

USC School of Cinematic Arts

Media Arts + Practice Division

IML 320 Designing and Writing for Transmedia Narrative

Spring 2018
4 units
Tuesday: 1:00 – 3:50 pm
SCI 209

Professor: Vicki Callahan
Email: vcallahan@cinema.usc.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday 12:00 -1:00 pm;
Wednesday 3:00-4:00 pm (SCI 101G)
TA: Emilia Yang, emiliaya@usc.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the possibilities of transmedia, interactive, or cross-platform storytelling in the context of developing a story about contemporary campus life. Our goal is to develop/revise a collaborative script that looks at the social impact of racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, and the consequences of hatred on campus culture. The project offers students an opportunity to address issues of identity, self-esteem, and larger public health concerns.

Students will learn about classic film structure, interactive non-linear storytelling, and character development. They will also develop their ability to affect social change through dialogue and media-making. This will be a reading, writing, and viewing intensive class that explores the possibilities for narrative design and social impact.

The course features an international community partner, the UK based web-series, *TryLife* (Paul Irwin and Nicky Kaur, director and producer). *TryLife* (<http://www.trylife.tv>) is a successful interactive web-series with a large global audience aimed at exploring the difficult life choices facing young people and offering the opportunity to imagine a range of responses to key events. We will use the series as our narrative model to help us in the design of a prototype of a shooting script for *TryLife*, and we will receive direct feedback on our work from the production team.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

- Alan Watt, *The 90 Day Screenplay: From Concept to Polish*
- Adams, Maurianne, et. al. *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice, 3rd edition*
- Students will be required to view several films, some will be on reserve at library but all will also be available via Amazon.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

20% Reading/Viewing Responses/Prep for Writing
20% Interviews with completion of one video edit
40% Script Revisions/Additions
10% Pre-Production/Production Tasks
10% Final Reflection

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION POLICY

No late work is accepted beyond the stated deadlines unless there is a documented excuse.

Attendance and Participation: This class depends on group work and community building, which makes your attendance vital. Come to class. If you must miss a class, please notify your teaching staff via email (with IML295 in the subject line) and be sure to get any notes and assignments from a colleague. This allows us (your professor and TA) to engage with you intellectually rather than logistically. Please exchange contact information with at least two other students. We also cover subject matter that is often provocative, and can challenge our worldviews. Thus, while lively debate is encouraged and all points of view are welcome, you will be expected to be back your claims with evidence and to maintain respect for your interlocutors.

Online, In-Class Etiquette/Presence: It is very important that our class time is quality time and that you are an engaged presence so we can work as a focused collaborative unit. While we often work online as part of our class, we will have policy a no laptop or mobile phone use unless for class assigned purpose. Do not use any online time in class for personal communication not related to class – no messaging, mail, Facebook updates, cell phones etc. If for some reason you feel some urgent need to do this or have an emergency message (this includes calls), please step out of the classroom.

Statement on Fair Use: Fair use is a legal principle that defines certain limitations on the exclusive rights of copyright holders. MA+P projects are produced with fair use doctrines in mind using its four pillars: (1) the purpose and character of use, (2) the nature of the copyrighted work, (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work. Generally speaking, this means you must only use as much of a copyrighted work as is necessary to make your point, and you must cite your sources accordingly.

Citation Guidelines: We assert that work produced in MA+P classes is covered under the Doctrine of Fair Use. In order to make this claim, however, all projects must include academically appropriate citations in the form of a References section, which covers all sources, in order to receive a passing grade. The References section is either included in the project itself or as a separate document, as appropriate. We follow the *Kairos Journal of Rhetoric, Technology and Pedagogy* style guide <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/styleguide.html> for citation purposes; Kairos uses a modified APA format, whose general guidelines and specific examples may be found here: <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/styleguide.html#apa>

PLEASE NOTE:

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

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (Subject to change)

Please consult the course wiki for the most current information, assignments and due dates.

Jan 9, Week 1 Introduction to the class

View and Discussion:

LonelyGirl15: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-goXKtd6cPo>;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLqCM16i6QY>

Awkward Black Girl: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIVa9lkkbus>

Try Life, Episode 1: <http://www.trylife.tv/episodes/sophie>

Due for week 2:

Read:

- “The Complexity of Identity” and “Identities and Social Locations” in *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* (pp. 1-15)
 - Robert McKee, “The Story Problem” on wiki (pages 11-17)
 - TryLife Act One (print out a copy to bring to class, 1-37)
 - Karen Swallow Prior, “The New Old Way to Tell Stories, With Input from the Audience,” *The Atlantic*, October 18, 2013
<http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2013/10/the-new-old-way-to-tell-stories-with-input-from-the-audience/280682/>
 - **View:**
 - *The Lizzie Bennett Diaries* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KisuGP2lcPs>, Episodes 1 - 4 and some of the related materials linked through Prior article
 - *TryLife Episode 2*: <http://www.trylife.tv/episodes/aaliyah>
- Interview (audio/video record): USC student/s**

