

# USC School of Cinematic Arts

*Media Arts + Practice Division*

## IML 320

### Designing and Writing for Transmedia Narrative

Fall 2020

4 units

Monday: 4:00 – 6:50 pm

ONLINE

Professor: Vicki Callahan

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the possibilities of transmedia, or cross-platform storytelling in a variety of genres, from advertising/marketing/branding, social marketing, blockbuster and indie media, to documentary and social change campaigns. Although the term, “transmedia,” has been subject to fluid definitions and even one might argue obsolescence, we find ourselves surrounded with transmedia frameworks and strategies on a daily basis. While we will look at projects that employ transmedia strategies across the spectrum, we will be focused, in the main, on those outside the high-profile franchise models. We offer an expansive look at transmedia and encourage students to imagine the ways in which fiction and non-fiction storytelling might be transformed.

In this class we will define, design, and write transmedia narratives in consideration of the many possibilities the form offers. Students will be asked to work, either individually or in small groups, on a project of their own selection, fiction or non-fiction, using 3 platforms of their choice. By the end of the semester, the students will have created the basic story framework and characters, design, and user experience that implements the core concepts of transmedia storytelling.

**Please bookmark these two sites for our class**

Google Classroom Main Area: <https://classroom.google.com/u/0/c/MTIzMTg2NTc2Mjcy>

Google Classroom Google Drive – where most of our work will be done:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/0By\\_1FsF37rrpfnlNUGFITm1OYUZBdWhpRmcybW9kUXhucDBNaVNZQXZVeFB1UFFxaVE0Nnc](https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/0By_1FsF37rrpfnlNUGFITm1OYUZBdWhpRmcybW9kUXhucDBNaVNZQXZVeFB1UFFxaVE0Nnc)

### REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

- Gene Luen Yang, *Avatar: The Last Airbender, The Promise Part 1* (online vendors, e.g., Amazon)
- All other readings will be available via links or pdf on our course site.
- Students will be required to rent a few films available via streaming services but most will be via USC Portal or free online

### **GRADING BREAKDOWN**

Curation (Group Project) #1	10%
Story/Topic Presentation #2	10%
Narrative Strands Presentation #3	10%
Basic World Design and Moodboard #4	10%
Diagram/Mind Map #5	10%
Platforms/Timing/User Journey #6	10%
Final Project/Story Bible/Presentation	20%
Presence/Peer Review/Posts	10%
Final Reflection	10%

### **ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION POLICY**

No late work is accepted beyond the stated deadlines unless there is just cause. Please speak with Vicki or Sultan about issues related to deadlines.

**Presence, Participation, and Community:** We are building a space to discuss, create, and provide feedback in a supportive context. We encourage you to go deeply into the what and why of your story/project and our sessions are designed to help facilitate your process. Our class depends on group work, ongoing feedback, and community building, which makes your attendance and contributions key. Join us in class. If you miss a class, please notify Vicki and Sultan via email (with IML320 in the subject line) and be sure to get any notes and assignments from your colleagues. This allows us (your professor and TA) to engage with you about the ideas and creative possibilities of the class rather than logistics. Please exchange contact information with at least two other students to facilitate this process. We also cover subject matter that is often provocative and can challenge our worldviews. Lively debate is expected and encouraged with all points of view welcome. Our conversations are grounded in love and respect for our colleagues. Research, imagination, and careful analysis are the foundations on which we build community.

**Content Notice:** The work in our class involves the engagement of material that can at times be difficult, painful, or stressful to encounter. We may at times deal with issues of oppression across race, gender, class as well as other areas of oppression (e.g., ethnicity, age, nationality, disability) with the intent to understand our current context and future possibilities. I will do my best to provide warnings whenever I can. If for some reason, you want or need to miss material due to the topic or approach, please connect with Vicki or Sultan to consider alternatives.

**Statement on Fair Use:** Fair use is a legal principle that defines certain limitations on the exclusive rights of copyright holders. MAP seeks to apply a reasonable working definition of fair use that will enable students and instructors to develop multimedia projects without seeking authorization for non-commercial, educational uses. Four factors that should be considered when determining whether a use is fair: (1) the purpose and character of use, (2) the nature of the copyrighted work, (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work. In general, we regard the reproduction of copyrighted works for the purposes of analysis or critique in this class to be covered by the principle of fair use.

