School of Cinematic Arts

CTPR 450: The Production and Post-Production Assistant

Fall 2019, Section 18554

Instructors: Mary Posatko

Class Schedule: Tuesday 9:00 – 11:50

Class Location: SCI 108

Office Hours: By Appointment

Contact Information: Mary Posatko

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310-770-3877

Student Assistant

**COURSE OBJECTIVE:**

To give students a hands-on crew experience while working on CTPR 480 films or CTPR 486 shows. To expose students to “real world” aspects of development and production from concept to completion. To help prepare all students for a successful transition into the film industry job market.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Students will be encouraged to see development from every angle, including ideation, development of script, recognition of the unique production issues inherent in 480 or any other short scripted project. Emphasis will be placed on successful collaboration. All key roles – producer, writer, director, editor, sound design, production design, casting, etc. – will be discussed in terms of successful storytelling in this short form. The importance of understanding all roles in production and collaboration in story telling will be stressed. Differences between Television and Film in the above areas will also be examined.

Students will be encouraged to immerse themselves in the process and challenged to choose roles they may not have considered before. The class will mirror real world collaborative development in a way that will teach students to apply the skills learned from short form development to the development of television, film and new media projects. Projects will be written in the class but this will NOT be a writing class, rather it will be an overview of the entire development process from ideation to just before production. The class will focus on a hybrid of the roles of producers, director and writers in development, with as referenced above, a strong emphasis on collaboration, and also provide an understanding of how each department contributes to creative storytelling.

Students will also participate in secondary roles in 480 or 486 productions and reflect on the continuing process of the current Spring 480/486 productions.

**SUGGESTED READING:**

- *The Tools of Screenwriting* by David Howard and Edward Mabley.

- *Shooting to Kill* by Christine Vachon & David Edelstein.

- Daily newspaper or websites, the trades, KCRW’s The Business podcast, short stories, novels, anything you can get your hands on really… READING/LISTENING IS IMPORTANT TO THE PROCESS!

**GRADING CRITERIA:**

Class Participation and Presentations: 40%

Crew Participation in /480/486 (as evidenced by the Crew Surveys): 40%

Final Exam: 20%

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Two unexcused absences will result in your grade being lowered by one full point (ex: A to A-). A third unexcused absence will result in your grade being lowered another full point (ex: A- to B+). Your grade will be lowered by one point for every absence after. Two late arrivals equates to one full absence. We understand there may be times where you are required to be in two places at once. The key is communication. If you must miss class, please contact either the SA or one of your instructors prior to class.

Please note: **ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE TO BE DELIVERED VIA EMAIL TO MARY POSATKO and copied to THE SA.**

**Week One (August 27, 2019) --- Class overview and orientation**

What is this class? How does this class work?

What are my responsibilities?

What can students do if they feel they are pressured to commit more time than they are realistically able to commit?

View a 480 film(s).

What worked? Didn’t work?

Production challenges that had to be overcome?

What is CTPR 480? What are the deadlines and expectations?

What is the process of getting into CTPR 480?

Brenda Goodman comes to class to discuss CTPR 480.

Former 450 students come to class to discuss 450/480.

What should 480/484 students reasonably expect from 450 students?

What are other class options in addition to CTPR 480 (Sitcom, Hour-Long TV, Animation, VR)?

What makes a good pitch?

Networking: Use 450 as a “meeting place” for directors, DPs, PDs, editors, soundies, etc. to get to know each other and collaborate.

SCA Community has a system that exists for finding crew. Use it!

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1bbIuywziu3KlGCp0K0B16xr4Ab-CWcWE7dgpLfGH41M/edit#gid=625253874

**Assignment:** Writers to bring in one or two ideas to pitch. If you are *not* a designated writer, but would like to submit an idea, you may pitch your idea to a writer who will then pitch it in the following class.

Pitches should be 3-5 minutes long and include logline, genre, characters, tone, theme.

Fill out google chart with your interests. You must pick one area in which to present to the class (pitching, reel and resume, personal branding).

**If students have not joined a 480 team, they must do so ASAP.**

**Week Two (September 3, 2019) --- Development begins/ Lecture: The Crew and the Set**

Crew Structure/Hierarchy and the Run of Day

Writers (and others looking for writers) pitch ideas to the class.

*Any writer who succeeds in attaching a producer from the class will begin developing ideas into outlines with faculty and class support.*

**Assignment:** Writer/Producer teams work on the first draft of script. Anyone not pitching begin to work on reels/resume/personal branding website.

**Week Three** (**September 10, 2019) --- Writer Pitches Continue**

Writer Pitches continue.

