

532 SYLLABUS

FALL 2019

SINGLE CAMERA INTERMEDIATE DIRECTING

Course Number: CTPR 532 Section: **18634D**

Location: SCE Stage 2

Time: Tuesdays from 7:00 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.

Instructor:

[REDACTED]

SA: [REDACTED]

I am only impressed when the actor's technique is so perfect that it has become invisible and has persuaded the audience that they are in the presence of a living human being who makes it possible for them to empathize with all his foibles and struggles as they unfold in the play. It is my firm belief that when you are aware of how a feat has been achieved, the actor has failed.

Uta Hagen, A Challenge for the Actor (p. 36)

The director's main responsibility -- and prerogative -- is telling the story. This means finding a structure to the script and setting up the events so that they are at once surprising and inevitable. You give the actor direction in order that the actor's actions and interactions illuminate and create those events. The actor has a responsibility -- and prerogative -- to create truthful behavior while following direction and fulfilling the requirements of the script. Actor and director must respect each other's creative territory.

Judith Weston, Directing Actors (p. 9)

Course Description:

By working on two scenes from an existing screenplay, each director will learn script analysis, how to breakdown a scene into beats, identifying their objectives and tactics which will then be concisely communicated to the actor using active playable terms.

Every director will learn to identify where the actors in rehearsal are clear and effective, and where they are confused and need to be helped. This will sharpen your skills of observation as well as providing you with directing methods and techniques.

Emphasis will be on the textual analysis of dramatic scene work and on the communication between the director and the performer. Through analytical preparation

and knowledge of the rehearsal process, each director will learn to communicate his or her concept to the actors and be able to realize their vision on camera.

Over the course of this semester, the directors will complete two scenes, both from one screenplay, selected by each director from the scripts listed in the syllabus. The first scene will be shot on a USC soundstage as a black box presentation. This will allow each director to invest their time in analyzing the scene, breaking it down into beats, and being able to discuss the characters objectives with their actors. Both scenes will be two character scenes, which hopefully will allow you to work with the same cast for both scenes. Just saving time and gaining trust and rapport with your actors.

Once the first scene has been selected and rehearsed outside of class, you will be present in class to be critiqued and workshopped. Then before its shoot, you will have to have one final rehearsal and prepared shot list.

The second project will be a full production. Once the second scene has been selected, you will try to select a shooting date that works for your schedule as well as your actors. You will then proceed to select locations and any necessary permits. You may begin this process as soon as your first project is shot and edited. When you select your timeslot, please consider commitments to other classes and upcoming deadlines, to try and ensure your workload isn't overwhelming.

Goals and Objectives:

Our goal is to discover the spontaneity of the moment while telling the story. No matter how good the script, how experienced the cinematographer, or how inventive the production designer, unless the actor engages the audience, the film will rarely succeed. Directors will discover how to use their most valuable asset, the actor, to enable them to create the performance and thereby the film they envision. Directors will learn how to find the structure of a scene and break it down into its component parts. They will work with actors and incorporate the camera to discover the scene and learn some of the nuances of acting and directing on film. All students will actively participate in acting exercises, thereby gaining a greater understanding of the acting process.

Journals:

Each director will write a short journal to be sent to JW and XY every Sunday. It will consist of 3 paragraphs: One paragraph concerning that week's reading assignment, one concerning a concept from the previous class that you want to reflect on. E.g.: It could be a concept that suddenly became clear to you, a moment, in the performance or some sort of new insight. Whatever you like! The last paragraph should focus on where you are in the rehearsal process and how it's working.

Grading:

An essential element to the success of this class is the active participation of all students. This entails thorough preparation of exercises and scenes. Grading will be based on the extent of preparation, having assignments in ON TIME, and the growth and development evidenced by the final project. Credit for a course cannot be given simply for being present. Your grade will be affected if you are unprepared or if you are absent without an excuse. This class only meets once a week, so it is imperative that you come to class prepared, including bringing all necessary objects/props and clothing/costumes necessary

for scenes and exercises.

Participation, Commitment, Discipline, Preparation	15%
Midterm Scene rehearsal & Analysis	15%
Midterm final cut video	25%
Final Scene & cut video	30%
Class Exercises	10%
Written Assignments (including quiz and production paperwork)	10%

- An unexcused absence results in a 1/2 grade point being deducted from your final grade in the class (e.g., one unexcused absence reduces your grade from A to A-).
- Three late appearances reduces your final grade 1/2 grade point (e.g. from A to A-).
- Late assignments without a medical excuse will be penalized 1/2 grade each class it is late. Not being prepared for in-class presentations will also be penalized 1/2 grade.