**Citation Guidelines:** All projects will need to include academically appropriate citations in the form of a References section, which covers all sources, in order to receive a passing grade. The References area is either included in the project or as a separate document, as appropriate to your project. We will be following the KAIROS style guide for citation purposes in this class [<http://www.technorhetoric.net/styleguide.html>]. Kairos uses a modified APA format, whose general guidelines and many specific examples you can find here: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

**Zoom Info and Protocol:** Each week I will provide you a unique link to access our session via Zoom. It will be available on our course site stream and in a document in the Google Drive. Please do not share the link.

**Be sure to sign into Zoom with your USC account.** Our class is intended as shared space of open dialogue (see above comment on our work). Because we are building a community to foster communication, I will not record the sessions except in circumstances to accommodate time zone difficulties. Please let me know if that is a particular issue for you. I will only make the video available to those students who need this accommodation. That is, if you miss a class, it will just be as an in-class experience, you will need to get notes from your colleagues.

Lastly, I will have my video on during our Zoom session, and I invite you to do so also. I recognize there might well be times that might not be best for you, and that is fine.

### **WEEKLY SCHEDULE (Subject to change)**

Please consult the course google site's google drive area posting for the week for the most current information, assignments, and due dates.

#### **Aug. 17, Week 1: Intro to Course**

**In class:**

**Intros: View and Discuss:**

Ayoka Chenzira, "Revel in the Physical"

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKAPya4IF\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKAPya4IF_M)

**Also in class read:**

\*Henry Jenkins, Intro to Transmedia Storytelling 101,

[http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2007/03/transmedia\\_storytelling\\_101.html](http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2007/03/transmedia_storytelling_101.html)

\*Elena Cresci “Lonely Girl 15, “How One Mysterious Blogger Changed the Internet”

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/jun/16/lonelygirl15-bree-video-blog-youtube>

### View and Discuss:

Art of the Heist: <http://campfirenyc.com/work/audi-art-of-the-heist>

Why So Serious? <http://www.42entertainment.com/work/whysoserious>

Conspiracy for Good: <http://conspiracyforgood.com/index.php>

LonelyGirl15: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-goXKtd6cPo> (first two episodes of season 1)

Awkward Black Girl: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIVa9lxkbus> (first two episodes of season 1) explore her website: <http://www.issarae.com>

### For Week 2:

#### Read:

- Karen Swallow Prior, “The New Old Way to Tell Stories, With Input from the Audience,” *The Atlantic*, October 18, 2013  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2013/10/the-new-old-way-to-tell-stories-with-input-from-the-audience/280682/>
- Henry Jenkins, Transmedia 202,  
[http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2011/08/defining\\_transmedia\\_further\\_re.html](http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2011/08/defining_transmedia_further_re.html)
- Robert Pratten, Getting Started in Transmedia Storytelling, Intro and Understanding Transmedia Storytelling, pgs 1-39. (Pdf, in resources area)

#### View:

- *The Lizzie Bennett Diaries* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KisuGP2lcPs>, Episodes 1 - 4 and some of the related materials linked through Prior article
- *Walking Dead, Season 1, Episode #1* (View through USC portal)

### ***Suggested not required (we will look at first two in class next week)***

\*Christian Vázquez Nóvoa, “*The Walking Dead* as Transmedia Phenomenon (in resources area)

### August 24, Week 2: What is Transmedia?

#### *In class, read:*

- Maya Zuckerman, “The Why of Transmedia” <https://www.provideocoalition.com/the-why-of-transmedia/>
- *The Walking Dead*, <https://www.comicextra.com/the-walking-dead/chapter-1>
- *The Walking Dead* Fan Fiction, <https://www.fanfiction.net/tv/Walking-Dead/>

### Due for Week 3:

#### Read:

- Robert McKee, “The Story Problem,” (pdf pages 11-17)
- What is the Hero’s Journey Archetype, <https://blog.reedsy.com/heros-journey/>
- Jeff Gomez, The Collective Journey  
<https://blog.collectivejourney.com/why-is-this-happening-d1287d5ee4ee>  
<https://blog.collectivejourney.com/the-heros-journey-is-no-longer-serving-us-85c6f8152a50>  
<https://blog.collectivejourney.com/when-it-comes-to-story-youre-not-getting-it-f6e1f20006f1>
- Selection from Fan Fiction on Prometheus,  
[https://archiveofourown.org/works/search?utf8=√&work\\_search%5Bquery%5D=prometheus](https://archiveofourown.org/works/search?utf8=√&work_search%5Bquery%5D=prometheus)