Review of 480 pitching process and timelines.

**Assignment:** Writer-Producer teams need to email completed/partial drafts to Mary by **Sunday September 15, 2019 at 9am**.

**Week Four** (**September 17, 2019) --- Watch 480 Test Dailies**

lass joins with CTPR 480 to watch the test dailies (room SCA112).

**Week Five** (**September 24, 2019) --- Lecture: Television Producing**

Guest from the world of Television producing

Writer-Producer teams who are developing scripts to meet with faculty to discuss progress.

**Assignment:** Answer the 1st Online Production Survey about the 480 crew experience over the weekend.

Students answer questions regarding their experiences on 480 productions (pros, cons, set drama, set protocol, teachable moments, etc.)

Any significant issues need to be communicated to instructors during this class or prior to it.

Prepare pitches for next week. 5-7 minutes, visuals recommended, include story, characters, tone, theme, genre.

**Week Six** (**October 1, 2019) --- Watch 480 Dailies**

Class joins with CTPR 480 to watch the dailies (room SCA112).

**Week Seven** (**October 8, 2019) --- Writer-Producer Pitches**

Writer-Producer teams pitch their projects to class. Pitch order will be determined ahead of class.

Discussion of upcoming deadlines and what is in a director/producer application.

**Assignment:** Interested Directors, DPs, Editors, PDs, Soundies, Costumes Designers, etc. to develop reel and/or verbal pitch for the projects presented in class. 5 -7 minute pitches.

**Assignment:** Writer-Producer teams will continue to develop their scripts.

**Assignment:** Answer the 2nd Online Production Survey about the 480 crew experience over the weekend.

**Week Eight** (**October 15, 2019 ) Pitches, Cont.**

Continue writer/producer pitches.

Interested Crew to pitch for positions. Faculty/class critique of presentations and hiring teams.

**Assignments:** Writer-Producer teams will continue to develop their scripts. Drafts will be emailed to Mary **Sunday October 20, 2019 at 9am.**.

**MONDAY OCTOBER 21 is the submission deadline for scripts and director and producer applications for 480 (time TBD).**

**Week Nine** (**October 22, 2019) --- Watch 480 Cuts**

Class joins with CTPR 480 to watch the test dailies (SCA112).

**Assignment:** Shortlisted Writer/Producers/Directors will work on their pitches

**Assignment:** Continue to work on reels/resumes/personal branding website.

**Week Ten** - (**October 29, 2019) --- Getting a Movie Made Now**

Lecture on Grants, labs, festivals, publicity and press packs, unions and independent thinking

Continue pitches.

Review deadlines and 480 application process. Reels/resumes if time.

**Assignment:** Answer the 3rd Online Production Survey about your 480 crew experience over the weekend.

**Assignment:** Shortlisted Writer/Producers/Directors will work on their pitches

**Assignment**: If you are pitching your personal website/brand, prepare for critique next class.

**Week Eleven** : (**November 5, 2019) --- Lecture: Law for Filmmakers**

Guest to discuss basic Legal Concepts for Film: key elements of option and purchase agreements, actor deals, acquisition and distribution arrangements, music licenses, fair use, etc.

Personal branding, websites critiqued.

**Assignments**: Prepare reels and resumes for critique by guests and/or class.

**Week Twelve** **(November 12, 2019)--- 480 Pitch Practice**

Shortlisted 480 Team Pitch: Teams will have the opportunity to pitch and receive feedback from faculty. NO CLASS for everyone else

**Assignments:** Shortlisted Writer/Producers/Directors will work on their pitches.

\*\*\***THE 480 PITCH DATE IS FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15!**

**Week Thirteen:** (**November 19, 2019) --- Producing new media, Post-production, Reels and Resumes**

Guests will include a mid-form content producer and a post-producer. Reels and resumes will be critiqued.

**Week Fourteen** (**November 26, 2019) --- NO CLASS HAPPY THANKSGIVING**

**Week Fifteen** (**December 3, 2019) --- 480 Spotting Sessions/480 Faculty Visits, End of Semester Reflection and Looking Ahead**

Post-production sound class members will join their 480 crews for sound spotting sessions. 480 Faculty will Guest Lecture to the rest of the class.

Newly selected 480 teams lobby for crew to join their projects, if necessary.

Reels/resumes/websites critiqued, cont.

Students provide feedback about how to improve the course for future students.

**FINAL EXAM:** TO BE SCHEDULED

**480 Screenings are December 18th, 2019.**

**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 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> 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/*](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 fordisruptive 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.