



**CTPR 423 INTRO TO SPECIAL/VISUAL EFFECTS  
IN CINEMA**

Units: 2

**Spring 2020 — Monday — 7:00pm – 10:00pm**

Athletic shoes and long pants **MUST** be worn to all Cinematography classes, when picking up and returning equipment. No open toed, dress shoes, shorts, skirts or dresses will be permitted. If you come to class dressed inappropriately, you will be asked to leave and may return when dressed for a work environment.

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

This class may not be audited.

**Location:** SCC Stage 3

**Instructor:** Gene Warren III, Christopher Lee Warren

**Office:** SCA stage 3

**Office Hours:** (By Appointment)

**Contact Info:** [warrenii@usc.edu](mailto:warrenii@usc.edu)

818-606-3087

**Teaching Assistant:** Derek Bosko

**Contact Info:** [dbosko@usc.edu](mailto:dbosko@usc.edu)

970-692 1318

## **Course Description**

Welcome to CTPR 423. Our aspiration is to generate an appreciation for the art of special/visual effects and foster an understanding of how special/visual effects are conceived, generated and produced. This course will primarily cover the practical elements of visual and special effects using various film clips, discussion and hands on filming. We encourage all students to participate in as many of the crew positions as possible during our hands on portion of class. Discussion of digital effects will only focus on how the various in-camera techniques integrate with the newer digital tools.

## **Learning Objectives and Outcomes**

By the end of this course, students will be able to :

Apply and combine scales through the use of forced perspective techniques to produce (out of class) and submit a photographic still or moving picture.

Demonstrate the basic mechanics of stop motion animation and produce (out of class) a 10 to 20 second stop motion animation clip.

Analyse (out of class) an excerpt of a provided screenplay to identify and submit possible special and visual effects solutions. (commonly referred to as a 'Script Breakout')

Every student will participate within a group to develop and produce a short film using special and visual effects techniques previously used/taught throughout the session.

## **Prerequisite(s): Safety Seminar**

### **Course Notes:**

Athletic shoes and long pants **MUST** be worn to all Cinematography classes and when picking up and returning equipment. No open toed or dress shoes will be permitted. If you come to class dressed inappropriately, you will be asked to leave and marked absent.

Please note our final class is Monday, May 11th. All students are required to attend, take the final exam and screen their final projects.

### **Required course equipment**

Either a digital or analogue still camera (the quality does not matter; you can use the camera in your smart phone), but we highly encourage a manual still camera for reasons that will pertain to the forced perspective project and the stop motion clip.

### **Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

A study sheet of commonly used words and phrases will be handed out week 1. It is meant for students to be more familiar with the jargon used in the special and visual effects discipline.

## Grading Breakdown

	Points	of Grade
Participation	15	15%
Mid term exam	20	20%
Forced perspective assignment	10	10%
Script excerpt f/x breakout assignment	10	10%
Stop Motion Animation clip	10	10%
Group f/x production clip	15	15%
Final exam	20	20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100	100%

## Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

## Assignment Rubrics

For participation, forced perspective and script breakout assignments there are extra points to be had for inspired work beyond the basic examples of an understanding of the conceptual work.

The midterm and final will be graded by dividing the number of questions into 100. Each incorrect answer will be that number taken away from 100 resulting in the grading scale outlined above.

## Extra Credit Assignments

1. Due: Class Meeting #7 03/09/2020

Construct a miniature scale model (No more than 25 dollars) as early extra credit.

In class, hands on projects will consist of filming various elements relating to the particular technique discussed each week.

## Final film project

Four production groups will be formed from the class. Each group will produce a final film up to 10 minutes long containing in-camera practical and special effects shots. Post compositing shots will be allowed but only in coordination with the professors. Each project will be due 2 weeks after filming.

## Grading Timeline

The Midterm will be reviewed the following week.

The forced perspective assignment will be graded within two weeks of the due date.

## Additional Policies

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance is not optional!

- 1) You must discuss all absences from and arriving late to class with your instructors.
- 2) Absence or lateness will be categorized as excused or unexcused. An absence or lateness is considered excused: if you discuss it with us and have a note from an authority. All medical absences require a visit and note from a doctor.

(Examples, assume you earn an A+ i.e. 100%)

One absence will result in your final grade dropping one portion of a grade, i.e., from A+ to A. Two absences will result in your final grade dropping two portions of a grade, i.e. from A to A-. Three absences will result in your final grade dropping three portions of a grade, i.e. from A- to B+ and so on.

Unexcused lateness will alter your final grade in the following way: (assume you earn an A).

One late arrival will not count against you because it is LA.