**View:**

- *Prometheus* Transmedia Campaign,  
<https://www.behance.net/gallery/14357945/Prometheus-Transmedia-Campaign>
- Peter Weiland, Ted Talk 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQpGwnN3dfc>
- *Prometheus*, Ridley Scott (View through USC Portal)

**\*\*\*Prep for Exercise #1 will be due next week**

**Suggested, not required:** Susan Mackey-Kallis, “The Perennial Journey Home” (pdf in resources)

**August 31, Week 3: Story: The Hero’s Journey and Emerging Story Possibilities**

**Exercise #1 Curation Prep Due in class**

**For Week 4:**

**Read:**

- Jeff Gomez, Collective Journey, <https://blog.collectivejourney.com> (continue with series)
- Maya Zuckerman,  
<https://medium.com/regenerative-narrative/the-great-becoming-part-002-92c2825d19cc>  
<https://medium.com/regenerative-narrative/the-lifting-of-the-veils-d32bca8d5b0c>  
<https://medium.com/regenerative-narrative/the-great-becoming-part-001-8d6588f1efd5>
- Michon Boston, “On PBS, Old Photos Tell New Stories,”  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/12/arts/television/family-pictures-usa-pbs.html>

**View:**

\**Family Pictures*, Thomas Allen Harris: <https://www.pbs.org/show/family-pictures-usa/>  
(Episode 2, Detroit, rent via Amazon or free if you have PBS or Hoopla).

\*And Healthy Families, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Feemf4Mq6A&feature=youtu.be>

\*Elif Shafak: “The Politics of Fiction,”

[https://www.ted.com/talks/elif\\_shafak\\_the\\_politics\\_of\\_fiction](https://www.ted.com/talks/elif_shafak_the_politics_of_fiction)

**Prepare: Story Idea, Exercise #2 Due**

## Sept 7 Labor Day, No Class Meeting

## Sept 14, Week 4: The Collective Journey, Story Session – Story Idea Presentation

### In class:

- (Exercise #2, Story due)
- Sasha Costanza-Chock on Design Justice, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWEq0vRCe0M>

Documentation on VozMob: <https://docubase.mit.edu/project/vozmob/>

Voz Mob, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwNHhGUPZQk>

And <https://vozmob.wordpress.com>

### For week 5,

### Read:

- Ruth Anne Reid, World Building 101, <https://thewritepractice.com/world-building-101/>
- “Fantasy World Building” <https://nybookeditors.com/2017/07/fantasy-world-building-101-create-breathing-world-fantasy-novel/>
- Connie Jasperson, World Building, part 1 <https://conniejjasperson.com/2020/08/03/world-building-part-1-place-amwriting/>
- Robert Pratten, Developing a Participatory Story World, pgs 76-89 (pdf)
- Gene Luen Yang, *Avatar: The Last Airbender, The Promise Part 1*
- Lori Kido Lopez, “Fan Activists and the Politics of Race” pdf

### View:

- *Avatar: The Last Airbender, Season 1, Episode 17*, 2006. (in USC Portal)
- *Avatar: The Last Airbender game* <http://www.nick.co.uk/shows/avatar/games/avatar-the-last-airbender-sozins-echo/5ikc28>

## Sept 21, Week 5: Of Worlds and Moods and Fans

### In class:

\*Guest, Khaliah Reed on fan fiction

\*Sultan Sharrief on Mood Boards

### Read:

- *Avatar: The Last Airbender* fan fiction [https://archiveofourown.org/works/search?utf8=✓&work\\_search%5Bquery%5D=last+air+bender](https://archiveofourown.org/works/search?utf8=✓&work_search%5Bquery%5D=last+air+bender)
- Khaliah Reed, “Fan Fiction as Performative Criticism: Harry Potter Race Bending”

View: “The Case for Fan Fiction”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdDIMOehLm8&feature=youtu.be>