Textbooks and Materials:

List of Screenplays:

Before Sunrise
Before Sunset
Born on the 4th of July
Boyz N the Hood
Broadcast News
Clerks
Crash
Creed
Diner
Eat Drink Man Woman
Election
Erin Brockovich
Frankie and Johnnie
Frozen River
Fruitvale Station
Good Will Hunting
High Fidelity
Lost in Translation
Martha, Marcy, May, Marlene
Michael Clayton
Moonlight
Ordinary People
Real Women Have Curves
Sex, Lies & Videotape
Sideways
Silkwood
The Social Network
Sunshine Cleaning
Swingers

Walking & Talking
You Can Count On Me

Required Reading For Directors & Actors:

- Directing Actors by Judith Weston 20 copies
- Selected handouts

Further Recommended Reading:

Film Directing, Cinematic Motion: A Workshop for Staging Scenes by Steven Katz

A Challenge for the Actor by Uta Hagen.

On Directing by Harold Clurman

A Sense of Direction by William Ball

The Way of the Actor by Don Millman

Improvisation for the Theatre by Viola Spolin

Acting: The First Six Lessons by Richard Boleslavski

A Practical Handbook for the Actor by Melissa Bruder & others

Acting on Film by Michael Caine

The Secrets of Screen Acting by Patrick Tucker

The Genius of the System by Tom Shatz

Recommended Viewing at the Cinema School Library:

“American Masters – A Tribute to Sanford Meisner” – CINVID 8715

“Sally Field: Inside the Actor’s Studio” – CINVID 8714

GENERAL ASSIGNMENTS:

Midterm and Final Video Projects:

- Directors must read the entire script of the selected scene and make sure your actors have as well.
- Directors will use Harold Clurman’s 3-column breakdown to break down the dramatic values of the scene, cast it, meet/rehearse with actors outside of class, rehearse the scene in front of the class with props and costumes, shoot and edit it.
- DO NOT WATCH THE MOVIE THE SCENE IS FROM!! You may very well have seen the movie you want to work on, but as long as it’s not too fresh in your mind, it will probably be fine. The exciting part is to watch it after you’ve shot your own scene, then you can compare and contrast.

Weekly Readings: Will be assigned, and students will complete a short quiz demonstrating their understanding of the main concepts. Students will also be assigned at random to present a brief summary of the reading to the class.

Casting Scenes: Students are advised to hold auditions and cast the best actors available. The purpose of this class is to improve your ability to work with actors, (performers who assumedly take their craft seriously) not to have a good time with your roommate or drinking buddy (unless, of course, they happen to be actors who take their craft seriously).

Notes regarding Video Projects:

1. Directors will be responsible for payment of an insurance fee for usage of school equipment.
2. Directors sharing the same production number will work together. Since there is one camera between them, one director will act as the DP when the other directs. As the director, you may arrange to have a person other than the person who shares your production number act as the DP, but you are still responsible to act as the DP for the other director if called upon.
3. Small lighting package will be provided for this class. Also, only a couple of sound kits have been put aside for 475/477, so be sure to reserve them early. If you are shooting on an outside location, especially one that is a working business location, in that situation you must use a sound kit with boom and a boom operator. Reserve cameras at the equipment center on campus. You must provide ample notice, typically 72 hours, to obtain your camera. Please see Equipment Center Staff, or your SA for more reservation instructions.
4. The school will be able to provide rehearsal space and some access to sound stages for shooting. Make reservations at the Zemeckis Center desk right across from the entrance to Studio A or at Operations in the Steven Spielberg building to reserve space in the SCA facilities.
5. All directors will burn a watermark disclaimer that will run the length of the project. The disclaimer should read: "This is a classroom exercise and not intended for distribution."
6. The directors may edit their projects in Post on the Avid Premiere editing bays, which allow mini-digital input and output only. If they have access to outside facilities (e.g., Adobe, Final Cut Pro, etc.), they may use them, however they do so at their own risk as Post facilities will not be able to troubleshoot any technical problems. All directors must undergo a short Post checkout scheduled during the third class meeting, prior to being allowed to use the facilities there. Questions regarding equipment or the schedule should be addressed to the CNTV Production Assistant.
7. Each copy of your project that you give to your actors must have a letter accompanying it with the following wording:

USC's Current Camera Policy:

1. Students enrolled in 552, 533 and 532 have access to Sony EX3 cameras (if available) or Canon XC15 cameras. These are the standard, officially supported cameras for these classes.
2. If a student in 552, 533 or 532 wants to use the Sony F3 camera (with or without USC lenses) the cinematographer must be currently enrolled in SCA and have completed CTPR 424 or 537.
3. If a student in 552, 533 or 532 wants to use a USC Red Dragon, the cinematographer must be currently enrolled in SCA and have completed CTPR 557 Advanced Cinematography. Only the camera body is offered; all accessories and lenses must be rented from USC approved vendors and paid for by the student enrolled in the class. USC insurance never covers unapproved vendors.

