



FALL, 2020

CTPR: 533 - DIRECTING TECHNIQUES

Professor: Katy Garretson

Contact Email (24/7): kgarrets@usc.edu or katygarretson@gmail.com

Office Hours: *By Appointment Only - contact Katy directly to schedule.*

Wednesdays: 7:00pm- 10:30pm

Units: 2

Class Location: SCE Stg2

Instruction Mode: Lecture & Participation & Filmmaking

Grading Option: Letter

Student Assistant: Courtney Moore

SA Contact Info: moorecr@usc.edu

Overall USC SCA Degree Goal: “To develop the student's ability to express original ideas on film or video and to instill a thorough understanding of the technical and aesthetic aspects of motion pictures and television. Courses in production provide individual and group filmmaking experiences and the opportunity to learn all aspects of filmmaking in a collaborative environment.”

533 Class Philosophy: This is a second semester of Intermediate Directing, intended to prepare you for your life in showbiz after graduation. The goal for this interactive course is for you to further your ability to develop your own style and communicate your vision, as well as to enhance your leadership skills on set and feel more comfortable in “the real world.”

NOTE: AS I AM A WORKING DIRECTOR/PRODUCER AND MAY NEED TO REARRANGE CLASSES, THIS SYLLABUS IS ALWAYS TENTATIVE.

ALSO, I AM CURRENTLY PLANNING TO TEACH THE FIRST CLASS AND ALL IN-CLASS EXERCISE CLASSES IN PERSON. THE REST MAY BE ONLINE. WE’LL DISCUSS THE FIRST NIGHT, WEDNESDAY, 8/19.

What is Directing?

A question with many answers, none of them necessarily wrong, but for our general purposes, directing is story interpretation and execution. The script provides the story. The director tells that story as they want it to be told, how they interpret the script and want it to be viewed by an audience – keeping in mind who their audiences are for their various projects. This is why the directors own the “A *FILM* BY” credit.

Directing includes recognizing and delivering the overall story/beats, character arcs, dialogue and behaviors that reveal character and plot, and a *complete visual representation* of the story told in the script – **The Director’s Vision**.

We will discuss the above more in class.

This course will be both hands-on and discussion oriented.

Using examples from various productions, we will discuss overall *style* and the elements that go into making it – basic coverage of characters versus making a film “your own” through camera shots and direction of actors, among other elements. We will break down existing film scenes as well as those directed by students – what worked well, what perhaps did not

Students will get practical experience directing in multiple genres and styles of filmmaking. There will be THREE short films made. Remember: Genres Can Launch Careers.

We will discuss and enhance the students’ interaction with both cast and crew. While it’s The Director’s Vision, it takes a large team to carry out that vision. The Director provides their team of professionals with the goals – for the overall movie as well as each individual scene – every director must be an effective leader and communicator with both actors and crew to achieve those goals.

By the end of the class, students will have a better understanding of how to communicate with and direct actors/crew, how to stage a scene, coverage *needed*, and where to place cameras. We will discuss and deliver various ways the camera can help tell the story, and how it is used (in conjunction with other elements) to create a distinct style.

Students will practice shooting with two cameras simultaneously, as rarely will a professional film shoot use only one camera at a time. Students will also have a better understanding of the teamwork involved in carrying out their Director’s Vision, and will learn general industry practices, a little about agents/managers, and anything the students wish to discuss about the business called SHOW.

A high level of enthusiasm and participation is expected of every student in this class. Making movies can be challenging, hard work, but if it’s your passion it should also be fun. So, let’s have fun!

RECOMMENDED PODCASTS: The Rewatchables, The Big Picture, Rewatchables 1999, Hollywood Breakdown, The Recappables, The Business with Kim Masters, The Watch, NPR's Pop Culture Happy Hour...*let me know if you have any good ones to recommend!*

RECOMMENDED BOOKS: A good book on body language that gives Directors great references for directing actors is THE DEFINITIVE BOOK OF BODY LANGUAGE, by Allan and Barbara Pease (it's a super fun read). Also, FAME by Justine Bateman and THE WAR OF ART by Steven Pressfield. Any book on storytelling...*it's all about the story.*

RECOMMENDED APPS: DEADLINE, VARIETY – you should always know what's going on in the business and who the players are. RUN PEE – because some movies are long...

CLASS ONE – INTRO & OVERVIEW – 8/19

Meet & Greet - student intros

Katy's Story, more or less. Disclaimers & Expectations

Review of Syllabus

- Select weeks: email a question to Katy - about *any* aspect of the business, directing or filmmaking in general – that you want to discuss *in class*. No question is dumb, and if I can't answer it to your satisfaction, I'll find someone who can. If you don't want me to name you as the author of your question, just say so, I'll address it generically. **OR**, if you don't have a question, send a link to a scene or sequence you'd like to discuss.
- We will study genres & styles, which will aid you in working with the camera and developing your own style as well as directing actors in different ways. Students will direct alternate versions of an existing scene:
Project 1) a duplicate of shots, as best as you can, so you have an idea of how & why the original director shot what they shot – and so you think about what you would shoot.
Project 2) the same scene shot again in another genre or a *combination* of genres. Props, lighting & setting may change, the actors' intentions may certainly change, the camera angles *must* change. You may alter the words slightly to suit your characters/setting – but the scene must be recognizable as a version of the original. I'll provide examples in class and we'll discuss.

