

### **Course Description and Overview**

This course will examine the use of fight and violence in a theatrical context for the stage and for the camera.

### **Learning Objectives**

Topics that will be covered include:

1. Safety: How to create the illusion of violence without causing harm to self, acting partner, audience or scenery to create a safe working environment in the classroom and in a professional setting.
2. The need for violence: Discussion of the artist's responsibility to reflect violence safely and accurately so that the actor can deeply explore violence in the service of a given character and text.
3. Basic unarmed stage combat: Punches, blocks, kicks, falls, rolls, slaps, found objects as weapons. These are all tools that the professional actor will encounter throughout the course of their career.
4. Theatrical blank-firing weapons: Practice & Safety – A introduction to basic blank-firing theatrical fire arms handling and safety practices.
5. Fights and violence for the camera – Basic camera and editing techniques for shooting action.

Principles covered:

1. Making your partner look good
2. Eye contact
3. Action-Reaction-Completion (ARC) Principle
4. Receiver in control
5. Reversal of energy
6. Lines of attack
7. Diffusing energy
8. Stacking & Other Fight Techniques for the Camera

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

#### **Suggested Reading**

*The Art of Unarmed Stage Combat* by Robert Najarian

*How We Die* by Sherwin B. Nuland

Reference handouts containing overviews and additional information will be given to students throughout the semester.

## **Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments**

Assignments:

1. Quizzes
2. Presentation of fight scene #1
3. Presentation of fight scene #2
4. Video Project 1
5. Video Project 2
6. Final Video Project
7. Final Fight Scene

### **Grading Scale**

A = Work of excellent quality

B = Work of good quality

C = Work of fair quality

D = Work of poor quality

F = Fail

### **Grading Guidelines**

25% Participation/Quizzes

10% Scene #1 Presentation

10% Scene #2 Presentation

5% Video Project 1

5% Video Project 2

25% Final Scene Presentation

20% Final Video Project

\* Each scene will be scored as follows:

30% - Execution of choreography

30% - Execution of storytelling

40% - Safety Management

\*\* Each short action video project will be scored as follows:

20% - Use of required camera techniques

30% - Execution of choreography adapted for the camera

20% - Use of editing techniques including SFX

30% - Safety Management

### **Attendance, Tardiness and Absences**

Lateness is not tolerated without prior notice. Unexcused absences are not permitted.

Communication with the instructor is essential in case of emergency or illness.

The structure of this class is cumulative. Missed classes mean you fall behind and your partner falls behind if you miss on a day scheduled for scene work.

## Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

### Week 1

**Mon Jan 13:** Class Intro & Overview / Hand Strike Techniques 1 (The Roundhouse Punch)

**Wed Jan 15:** Hand Strike Techniques 1 (Punch Varieties)  
Arm & Hand Blocking Techniques 1

**Objectives:** Distance/Measure, Eye Contact, Breath, Cueing, In Slow/Out Fast, Casting Energy, Making Your Partner Look Good, Action-Reaction-Completion, Aggressor/Victim vs Sender/Receiver, Clap Knaps

### Week 2

**Mon Jan 20:** *School Holiday – NO CLASS*

**Wed Jan 22:** Full Body Contact 1 (Shoves, Pushes and Grappling)  
**\*\* Scene Project 1 Partners and Scenes Assigned (A/B Scenes) \*\***

**Objectives:** Dispersing Energy, Placing Energy, Sharing Energy & Weight, Receiver in Control

### Week 3

**Mon Jan 27:** Full Body Contact 2 (Headlocks, Bear Hugs)  
Elbow Strikes & Body Knaps  
**\*\* Scene Project 1 Choreography \*\***

**Wed Jan 29:** Hand Strikes 2 (Slaps) – Shared Knaps & Clap Knaps  
Arm & Hand Blocking Technique 2

**Objectives:** Personal Safety & Boundaries, Shared Knaps, Body Knaps, Slow is Smooth & Smooth is Fast

### Week 4

**Mon Feb 3:** Hand Strikes 3 (Stomach Punches, Back Strikes)  
Full Body Contact 3 (Shoulder Rams, Hair Pulls)

**Wed Feb 5:** Hitting the Floor (Falling, Rolling, Throwing)  
Full Body Contact 4 (Hip Throws)

**Objectives:** Reversal of Energy, Presenting the Target, Victim in Control, Shared Energy, Vocal Cues, Touch Cues, Body Control