Two will result in your final grade dropping one letter portion of a grade, i.e. from A to A- and so on... just like absences.

If you arrive late, you MUST come to us during a break and let us know you are present. Please don't assume we saw you arrive. If you fail to do so, you may be marked absent.

### **-NOTEWORTHY DATES TO REMEMBER-**

- ☐ **01/20/2020 – MLK DAY – NO CLASS**
- ☐ **02/17/2020 – PRESIDENTS DAY – NO CLASS**
- ☐ **03/02/2020 – MID-TERM EXAM**
- ☐ **03/09/2020 – TURN IN FORCED PERSPECTIVE PHOTOGRAPH PROJECT**
- ☐ **03/16/2020 – SPRING RECESS – NO CLASS**
- ☐ **03/30/2020 – TURN IN STOP MOTION PROJECT**
- ☐ **04/06/2020 – SCRIPT BREAKOUT DUE**
- ☐ **04/06/2020 – GROUP 1 STAGE SHOOT NIGHT ASSEMBLY DUE 04/20/2015**
- ☐ **04/13/2020 – GROUP 2 STAGE SHOOT NIGHT ASSEMBLY DUE 04/27/2015**
- ☐ **04/20/2020 – GROUP 3 STAGE SHOOT NIGHT ASSEMBLY DUE 05/04/2015**
- ☐ **04/27/2020 – GROUP 4 STAGE SHOOT NIGHT ASSEMBLY DUE 05/11/2015**
- ☐ **05/11/2020 – REVIEW GROUP FILMS – FINAL EXAM**

## **Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown**

### **MEETING #1 01/13/2020 - COURSE OVERVIEW**

INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL/VISUAL EFFECTS HISTORY AND TECHNIQUES.  
SPECIAL AND (VISUAL) EFFECTS CATEGORIES: PHYSICAL, PRACTICAL AND  
SPECIAL PROPS, IN CAMERA EFFECTS, SPECIAL MAKE-UP EFFECTS, PYRO-  
TECHNICS, MINIATURES, CHARACTER ANIMATION, POST COMPOSITING.

### **(MLK DAY - 01/20/2020 - NO CLASS)**

### **MEETING #2 01/27/2020 - PHYSICAL/PRACTICAL/PROPS EFFECTS**

BREAKING AND COLLAPSING SCENERY, WIND AND RAIN.  
BREAKAWAY PROPS BREAKING WINDOWS, BREAKING BOTTLES,  
CROCKERY AND CHAIRS. STUNTS, FIGHTS. ARROWS, KNIVES, SWORDS AND  
DAGGERS.

INSTRUCTION OF BASIC SAFE USE OF STANDARD MOVIE EQUIPMENT.

(IN CLASS HANDS ON PROJECT)

### **MEETING #3 02/03/2020 - SPECIAL MAKE-UP EFFECTS**

BLOOD, BONES, SLIME AND PROSTHETICS.  
FROSTBITE, SCARS, WOUNDS, SCRATCHES, TEARS AND BLOOD EFFECTS.  
CASTING BODY PARTS.

(IN CLASS HANDS ON PROJECT)

### **MEETING #4 02/10/2020 - IN CAMERA EFFECTS**

UNDER/OVER CRANK PHOTOGRAPHY.  
SCENIC PROJECTION FRONT AND REAR SCREEN.  
PROCESS PHOTOGRAPHY (POOR MAN'S PROCESS)

(IN CLASS HANDS ON PROJECT)

### **(PRESIDENTS DAY - 02/17/2020 - NO CLASS)**

### **MEETING #5 02/24/2020 - IN CAMERA EFFECTS**

MIRROR EFFECTS: FIFTY-FIFTY MIRRORS, GLASS SHOTS AND SPLIT SCREEN  
OVERLAYS, DOUBLE EXPOSURES. GHOST EFFECTS USING 50/50 MIRROR

(IN CLASS HANDS ON PROJECT)

**GROUPS WILL BE CHOSEN DURING THIS CLASS MEETING.**

**MEETING #6 03/02/2020 - CHARACTER ANIMATION**

STOP MOTION PUPPETS (ARMATURED, CLAYMATION AND REPLACEMENT).  
HAND PUPPETS, ROD PUPPETS/ANIMITRONICS (SAG ACTORS).  
WHY MOTION CAPTURE?