4. If a student in 552 wants to use a Sony F5 camera (with or without USC lenses) the cinematographer must be a student currently enrolled in SCA, have completed CTPR 424 or 537 and have shot a CTPR 480 or 546.
5. The F-65 camera is only available to thesis projects.
6. Directing class students are the only person listed on the production number and are responsible for covering the deductible if equipment is lost or damaged. The deductible is \$2,500 per item per occurrence (Example: if a single event damages a camera and a lens, the deductible payment due is \$5,000). This applies to equipment from USC and rented from USC approved vendors. USC insurance never covers unapproved vendors. Student owned equipment is not covered by the USC insurance policy.
7. USC Insurance only covers approved vendors up to \$200,000. Any additional coverage must be provided by the student enrolled in the directing class.

FAIR USE INFO:

Using or adapting work protected under copyright without the author/holder of the copyright's permission is against the law. Fair use doesn't protect work that is publicly exhibited. Exhibition includes posting on the internet. Anyone using work without such permissions is liable for prosecution. That includes students, their parents if the student is underage, and very likely, the faculty member allowing this activity.

Tell your actors the SAG agreement allows for only 30 seconds only of material to be posted online. All students must "watermark" their projects on the bottom of each frame of the image with these remarks: "This is a classroom exercise and not intended for distribution".

A Note from Your Instructors

You will be expected to work hard, both in and out of class. You have a responsibility to yourself, to your fellow directors and actors and to the class as a whole. Together we are a production company – we, instructors, are your producers, the student assistant is the production coordinator/A.D. and you are the talent - the actors and directors. We all have to work together to deliver the product and to keep the chains of communication clear. (i.e. Directors call Actors, Actors call Directors, Director calls S.A. in regards to scheduling and then contacts the actor.) . You will be expected to push yourself beyond the comfort zone. Class participation, discipline and enthusiasm/rigor will be reflected in how prepared and committed your work is. Absorb criticism and avoid going to a defensive place. The people who process information are the ones who work.

A note to aspiring actors/directors/DPs/producers/writers, etc. - I have never asked an actor/director how good their grades were in high school or college, nor do I know of another actor, director, producer, studio executive, casting director or agent who asks actors/directors about their grade point average. The people that hire you are only interested in what you are able to create and produce, and if you are reliable, responsible and flexible - mentally, emotionally, and physically. However, we are required to give you a letter grade. They can be useful because they give you an idea of how you are

doing, and how you are applying yourself in the context of this class, thereby enabling you to maximize your strengths and minimize your weaknesses. As with most things, you will get out of it what you put into it.

"Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The office is in Student Union 301, and their phone number is (213) 740-0776."

All students are expected to understand and abide by the USC School of Cinematic Arts Safety guidelines. Violations of any of the safety guidelines may result in disciplinary action ranging from confiscation of footage to expulsion from the University.

CTPR 532 Schedule –FALL 2019

Week 1: 8/27/19

In class:

1. **Introductions**/fill out Contact Sheet
2. **Hand out and discuss: Syllabus** with schedule, **Opening Packet**
3. **Each director's screenplay and scene selection** will be handed in next week.
Have 1st and 2nd choices for selected scenes (3-5 pages, 2 actors) from script list for Project 1.
4. **Handout** and discuss **9 Questions**.
5. **Handout** Harold Clurman "**Three Column Breakdown.**"
6. **Directors** will sign up for the order of scene workshops.
7. **Do the Layering on Exercise** and discuss **Hagen's 6 Steps**.
8. **Announce Drama School auditions**. Students have to attend at least 1 hour on either night.