### Week 5

**Mon Feb 10:** Fighting for the Camera – Take 1 (Smart Phones, Basic Camera Techniques)  
**\*\* Action Film Project 1 Partners Assigned \*\***

**Wed Feb 12:** **Project 1 - Class Presentation #1**  
**\*\* Scene Project 2 Partners and Scenes Assigned (Mini-Scenes) \*\***

**Objectives:** Camera Techniques & Editing

**Week 6**

**Mon Feb 17:** *School Holiday – NO CLASS*

**Wed Feb 19:** Fighting for the Camera – Takes 2 & 3 (Editing the Action & Shooting the Action)

**Objectives:** Using basic camera techniques on smart phones, basic editing techniques

**Week 7**

**Mon Feb 24:** Lower Body Strikes 1 (Feet, Heels, Knees & Sweeps)

*\*\* Action Film Project 1 Screening w/notes \*\**

**Wed Feb 26:** Architecture and Fight Choreography

*\*\* Scene Project 2 Rehearsal (Scenes should be memorized) \*\**

**Objectives:** Action-Reaction-Completion, Story, Fight Beats, Pace & Rhythm

**Week 8**

**Mon Mar 2:** Fighting for Your Life (Strangulation Techniques)

**Wed Mar 5:** Found Props (Bottle, Boxes, Ropes and Chairs)

**Objectives:** Story, Controlled Chaos, Spatial Awareness, Prop Awareness

**Week 9**

**Mon Mar 9:** REVIEW & In-Class Rehearsal of Scene Project 2

*\*\* Action Film Project 2 Partners Assigned \*\**

**Wed Mar 11:** In-Class Rehearsal of Action Film Choreography & Story

**Objectives:** Review of techniques and principles

**Week 10**

**March 16 & 18:** *SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES*

**Week 11**

**Mon Mar 23:** TBD

**Wed Mar 25:** *In-Class Rehearsal of Scene Project 2*

**Objectives:** Development of Story Telling with the Fight/Action

**Week 12**

**Mon Mar 30:** Choreographing...Ready, Set, Go!

**Wed Apr 1:** *Scene Project 2 Presentation #1*

**Objectives:** Critical Response, Safety, Creative Solutions

**Week 13**

**Mon Apr 6: Theatrical Firearms – Safety & Practical Use**

**Wed Apr 8: Theatrical Firearms – Safety & Practical Use**

**Objectives:** Safe Handling of Theatrical Firearms, Protocols & Best Practices when handling theatrical firearms

**Week 14**

**Mon Apr 13: Advanced Hand & Foot Strike Techniques**

**\*\* Action Film Project 2 Screening w/notes \*\***

**Wed Apr 15: Scene Project 2 Presentation #2**

**Objectives:** Application of previous techniques and principles

**Week 15**

**Mon Apr 20: Multiple Player Fights & Mass Fights**

**\*\* Action Film Project 1 Screening – Take 2 w/notes \*\***

**Wed Apr 22: Scene Project 2 Presentation #3**

**Objectives:** Timing and Rhythm

**Week 16**

**Mon Apr 27: Fight Jam 1**

**Wed Apr 29: Fight Jam 2**

**Objectives:** Review & Closure

**Final Examination Date:**

*Monday May 11, 2019 (8:00AM – 10:00AM)*

Final Scene Presentation

Short Action Film (Final Video Project) Screenings

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR COMMITMENTS AND ISPS**

Should you choose to participate in any extra-curricular project, such as an Independent Student Production, the SDA administration and faculty will not make allowances or exceptions for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, home work that is required as preparation for class, or lack of participation in class resulting from your extra-curricular involvement.

### **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, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

#### **Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for DSP and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu).

#### **Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university’s site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

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#### **Support Systems:**

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

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

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

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255*

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

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

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. [engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp)

*Sexual Assault Resource Center*

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: [sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu)

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086*

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class.

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

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support)

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs*

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations.

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

*Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710*

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa)

*Diversity at USC*

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. [diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

*USC Emergency Information*

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

*USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.*

Provides overall safety to USC community. [dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)