(IN CLASS HANDS ON PROJECT)

**MID-TERM EXAM**

**MEETING #7 03/09/2020 - MINIATURES**

MINIATURE EFFECTS: FOREGROUND HANGING MINIATURES, FULL FRAME  
MINIATURES AND CHOICE OF SCALE.  
MINIATURE CONSTRUCTION (CHOICE OF MATERIALS).  
MINIATURE LIGHTING PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES.  
MINIATURES AND MOTION CONTROL (MODELS AND CAMERA).  
THE NODAL POINT AS USED IN VISUAL EFFECTS.  
(IN CLASS HANDS ON PROJECT)

**TURN IN FORCED PERSPECTIVE ASSIGNMENT**

**(SPRING RECESS - 03/16/2020 - NO CLASS)**

**MEETING #8 03/23/2020 - ATMOSPHERIC ELEMENTS AND PYROTHECNICS**

WORKING WITH WATER.  
CREATING ATMOSPHERIC ELEMENTS FOR POST COMPOSITING.

(IN CLASS HANDS ON PROJECT)

**Team #1 – Proposal Due**

**MEETING #9 03/30/2020 - POST COMPOSITING**

HISTORY OF POST COMPOSITING (IN-CAMERA, OPTICAL AND DIGITAL).  
INTRO TO COMPOSITE TECHNIQUES AND PROGRAMS.  
RED/GREEN/BLUE SCREEN CAPTURE TECHNIQUES.  
MATTE MAKING, ROTOSCOPING AND INTEGRATING SUBJECTS INTO THE  
ENVIRONMENT.

**TURN IN STOP MOTION ASSIGNMENT**

**Team #2 – Proposal Due**

**MEETING #10 04/06/2020 - TEAM#1 PRODUCTION STAGE 3 CALL TIME 6:00 P.M. (7:00 P.M. everyone else)**  
CLASS EXERCISES IN TECHNIQUES AS APPLIES TO THE GROUP'S SCRIPTED PAGE/S  
**ASSIGNMENT: COMPLETE PHOTOGRAPHY OF PROJECT\***  
CLOSED SET

**Team #3 – Proposal Due**

**TURN IN SCRIPT BREAKOUT**

**MEETING #11 04/13/2020 - TEAM#2 PRODUCTION STAGE 3 CALL TIME 6:00 P.M. (7:00 P.M. everyone else)**  
CLASS EXERCISES IN TECHNIQUES AS APPLIES TO THE GROUP'S SCRIPTED PAGE/S  
**ASSIGNMENT: COMPLETE PHOTOGRAPHY OF PROJECT\***  
CLOSED SET

**Team #4 – Proposal Due**

**MEETING #12 04/20/2020 - TEAM #3 PRODUCTION STAGE 3 CALL TIME 6:00 P.M. (7:00 P.M. everyone else)**  
CLASS EXERCISES IN TECHNIQUES AS APPLIES TO THE GROUP'S SCRIPTED PAGE/S  
**ASSIGNMENT: COMPLETE PHOTOGRAPHY OF PROJECT\***  
CLOSED SET

**MEETING #13 04/27/2020 - TEAM #4 PRODUCTION STAGE 3 CALL TIME 6:00 P.M. (7:00 P.M. everyone else)**  
CLASS EXERCISES IN TECHNIQUES AS APPLIES TO THE GROUP'S SCRIPTED PAGE/S  
**ASSIGNMENT: COMPLETE PHOTOGRAPHY OF PROJECT\***  
CLOSED SET

**MEETING #14 05/11/2020 – FINAL CLASS**

RECAP OF COURSE MATERIALS

REVIEW FOR THE FINAL EXAM

**SCREEN FINISHED FINAL FILM PROJECTS**

**FINAL EXAM**

## 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” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://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, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

### Support Systems:

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

[engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*Student Health Leave Coordinator – 213-821-4710*

Located in the USC Support and Advocacy office, the Health Leave Coordinator processes requests for health leaves of absence and advocates for students taking such leaves when needed.

<https://policy.usc.edu/student-health-leave-absence/>

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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

[engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086*

[equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.



*Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421*

[studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776*

[dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710*

[studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*

[diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

### **Diversity and Inclusion:**

Diversity and Inclusion are foundational to the SCA community. We are committed to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment where students of all identities and backgrounds can flourish. The classroom should be a space for open discussion of ideas and self-expression; however, SCA will not tolerate verbal or written abuse, threats, harassment, intimidation or violence against person or property. If students are concerned about these matters in the classroom setting they are encouraged to contact their SCA Diversity and Inclusion Liaison, <http://cinema.usc.edu/about/diversity.cfm>; e-mail [diversity@cinema.usc.edu](mailto:diversity@cinema.usc.edu). You can also report discrimination based on a protected class here <https://equity.usc.edu/harassment-or-discrimination/>

**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 for disruptive 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.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

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