

CTPR 425 PRODUCTION PLANNING
SECTION 18544
UNITS: 2
SPRING 2020, WEDNESDAYS, 7 PM TO 8:50 PM
SCA 356

USC Cinematic Arts

Instructor: *Robert L. Brown*
Office: *SCA 410*
Office Hours: *By Appointment*
Course Related Email: *rlbrown@usc.edu*
Email: *robertbrown979@gmail.com*
Office phone: *(818) 852-7080*
Cell: *(818) 970-3978*

Student Assistant: *Robin Wang*
Email: *wangz@usc.edu*
Cell: *(984) 888-7283*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

How long will it take to shoot your movie? How much will it cost? What's the most efficient way to schedule the scenes? Who and what need to be there? This course will give you the tools to answer those questions by examining the process of production planning. By the end of the semester, each student should not only have a conceptual grasp of how to line, breakdown, schedule, and budget a screenplay, but also have the practical skill to actually do it. Our goal, however, is not to make you into professional production managers, but rather to introduce you to the basic principles of production planning with an emphasis on scheduling and budgeting.

Although, there are differences in scale and detail, the processes involved are essentially the same whether one is making a major studio feature, a low-budget feature, a movie-of-the-week, an episodic television show, an educational film, an industrial film, or a student film.

Using a script from a one-hour episodic television show, each class member will line a script, develop a shooting schedule and create a day-out-of-days. The class will also create a film budget for a low budget independent in order to reach an understanding of the various elements that go into the making of a film.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Develop an understanding of the shooting sequence and how it is used in constructing a shooting schedule.
- ◆ Develop an understanding of the principles of scheduling a film in a way that is efficient yet preserves a director's freedom as much as possible and fosters a comfortable and creative atmosphere to help the actors reach their best performances.
- ◆ Develop an understanding of film budgets such that each student will know how to read and construct a budget with confidence.

As the course is open to students who are not Cinema majors, there are no prerequisite courses.

COURSE NOTES

The course meets once a week. Research and assignments will be conducted outside of class except for the budgeting assignment which will be done in class. I will use Blackboard to deliver course materials and post grades.

TECHNOLOGICAL PROFICIENCY AND HARDWARE/SOFTWARE REQUIRED

Movie Magic Scheduling published by Entertainment Partners. Students will be given a coupon to purchase this software at a discounted rate of \$149. Without the coupon, the academic edition sells for \$185. This software is the industry standard and is used by all the major studios and production companies.

You will *not* be required to purchase *Movie Magic Budgeting* although you may use the coupon for this program as well, if you wish. For our budgeting work, we will be using the software installed on the computers in the production lab (SCA 356).

REQUIRED READING

There is both required and optional reading listed below. The required reading is a necessary reference for the course work. It will be closely tied to the course content and will cover in great detail the subjects we address in class. The optional reading listed comes with my highest recommendation and will prove useful for anyone wanting to deepen his or her understanding of production and production planning.

Required reading:

Planning the Low-Budget Film, 2nd edition by Robert Latham Brown

Optional reading:

The Producer's Business Handbook, 4th edition by John J. Lee, Jr. and Anne Marie Gillen

The Complete Film Production Handbook, 4th edition by Eve Light Honthaner

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

Grades will be awarded based on class participation and five projects which will be due at various specific times during the term plus a final exam. The due dates of the projects are specified in the Course Outline. I will grade them based on clear criteria with which you will be provided, and I will return them to you with written comments explaining why I graded them the way I did.

Assignment	Points	% Of Grade
LINED SCRIPT		
Each student will line a one-hour episodic television script indicating shooting sequences, their length, and essential elements.	20	20%
BREAKDOWN SHEETS		
Each student will create a set of breakdown sheets from the lined script using Movie Magic Scheduling.	10	10%
SCHEDULED PRODUCTION BOARD		
Each student will create a production schedule for the script showing the order in which the sequences will be shot, using Movie Magic Scheduling and good scheduling practices.	20	20%
DAY-OUT-OF-DAYS		
Using the DOOD generated by Movie Magic Scheduling and an Excel spreadsheet which will be provided, each student will devise a plan to meet SAG's Diversity in Casting requirements.	10	10%