For next class:

1. **Read scripts** on list in Syllabus
2. **Read Weston's *Directing Actors***
 - A. Chapter 1 – Result Directing and Quick Fixes (p. 13-47)
 - B. Chapter 8 – Casting
3. **Read Harold Clurman's Three Column Breakdown**; each director will email their Three Column Breakdowns to JW & SM the Sunday before their in-class rehearsal
4. **Directors 1 & 2** need to cast for in-class rehearsal workshop including first read exercise
5. **Read SILKWOOD** script (SA will email you a copy)

Week 2: 9/3/19

In class:

1. **Discuss** Chapters 1 and 8, casting, the auditioning process, and adjustments,
2. **Discuss Three-Column Breakdown** and beats & objective from *Sex, Lies and Videotape*
3. **Directing demo**: Instructor will bring in actors and rehearse one scene in class using exercises and improvisation.
4. **Form Directing teams for Project 1**: We will form Four Teams of 4:
Team 1; Directors 1-4: Team 2; Directors 5-8: Team 3; Directors 9-12: Team 4;
Directors 13 - 16.
Put teams together.
Two stages have been held open for 532 directors on weekends. Each Director will cycle through roles (Producer, Director, DP, Sound). You will have to shoot on your assigned weekend. You can choose either Saturday or Sunday, depending on your cast availability. Each director will have 2 hours on a sound stage to shoot your scene with your actors and your crew. Then you rotate to the next position for the next scene directed by the next director. Emphasis is on directing actors and the scene i.e. blocking, shot selection, coverage. This is black box shooting.

Use props and production design to sell the scene but don't need to focus on this aspect.

If you cannot shoot on your assigned weekend, you will have to personally switch with another director.

The SA will assign you a choice of two weekends and a decision should be made, no later than a week prior to shooting.

Screenings for each group will occur two Tuesdays after their shoot.

For next class:

1. **Directors 1 and 2** need to hold outside of class rehearsal in preparation for in-class rehearsal.
2. **Directors 1 and 2** need to email **9 Questions and Three Column Breakdowns** to JW and SM by Sunday.
3. **Read Weston's *Directing Actors***
 - C. Introduction (pp. 1-12)
 - D. Chapter 2 – Moment by Moment (pp. 49-76)
4. **Directors 3, 4 and 5 need to cast.**
5. **REMINDER: Watch SILKWOOD**

Week 3:9/10/19

1. **Discuss Weston** reading: Introduction, and Chapter 2
2. **Go over** the Three-Column Breakdown
3. **IN CLASS REHERSALS: DIRECTORS 1 and 2**

For next class:

1. **Directors 3 & 4 & 5** need to have a rehearsal outside of class and email JW & YG their **9 Questions and Clurman's Three Column Breakdown** by Sunday.
2. **Read Weston's *Directing Actors***
 - A. Chapter 3 "Listening" (pp. 77-90)
 - B. Chapter 4 "Actors Choices" (pp. 91 – 130)
3. **Directors 5 and 6 need to cast.**
4. **REMINDER: Watch SILKWOOD**

Week 4: 9/17/19

In class:

1. **Discuss Weston** Chapters: 3 & 4
2. **Discuss** beats and objectives. Show clips.
3. **IN CLASS REHERSALS: DIRECTORS 3 & 4 & 5**

For next class:

1. **Directors 6 and 7** need to hold out of class rehearsal and email JW and YG their **9 Questions and Clurman's Three Column Breakdown by Sunday.**
2. **Directors 8 & 9 & 10** need to cast
3. **Read Weston**
 - A. Chapter 7 – "Script Analysis" (pp. 163-234)
 - B. Chapter 9 – "Rehearsal" (pp. 245-278)

- 4 REMINDER: Watch **SILKWOOD** for next week's class

-----GROUP 1 SHOOT PLAN A

Week 5: 9/24/19

In class:

1. Discuss **Weston** Chapters: 7 & 9
2. LECTURE/DEMO: **Silkwood**: Discuss theme, etc. Show clips.
3. **IN CLASS REHERSALS: DIRECTORS 6 and 7**

For next class:

1. Directors 8 & 9 & 10 need to hold out of class rehearsal and email **9 Questions and Clurman's Three Column Breakdown** to JW & YG by Sunday
2. Directors 11 & 12 & 13 need to cast
3. Read Weston
 - A. Chapter 9 – “Rehearsal” (pp. 245 - 278)
 - B. Chapter 10 – “Shooting” (pp. 281 – 291)

-----GROUP 1 SHOOT PLAN B

Week 6: 10/01/19

In class:

1. LECTURE/DEMO: Discuss shot selection: Show clips.
2. **ALL directors** should begin to select a **second** scene for their P. 2 from their present screenplay using the same actors as before if possible.
3. **Discuss** Chapters: 9 & 10
4. **IN CLASS REHERSALS: DIRECTORS 8 & 9 & 10**

For next class:

1. **Directors 11 & 12 & 13** need to email JW & VP **9 Questions and Clurman's Three Column Breakdown** by Sunday and hold out of class rehearsal
2. **Directors 14 & 15 & 16** need to cast
3. **Read Weston**
 - A. Appendix B “Comedy” (pp. 296 – 301)
 - B. Appendix C “List of Action Verbs” (pp. 302 - 307)
 - C. Chapter 6: “Actors” Resources and Training).