### For week 6,

### Read:

- Connie Jaspersen, World Building, part 2, <https://conniejaspersen.com/2020/08/05/world-building-part-2-building-reality-amwriting/>
- Kamal Sinclair, Selections from “Making a New Reality”

**View:**

- Illya Szilak, *Queerskins: A Novel*, <http://www.queerskins.com/>

**Sept 28, Week 6: Making a New Reality**

**Exercise # 3, Mood Board Due**

**For Week 7**

**Read:**

- Robert McKee: The Structure Spectrum
- Janet Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck* excerpts, read parts I and II <http://www.altx.com/ebr/ebr7/7mur.htm>

**View:**

- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *The Danger of a Single Story*, [https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_ngozi\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story)
- **Question Bridge:** <http://beta.questionbridge.com>
- **Quipu Project OR Ear Hustle**

**#4 Narrative Strands Due**

**Oct 5, Week 7: Writing New Histories: Narrative Strands Presentation (#4 Exercise)**

**Mind Mapping tools**

**For Week 8**

**Read:**

- Pratten, “Writing Interactive Transmedia Narratives, Chapter 6 (through 6.4)”
- Laura Hudson, “Twine, The Video Game Technology for all” <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/23/magazine/twine-the-video-game-technology-for-all.html>

**View:**

- Select any two of the Twine examples from the Arcade at the end of the NYTimes article
- NFB Welcome to Pine Point: <http://pinpoint.nfb.ca/#/pinpoint>

**Oct 12, Week 8: Designing the Intersection of Storylines**

**In class, *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch* walkthrough**

**For Week 9**

**Read:**

- “Transmedia Activism” <http://henryjenkins.org/2016/01/telling-stories-lina-srivastava-talks-about-transmedia-activism-part-one.html>

- Aggie Ebrahimi Bazaz, “Border Crossing and Genre Bending, An Interview with Jesikah Maria Ross (pdf in weekly assignment)
- *Robert Pratten, Appendix 2, Transmedia for Change*

**View:**

- Explore work of jesikah maria ross <http://jesikahmariaross.com>
- *Priya Shakti*: <https://www.priyashakti.com/>
- Campaign 2020 stories (you select a campaign of interest to you, local or national)

**Oct 19, Week 9: How is your story experienced?**

**MindMap Exercise #5 Due**

**Intro to User Journey**

**For Week 10**

**Read:**

- Robert Pratten: Chapter 5 “Audience” and Sec 6.4 to end of chapter
- De Michel and Zimmerman, “Documentary as ‘Open Space’” (pdf)

**Listen/View:**

Ken Eklund, Future Coast, <http://futurecoast.org> and <http://writerguy.com/ww/metaabout.htm>

And

Sara Thacher, “Olga Nunes, On Making Transmedia Music (Lamp Project)”  
<https://thachr.com/2013/olga-nunes-on-making-transmedia-music/index.html>

**Oct 26, Week 10: Platforms and User Journeys**

**User Journey Workshop**

**For Week 11**

**Read:**

**Pratten Section 7, Content Strategy**

**Complete:**

**User Journey Exercise**

**Nov 2, Week 11: User Journey, Exercise #6 Due**

**Exercise #6 User Journey Due**

**For Week 12**

**Work on Final Project/Storybible**

**Nov 9, Week 12: Final Project Feedback session**

**For Week 13**

**Final Project/Storybible Due**

**Nov 19, Week 13: Final Project Presentations/Storybible Due**

## **Exam Week: Final Course Reflection and Peer Review end of your course examination time)**

### **Additional Academic Policies and Resources**

#### **SCA Diversity and Inclusion Statement:**

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.

**Statement on 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” <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>.

**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.

#### **Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment**

The sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment is prohibited and against USC university policy.

#### *SCampus Section 11.12(B)*

*Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).*

#### **COVID-19 Information for Students Coming to Campus**

USC has COVID-19 and health protocols requirements for students who will be coming to campus.

Please consult the [USC COVID-19 resource center website](#) for the latest COVID-19 testing and health protocol requirements. Requirements are continuously updated so please check frequently.

Students should also stay informed with the “We Are USC” portal:

<https://we-are.usc.edu/students/>

Students are also expected to follow the [University’s Expectations on Student Behavior](#).

Academic Policies: <https://map.usc.edu/community/academic-policies/>

USC Resources: <https://map.usc.edu/community/university-resources/>