Jan. 16 , Week 2: Storytelling in a Multi-platform/path form

Discuss readings and *Lizzie Bennett Diaries*, *TryLife 2* and script thoughts

View episode of *Dear White People*, *Downtown Browns*

For Week 3

Read:

in *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*

Alan G. Johnson, The Social Construction of Difference (pp 15-21)

Beverly Daniel Tatum “Can We Talk (pp 65-68)

Voices, Section 2, (pp 109-126)

And

McKee, The Structure of Story Design

TryLife, Act Two (print out and bring to class)

View: *Fruitvale Station* (script in Resources area of wiki)

Interview: USC student activists

Jan. 23, Week 3: Story Elements and Structure

In class view and explore: *East Los High, Try Life 3*

In class: Writing Exercises on Fruitvale Station and *TryLife*

Due Week 4:

Read:

- in *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* (on class) pp. 141-145; 157-70; 192-211; 216-225
- *Selections from: Watt, 90 day Screenplay* Intro and Part 1
- TryLife Act 3 (print out and bring to class)

View: *Dear White People* (script on wiki)

Interview: USC Staff/Faculty that work on diversity

Jan 30, Week 4: Creating Characters

Writing exercises on TryLife

Due Week 5:

Read:

- Chris Crawford, “What Exactly is Interactivity?” From *The Art of Interactive Design*, pgs 3-12.
- Janet Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck* excerpts, read parts I and II
<http://www.altx.com/ebr/ebr7/7mur.htm>
- selections from *The 90 Day Screenplay* (19-25, 248)

Write: Character Back Story

View: *Tsotsi*

Feb 6, Week 5: Writing Pathways/Choices

Discuss readings, character stories, and pathways in storytelling (Tsotsi example)

Due Week 6:

Read:

- in *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* (Sexism) pgs. 323-329
- selections from *The 90 Day Screenplay*

View: *The Hunting Ground*

Write: in teams for basic story arc and path/s: characters, basic events, choices

Feb 13, Week 6: Script Work

Discuss *The Hunting Ground*

Feedback on writing teams' work
Workshop on Act 1

Due Week 7:

Read:

- In *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* (Transgender Oppression) pgs. 432-459
- selections from *The 90 Day Screenplay*
- “Twine the Video Game Technology for all,
“http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/23/magazine/twine-the-video-game-technology-for-all.html?ref=magazine&_r=1”

**View: Howling Dogs by Portenpine Heartscape, <http://slimedaughter.com/games/>
And Depression Quest, <http://www.depressionquest.com>**

Or if not Depression Question, select another game by Heartscape

OR take a look at Twine site, scroll down for samples:

<https://twinery.org>

Write in groups to complete Act 1

Feb 20, Week 7: Script Work

Discuss readings and twine stories

Review Act 1

Workshop Act 2

For Week 8:

Read:

- In *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* (Religion) pgs. 237-244; 289-305
- selections from *The 90 Day Screenplay*

Write: in Groups to complete Act 2

Feb 27, Week 8: Script Work

Due Week 9:

Read:

- In *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* (Heterosexism) pgs. 379-398, 403-411
- selections from *The 90 Day Screenplay*

Write: in groups to complete Act 3

March 6, Week 9: Script Work; Lock Storyline and Pre-production

Script read through, revisions

March 13-16, Spring Break

March 20 Week 10: Pre-Production Work

Guest (3 pm): Elizabeth Galoozis, Head, Information Literacy, USC Libraries: discussion of Visions & Voices panel *Talking Race: Social Media and Social Justice* on Tuesday, March 27, 2018 at 7 pm at Doheny Memorial Library

It is strongly encouraged you attend V+V and extra credit will be given for the event

March 27, Week 11: TryLife Filming

April 3, Week 12: Complete TryLife Filming

April 10, Week 13:

Short video essay work (based on prior or new interviews)

- **Read:** In *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* (Heterosexism) Pgs.594-630; 635-641

April 17, Week 14:

Video essay work

April 24: Final Feedback Session

Show rough cut/trailer of TryLife Episode and videos from interviews

Final Exam, Final Course Reflection Due May 9 at 4:00 pm

Study days April 29-Tuesday, May 1

Exams May 2-9, 2018

Additional Course Policies and Resources

Statement on 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>.

Statement for Students with Disabilities: Any student requesting academic

accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Emergency Plan: In the event of an emergency, all attempts will be made to continue MAP courses as usual. If we cannot meet synchronously, we will continue with our asynchronous work. In addition, all course materials are backed up on a secondary site (usually Blackboard) in the event that the primary wiki site should go down.

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>