

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086*

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu/>

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs*

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. <http://dsp.usc.edu>

*Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710*

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

*Diversity at USC*

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. <https://diversity.usc.edu/>

*USC Emergency Information*

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, <http://emergency.usc.edu>

*USC Department of Public Safety – 213-740-4321 (UPC) and 323-442-1000 (HSC) for 24-hour emergency assistance or to report a crime.*

Provides overall safety to USC community. <http://dps.usc.edu>



**PLEASE NOTE:**

**FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX**