USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS
CTPR 506 - VISUAL EXPRESSION
<u>**SYLLABUS**</u>

Semester: Spring 2020
Professor: Bruce A. Block
SA: TBA
2 UNITS
OFFICE HOURS: Monday & Tuesday mornings by appointment
PREREQUISITES: CTPR 508 OR CTAN 547 OR CTIN 534

Auditing CTPR 506 is not permitted. This course does not use pass/no pass grading.

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

Just as a writer is concerned with story structure or a musician with musical structure, a picture maker must be concerned with visual structure. Visual structure is the only language available to picture makers yet it is often misused or simply ignored. The key to using visual structure is an understanding of the basic visual components and how visual structure relates to narrative/story structure. The basic visual components are: space, line, shape, color, tone, movement, and rhythm. It is through the control of these basic visual components that the picture maker stirs an audience's emotions, creates a visual style, gives unity to their work and links story structure to visual structure. The principles discussed in this class can be used to create and control pictures for any format including theatrical motion pictures, television/streaming shows, commercials, internet sites, and digital games, using live-action, traditional or CG animation. This class relates all of the visual concepts to practical production and bridges the gap between theory and practice.

<u>The Structure of the Class:</u>
1. Define each basic visual component.
2. Show how to recognize these components.
3. Demonstrate how these components communicate to an audience.
4. Apply the components to a text/script.
5. Discuss how the component is used technically and aesthetically in actual production.
6. Show examples from films.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

The class is extremely rigorous. Lectures are complex and require extensive note taking. There are weekly assignments plus two assignments that are due near the end of the semester:

Final Assignment 1. Each student, working alone, creates a photographic notebook of 78 still photos illustrating the concepts discussed in class. Approximately half of these photos are due during the semester as works-in-progress.

Final Assignment 2. Collaborating in groups of four, students create a short film demonstrating their understanding of the principles of visual structure in relation to a story. Writing Division students enrolled in CTPR 506 must work in film groups with at least two Production Division students.

Notebook and film grades are based on originality, directorial clarity and realization of each visual concept. Final course grade is based on the photo notebook grade (50%), film grade (35%) and class participation (15%). There is no mid-term grade. Late photo notebooks or films will not be accepted. The class does not allow make-up exams, extra credit papers or projects, or photo notebook/film re-dos. Due dates for the photo notebook and film assignments are announced in class. Students who plagiarize, share or exchange photos for their assignments will receive a failing grade.

Students should not enroll in 506 if they are simultaneously a key crew member on any active, in-production student project.

Attendance at all 506 screenings, including the student films, is mandatory. Students are expected to be on time for class. Excessive tardiness will be counted as an absence. Two absences will result in a student's grade being lowered by one full letter (IE: A becomes B). A third absence will result in a student's grade being lowered by one, additional full letter (IE: B becomes C). A student's grade will be lowered by one full letter for each additional absence.

READING & REFERENCES
The text for the class is *The Visual Story* by Bruce Block. The book is available at the USC Student bookstore, from online vendors and at local bookstores. The class lectures are divided into topics that coincide with the chapters in the book.

LECTURES & SCHEDULE
Class lectures are dense and rigorous. Students are encouraged to take notes, which includes drawings and diagrams. Recording and photography are not permitted during class. The listing below of specific material for each lecture is approximate since discussion lengths will vary.

LECTURE 1: Orientation and overview of the basic visual components. Basic class terms are defined. Space is introduced with an overview followed by the organization of space into four basic categories.

LECTURE 2: Definition of space continues. Discussion moves to secondary spatial concepts.

LECTURE 3: Discussion of space finishes. The final assignments for the class (individual student notebook and group film) are announced and discussed.

LECTURE 4: Visual structure. The relationships between visual and narrative structure, structural analysis and visual economy are discussed.

LECTURE 5: Visual structure continues. The Principle of Contrast & Affinity is discussed. Graphing, structure and visual change are discussed.

LECTURE 6: Line and shape discussion begins. Linear motif, basic shapes, perception of line, and methods of creating shapes are discussed.

LECTURE 7: Color. Color structure and systems are discussed to clear up and simplify an extremely misunderstood visual component.

LECTURE 8: Color continues with an explanation of color interaction and control in production.

LECTURE 9: Tone & Light. Although tone is an aspect of color, tone also relates to directorial emphasis and exposure control. Tone and light are related to the gray scale.

LECTURE 10: Movement. Movement is defined in relation to the screen, the camera, a single object and an object & background.

LECTURE 11: Movement continues. Continuum of Movement is defined. Fragmented and continuous structures of movement are discussed.

LECTURE 12: Rhythm. Visual rhythm is discussed in stationary and moving objects, and editing.

LECTURE 13: Screening & discussion of a feature length film.

LECTURE 14: Screen students' final films and discuss.

LECTURE 15: Screen students' final films and discuss. Photographic notebooks are due at the beginning of class.

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. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

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