Notes:

-You must incorporate a MASTER THAT MOVES into your genre variation. We will review Masters that Move in Class Two.

-You may use your phones to shoot Projects 1 & 2. Your Final Project should be shot on a better camera. Have fun and get creative with Projects 1 & 2, then put all you've got into that Final Project.

- Final Project – a complicated long scene/sequence/short film for your reel/website with three or more actors - not just basic drama, must incorporate at least one other genre – and *must include a master that moves*. Time limit – up to 15 minutes. Original material is preferred (get the rights if it's not your own writing). See casting notes at end of syllabus.
- Field Trip(s) – (Optional): TBD

SCREEN & ASSIGN PROJECT SCENES (will also screen project examples for you)

Tonight, we'll screen each Project Scene and students will select

HOMEWORK:

1. Email Katy a Showbiz Question or a link to a scene/sequence you'd like to discuss.
2. Prep/shoot your first project – the Duplicate of your scene, due Class THREE.

CLASS TWO – GENRES & SHOTS – 8/26

Discuss and/or screen clips of the various GENRES from which we'll choose:

1. Drama
2. Comedy
3. Farce
4. Noir (It's more than just b&w)
5. Crime/Mystery
6. Docu-Style
7. Action
8. Horror
9. Musical
10. Sci-Fi/Fantasy
11. Telenovela (melodrama)
12. French New Wave/Experimental
13. Superhero
14. Romance
15. Bollywood
16. Blaxploitation
17. Martial Arts

We'll discuss and show examples of a MOVING MASTERS and the various ways this can be done (dolly, pan, tilt, steadicam, jib/cranes, etc.). We'll also discuss the fact that the term "Moving Master" is not actually used on a real set...

We'll discuss basic coverage, matching shots, match cuts, sizing of shots, some uses of multiple cameras, the line...and the various ways a director can create a "style" for their films.

Q&A Time - Emailed Questions.

HOMEWORK:

1. Email Katy a Showbiz Question or a link to a scene/sequence you'd like to discuss.
2. Prep/shoot your first project – the Duplicate of your scene, *due next class*.

CLASS THREE – FIRST PROJECT SCREENINGS! 9/2

Trojan Stunt Team Presentation - TBD

- **PROJECT 1 DUE:** We will screen and discuss all the scene DUPLICATES.
- **Q&A Time** - Emailed Questions, Time Permitting

HOMEWORK:

1. Email Katy a Showbiz Question or Scene
2. Prep/shoot your Project 2.

CLASS FOUR – “BREAKING DOWN & SHOOTING THE SCRIPT” – PT 1 – 9/9

- **IN-CLASS PROJECT**

HOMEWORK:

1. Optional – send question or scene.
2. Prep/shoot your Project 2.

CLASS FIVE – “BREAKING DOWN & SHOOTING THE SCRIPT” – PART 2 – 9/16

- **IN-CLASS PROJECT**

HOMEWORK:

1. Optional – send question or scene.
2. Prep/shoot your Project 2.

CLASS SIX – WATCH SHORTS & SUBMITTED SCENES – 9/23

- We will watch, break down and discuss short films and submitted scenes.
- *POTENTIAL GUESTS:*

HOMEWORK:

1. Optional – send question or scene.
2. Prep/shoot your Project 2! Due next week!

CLASS SEVEN – GENRE VARIATION SCREENINGS – 9/30 **Screening Room TBD**

- **PROJECT 2 DUE:** We will screen and discuss the GENRE VARIATION scenes.
- *POTENTIAL GUESTS:*

HOMEWORK:

1. Prep/Shoot Final Project

CLASS EIGHT – “BREAKING DOWN & SHOOTING THE SCRIPT” - PT 3 – 10/7

- **IN-CLASS PROJECT**

HOMEWORK:

1. Prep/Shoot Final Project

CLASS NINE – “BREAKING DOWN & SHOOTING THE SCRIPT” - PT 4 – 10/14

- **IN-CLASS PROJECT**

HOMEWORK:

1. Prep/Shoot Final project
2. Prep questions for next week’s guests!

CLASS TEN - ‘WORKING WITH YOUR DGA TEAM’ – 10/21

- *POTENTIAL GUESTS*

HOMEWORK:

1. Prep/Shoot Final Project
2. Prep questions for next week’s guests!

CLASS ELEVEN – “DIRECTING ACTORS” – 10/28

- *POTENTIAL GUESTS:*

HOMEWORK:

1. Prep/Shoot Final Project
2. Prep questions for next week’s guests!

CLASS TWELVE – WORKING WITH YOUR MUSIC COMPOSER – 11/4**GUESTS: Hannah Parrott and Zach Robinson, Composers**

- **In-Class exercises that will help you break down your scenes and stylize your score/soundtrack**

HOMEWORK:

1. Finish & Upload Final Project!

CLASS THIRTEEN - FINAL PROJECTS – 11/11 **Screening Room TBD****ALL FINAL PROJECTS DUE: SCREEN AND DISCUSS AS MANY AS POSSIBLE**

- *Possible guests for commentary this class & next*

CLASS FOURTEEN - FINAL PROJECTS! – 11/18. **Screening Room TBD**

- **SCREEN AND DISCUSS REMAINING FINAL PROJECTS**

PROJECTS/GRADING

20% Duplicate Project
 25% New Genre Project
 15% Class Participation/Attendance
 10% Emailed Questions, Scenes
 30% Final Project

CASTING

You may cast students from USC School of Dramatic Arts. Students who have done so have found them to be well- trained professionals and reliable collaborators.

As this class has a Production #, you may cast SAG actors for free. See SA for info.

Remember, you may use the same actors (or not) for Projects 1, 2, and 3 – the scene duplicate and the two genre variations. Actors may love to switch it up and play different characters/genders/accents with the same words (more or less). Could be three interesting and creative shorts for your reel and theirs! I will pay attention to who you choose to cast for your Final Project, so they should be cast as well as you can to what your vision is for that scene/sequence.

PRODUCTION DIVISION (and Katy's) POLICIES (*You should read these!*)

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Two unexcused absences will result in a student's grade being lowered by one full letter (i.e. an A becomes a B). A student's grade will be lowered by one full letter for each additional unexcused absence. Two late class arrivals equate to one full absence. *Just come to class and be on time, it'll be fun.*

In order for an absence to be excused, the student must have approval in advance from me for a verifiable, good reason. Last-minute emails will never be excused, and the university policy states that NO absences may be excused, although I can occasionally make an exception.

Late Arrival: 15 minutes late constitutes an official late arrival. In cases where petty tardiness – i.e. of less than 15 minutes becomes chronic, I will give one “warning”, and then I will assign penalties. SA will keep track of late arrivals.

*****Cell phones, tablets, laptops:** Here's my feeling: Cell phone usage during class is disrespectful to me, your fellow classmates, and the professional standards for which you all are striving. Absolutely no video or audio recording of class is permitted. Violation of this policy is subject to a discretionary grade deduction.

Deadlines Unexcused missed due dates for projects will always result in a reduction of your final grade. Missing deadlines is regarded as unacceptable in the Industry – no studio, network or production company will ever say it's ok to deliver a project late - and so it will be in this class.

If you know ahead of time that unavoidable circumstances will hinder the timely delivery of your work you must notify me immediately, and the circumstances must be verifiable. Only genuine “emergencies” beyond your control will be accepted.

Unforeseen Circumstances: If you have life problems or circumstances that might affect your work, please let me know in advance. I want to be understanding and helpful if I can. See me to make arrangements for deadline extensions. We’re all human.

Also, if you are overwhelmed and overstressed and would like to schedule a time out of class to talk it all through with me, please don’t hesitate to reach out. I’ve been there and would like to help.

Grading Feedback: You may ask me for feedback about how you are doing at any time.

Safety: All students are expected to abide by 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.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems Academic Conduct:

***For your first two projects, because you are using existing material, you must put a disclaimer at the head or tail of your scene stating that this is an interpretation of X scene, from X film, originally directed by X. Let’s be respectful and safe, because:

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.

CAMERA, G&E EQUIPMENT AND CINEMATOGRAPHER POLICY FOR CTPR 533 – Directing Techniques

RESERVATION PROCEDURE: Students must contact Nick Rossier who will confirm a camera’s availability and verify that the student cinematographer has taken the required classes.

Reservation Priority Ranking:

1st Priority: CTPR 581 – Thesis Project

2nd Priority: CTPR 552 – Advanced Directing

3rd Priority: CTPR: 533 – Directing Techniques

4th Priority: CTPR 532 – Intermediate Directing

5th Priority: CTPR 565 – Making Media for Social Change

6th Priority: CTPR 497 – Music Video Production

Priority & Bumping: A higher priority class can bump a lower priority class up to 7 days before a shoot (Example: 2nd priority Advanced Directing can bump 3rd priority Directing Techniques).

NOTE: A 581 can bump any reservation up to 7 days before a shoot.

CTPR 552, 533, & 532 Classes:

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. The F-65 camera is only available to thesis projects.
5. 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.
6. USC Insurance only covers approved vendors up to \$200,000. Any additional coverage must be provided by the student enrolled in the directing class.

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