Assignment	Points	% Of Grade
FINAL BUDGET The class will be divided into six groups. Each group will be assigned certain major accounts in the budget and will be required to create a plausible, defensible budget for each of those accounts. The members of each group should be ready to defend their work in front of the rest of the class.	20	20%
FINAL EXAM The exam will be drawn from both the assigned reading and the lectures.	100	20%

GRADING SCALE (EXAMPLE)

Assignment grades and course final grades will be determined using the following scale

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

The Lined Script will be physically handed in at the end of the class period in which it is due. All other assignments will be handed in through Blackboard. Graded work will typically be returned 1 week after it is submitted.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

Students are expected to attend each of the classes. Doing so will insure that you will have all information need to complete the assignments. If you must miss a class, please notify me or our SA ahead of time. In addition, you should arrange to get any materials or notes you may have missed.

Students are expected to arrive to class on time. Repeated late arrivals are disruptive to the class and may mean you will miss material that is important. If you are unavoidably late due to another class or internship, discuss this with me so that I can accommodate you.

You are free to bring a laptop or tablet to class for note taking or use of the scheduling or budgeting software. There may be times that you will go online in class for research, however if you are browsing the web or indulging in social media during class-time I will ask you to stop.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 Wednesday, January 15

- ◆ Introduction to Production Planning: Syllabus, Grade Criteria, Text, and Required materials.
- ◆ The Projects: Script Lining, Breakdown Sheets, Scheduled Board, Day out of Days, and Budget
- ◆ The *shooting sequence*: 1 Shooting sequence = 1 breakdown sheet = 1 strip.
- ◆ Shooting Sequence Unities: Location, Time, Action, Cast.
- ◆ In-class exercises.
- ◆ Distribute script: Parts of a shooting script.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Read and visualize the script. *Due Wednesday, January 22.*
- Read Brown, Chapter 3, "The Shooting Sequence. *Due Wednesday, January 22.*
- Read Brown, Chapter 5, "Lining the Script." *Due Wednesday, January 22.*
- Bring 2 differently colored highlighters, a pencil, and a ruler to next class.

Week 2 Wednesday, January 22

- ◆ Discuss script and possible production problems.
- ◆ The process of *lining a script*, concept of *page count*, broken lines and *overlapping sequences*.
- ◆ In-class lining of first 5 pages of script.
- ◆ Things to look for: shooting sequence *elements*, how will the sequence be shot?
- ◆ Problematic situations: Int./Ext., Int. Vehicles, telephone conversations, movie within the movie.
- ◆ Creative geography: Hotel across the street from a café.
- ◆ Guiding principle: Where is the camera?

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Line the script for *Reckless*. **Due Wednesday, January 29.**
 - Read Brown, Chapter 4, “The Production Board.” **Due Wednesday, January 29.**
-

Week 3 Wednesday, January 29

Lined scripts due.

- ◆ What problems did you encounter in lining the script?
- ◆ Scene numbering.
- ◆ Terms not mentioned in the script:
 - ▷ Extras.
 - ▷ Stand-ins.
 - ▷ Vehicles (Who are in the vehicles?)
 - ▷ Special Equipment.
- ◆ From Script to film: video examples.
- ◆ Who does this stuff? The Production Staff:
 - ▷ The Unit Production Manager
 - ▷ The First Assistant Director
 - ▷ The Second Assistant Director.
- ◆ The process of filming a scene.
- ◆ The Production Meeting.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Read Brown, Chapter 6, “The Script Breakdown.” **Due Wednesday, February 5.**
-

Week 4 Wednesday, February 5

Graded lined scripts returned to students.

- ◆ Introduce MM Scheduling.
- ◆ Set up schedule file.
 - ▷ Show Info.
 - ▷ Categories
 - ▷ Calendar
 - ▷ Strip Colors: Int/Ext, Day/Night, Stock
- ◆ Naming conventions for sets (general to specific).
- ◆ The Breakdown Sheet.
 - ▷ INT. Vehicles - naming conventions.
 - ▷ Cast, Stunts, Pilots, Extras
- ◆ In-class work on breakdown sheets.
- ◆ Sorting the Cast by Occurrence and then by ID.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Complete breakdown sheets. **Due Wednesday, February 12.**
- Read Brown, Chapter 7, “Scheduling the Board.” **Due Wednesday, February 12.**

Week 5 Wednesday, February 12

MMS file with completed Breakdown Sheets due by midnight.