-----GROUP 2 SHOOT PLAN A

Week 7: 10/08/19

In class:

1. **Discuss Weston** reading: Appx. B, Appx. C, and Chapter 6
2. LECTURE/DEMO on shot selection and the moving master. Show clips
3. **IN CLASS REHERSALS: DIRECTORS 11 & 12 & 13**

For next class:

1. **Directors 14 & 15 & 16** need to email JW and YG their **9 Questions and Clurman's Three Column Breakdown** by Sunday and hold out of class rehearsal.

2. **Directors 13 & 14** need to cast
3. **Read Weston** Chapter 5 “Structure” (pp. 133 – 141)

-----GROUP 2 SHOOT PLAN B
 -----GROUP 3 SHOOT PLAN A

Week 8: 10/15/19

In class:

1. **LECTURE/DEMO:** What is the subjective & objective camera. Show clips.
2. **IN CLASS REHERSALS: DIRECTORS 14 & 15 & 16**

For next class:

1. **Three Column Breakdown** by Sunday and hold out of class rehearsal.
2. **Re-read Weston** Appendix C “List of Action Verbs” (pp 302 – 307)
3. **Directors 1 and 2 need to email JW & YG their 9 questions and three column breakdowns by Sunday**

-----GROUP 3 SHOOT PLAN B
 -----GROUP 4 SHOOT PLAN A

Week 9:10/22/19

In class:

1. **Discuss shooting of final project.** This is the time for the people that have already completed their black box shoots to decide on the scene from the same screenplay using the same actors. For this project you will be finding a location and crew and deciding on the date that you want to shoot, which could be any time between now and the end of the semester. In order to discover what dates you will be shooting, you will need to set your location and confirm your actors before you lock in a date. To clarify once more: You will be using the same actors and the same screenplay for both projects. Discuss logistics.
2. **LECTURE/DEMO** on exercises and improv
3. **IN CLASS REHERSALS: DIRECTORS 1 and 2**

For next class:

1. **Re-read Weston:** Chapter 1 – “Result Directing and Quick Fixes” (pp. 13 - 46)
2. **Directors 3 and 4 need to email JW & YG their 9 questions and three column breakdowns by Sunday**

-----GROUP 4 SHOOT PLAN B

Week 10: 10/29/19

In class:

1. **Discuss Weston Chapter 1**
2. **IN CLASS REHERSALS: DIRECTORS 3 and 4**

For next class:

1. **Directors 5 and 6 need to email JW & YG their 9 questions and three column breakdowns by Sunday**

Week 11: 11/05/19

In class:

1. **IN CLASS REHERSALS: DIRECTORS 5 and 6**

For Next Class:

2. **Directors 7 and 8 need to email JW & YG their 9 questions and three column breakdowns by Sunday**

Week 12: 11/12/19

In class:

1. **IN CLASS REHERSALS: DIRECTORS 7 and 8**

For next class:

2. **Directors 9 and 10 need to email JW & YG their 9 questions and three column breakdowns by Sunday**

Week 13: 11/19/19

In class:

1. **IN CLASS REHERSALS: DIRECTORS 9 and 10**

For next class:

2. **Directors 11 & 12 & 13 need to email JW & YG their 9 questions and three column breakdowns by Sunday**

Week 14: 11/26/19

In class:

1. **IN CLASS REHERSALS: DIRECTORS 11 & 12 & 13**

For next class:

2. **Directors 14 & 15 & 16 need to email JW & YG their 9 questions and three column breakdowns by Sunday**

Thanksgiving Holiday: 11/27 – 12/1

Week 15: 12/3/19

In class:

1. Blocking exercises and clips
2. **IN CLASS REHEARSALS: DIRECTORS 14 & 15 & 16**
- 3 Discuss the semester's reading. What are the highlights?
- 4 Discuss the moving master and how you implemented it.
- 5 Show clips and discuss.
- 6 Discussion of your final shoot. Where was it easy/difficult? What did you learn?

For next class:

1. Screening of final projects and preparation of final production books.

Study period 12/7 – 12/10

Week 16: - 12/17 – LAST CLASS

SCREENING PARTY at Jennifer's house, Final date TBD
Bring production books!

Winter Recess: 12/19 – 1/12/20