- ◆ Review production board strips.
- ◆ Sorting and arranging the board.
- ◆ Scheduling considerations.
- ◆ Scheduling Criteria.
- ◆ First steps.
- ◆ List of Assumptions.
- ◆ Using Final Draft Tagger or Movie Magic Screenwriter.

SORT YOUR CAST LIST BY OCCURRENCE AND NUMBER THEM BEFORE TURNING IN YOUR SCHEDULE.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Read Brown, Chapter 8, “Locations.” *Due Wednesday, February 19.*
-

Week 6 Wednesday, February 19

Breakdown Sheets grades returned.

- ◆ Locations:
 - Why location? Why stage?
 - Locations vs. Stage in *Reckless*
 - » List of location interiors.
 - Code of Conduct.
 - How to scout a location.
 - » What to look for.
 - » Beware the question you didn't ask.
 - Location releases.
 - Permits.
 - Insurance.
 - Police and traffic control.
 - Fire Safety Officer.
 - Dealing with the public.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Read Brown, Chapter 9, “The Day-Out-of-Days.” *Due Wednesday, February 26.*
 - Read Brown, Chapter 10, “The Published Schedule.” *Due Wednesday, February 26.*
 - Read Brown Chapter 11, “Unions.” *Due Wednesday, February 26.*
 - Schedule *Reckless* in MMS. *Due Wednesday, March 4.*
-

Week 7 Wednesday, February 26

- ◆ Discuss Class Production Board Problems.
- ◆ Management and Work Ethics:
 - Responsibility and safety.
 - Working with Minors.
 - Unions.
- ◆ Review scheduling -
 - Sorting
 - Location vs. stage.
 - Actor carry.
 - Day-out-of-days.
- ◆ Shooting Schedules -
 - One-Line Shooting Schedule.
 - Full Shooting Schedule.

ASSIGNMENT -

- Read Brown, Chapters 12, 13, 14, & 15. *Due Wednesday, March 4.*

Week 8 Wednesday, March 4**Scheduled Production Boards due at midnight.**

- ◆ Begin discussion of Budgeting:
 - ▷ Top Sheet.
 - ▷ Chart of accounts.
 - ▷ Production levels.
 - ▷ Contractual charges.
- ◆ Introduce EP Budgeting:
- ◆ Setting up a new budget.
 - ▷ Budget Info.
 - ▷ Globals.
 - ▷ Groups.
 - ▷ Fringe Benefits.
- ◆ Methods of entry.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Read Brown, Chapter 16, “The Shooting Period.” *Due Wednesday, March 25.*

Week 9 Wednesday, March 11**Production Board grades returned.**

- ◆ SAG Diversity in Casting DOOD.
- ◆ Movie Magic Budgeting in depth (continued).
- ◆ Form budgeting groups and assign accounts to each group.
 - ▷ Determine who will research what.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Completed DIC DOOD. *Due Wednesday, March 25.*
- Read Brown, Chapter 17, “Post Production.” *Due Wednesday, March 25.*
- Research *your* group’s budget accounts in Brown, Part III. *Due Wednesday, March 25.*

Week 10 Wednesday, March 25**DIC DOOD due at midnight.**

- ◆ Post Production
- ◆ Budget Grading Rubric.
- ◆ In-class group budget work.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Research your group’s accounts in the text and online. *Due Wednesday, April 1.*
- Read Brown, Chapter 18, “Other Expense.” *Due Wednesday, April 8.*

Week 11 Wednesday, April 1**Diversity in Casting DOOD grades returned.**

- ◆ Finish in-class group budget work.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Group budget files. *Due Friday, March 27.*

Week 12 Wednesday, April 8

- ◆ Budget Defense.

Week 13 Wednesday, April 15

- ◆ Budget Defense continued.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Read Brown, Chapter 19, “Tracking the Film’s Progress.” *Due Wednesday, April 29.*
-

Week 14 Wednesday, April 22

- ◆ Production paperwork as tools of control.
-

Week 15 Wednesday, April 29

- ◆ View *Reckless*.
 - ◆ Final Exam REVIEW
-

Final Exam Wednesday, May 6

- ◆ The exam is expected to be at 7 PM in SCA 356. To confirm the date and time of the final for this class, consult the USC Schedule of Classes at <http://classes.usc.edu/>.
-

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

<https://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

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

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, 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

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

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/note takers/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

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

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, 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

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. 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:

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

