

# USC School of Dramatic Arts

## THTR 467: Going Viral: Performance for New Media

### 2020 Fall Semester

**Units:** 2 Units

**Days:** Mondays & Wednesdays

**Time:** 2pm - 3:50pm

**Location:** Online

**ZOOM LINK:** (located on class Blackboard page)

**Instructor:** RODNEY TO

**Office:** Zoom

**Office Hours:** by Appointment

**Contact:** [rodneyto@usc.edu](mailto:rodneyto@usc.edu) / (917) 445-1040 (cell)

### Course Description (from the USC Course Catalogue)

A writing, performance, & development course where students will gain fundamental understanding of all areas of self-created film & digital content, & it's various mediums & platforms.

### Course Objectives

The current global climate has fully saturated itself in the Digital Age - there is no turning back. Consequently, the Entertainment Industry necessitates that it, too, entrench itself in digital/web technology & content. It is no longer possible to remain relevant, competitive, or creative without a thorough foothold on Digital Media and self-generated content. Through research, video exercises, writing exercises, analysis, and performance assignments, students will gain fundamental & practical knowledge in all areas of content creation in order to properly develop their own content.

### Learning Objectives

- Name the major digital streaming platforms and define each platform's defining content and target audience. Define each specific platform's mission statement through analyzing their content and resolve how they maintain and retain their viewership in the current competitive digital landscape.
- Name and describe major social media platforms and define each platform's defining content and target audience. Objectively defend their usefulness to their target audience and how its use is relevant in the world by finding three pieces of content from each, analyze their significance and defend them to the class.
- Set up and maintain one social media account; gather followers, follow accounts-of-interest, maintain consistent weekly posting, and use information to analyze trends in reach, marketing, promotion and interest within one's own network

- Complete individual video assignments using student's own digital equipment (camera, smartphone, computer, etc.) and analyze trends in student's work which will define the student's creative identity.
- Identify all aspects of a professional 'pitch'. Create a 'one sheet' document, determine essential visuals, and most importantly, clearly articulate one's work in a public form. Use basic public speaking techniques to guide the spoken pitch and effectively sell the project.
- Identify and understand all major components of collaboration in self-generated content by working with classmates to simulate real-life collaboration. Project manage by combining into groups and assign positions based on need, skill set, and support.
- Present accessible, self-generated digital content (videos, podcasts, social media clips, etc.) that is consistent with the student's personal creative vision, identity and skillset as examined throughout the semester.

### **Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required**

Students will need internet access as well as access to a working digital camera. Mobile phones or tablets are desirable for easy mobility and access (*see MOBILE DEVICES' POLICY under "Additional Policies"*). Basic editing software (ie iMovie, Premiere, Movie Maker, etc.), access to basic sound and lighting equipment may also be useful, but *not* required.

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

Since much of what we will be doing will be digitally-based, coursework and assigned reading will be conferred throughout the semester.

### **DESCRIPTION OF GRADING CRITERIA AND ASSESSMENT OF ASSIGNMENTS**

**\*\*\*SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS NEEDED. WILL NOTIFY OF ALL CHANGES\*\*\***

Since this course is both practically and artistically based, grading will focus on quantitative and qualitative aspects of the curriculum and assignments: proficiency of course concepts, critical thinking, assignments, class participation, collaboration, deadlines, attendance, and of course, the final project.

#### **Grading Breakdown:**

- Weekly (video or written) assignments: **60pts\*\*\***
- Final video project: **25pts**
- Social Media participation: **5pts\*** (*see Social Media posting breakdown below*)
- Class participation: **10pts †** (*see Participation breakdown below*)

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**Total: 100 points**

**\*Social Media posting breakdown:**

- \* 5pts warrants *approximately 75%* (of the semester, including weekends) daily social media interaction/posting of videos, pics, stories, chat, etc.
- \* 4pts warrants *approximately 50%* (of the semester, including weekends) daily social media interaction/posting of videos, pics, stories, chat, etc.
- \* 3pts warrants *approximately 25%* (of the semester, including weekends) daily social media interaction/posting of videos, pics, stories, chat, etc.
- \* 2pts warrants *approximately 10%* (of the semester, including weekends) daily social media interaction/posting of videos, pics, stories, chat, etc.
- \* 1pts warrants *approximately 5% or below* (of the semester, including weekends) daily social media interaction/posting of videos, pics, stories, chat, etc.

**† Participation Breakdown:**

- † 10pts EXCELLENT participation. Demonstrates active, everyday engagement. Shows willingness & enthusiasm in discussions, class activity, and collaborations
- † 8pts GOOD participation. Frequent active participation. Engaged, willing semi-regular participation in discussions, class activity, and collaborations
- † 6pts AVERAGE participation. Semi-regular, but active participation in discussions, class activity, and collaborations
- † 4pts BELOW AVERAGE participation. Infrequent participation. Predominately passive and rarely demonstrates willingness to contribute to discussions, class activity, and collaborations
- † 2pt POOR/INSUFFICIENT participation. Does not participate willingly. Extremely passive and lacks enthusiasm. Poor, if any, contribution to discussions, class activity, and collaborations

**Further Participation Notes:**

All aspects of content creation are fully collaborative and an immersive process. I cannot emphasize enough how much you will (also) learn by listening to, working with, and supporting your cohort. Therefore daily participation and active engagement in class (discussions, classwork, etc.) is essential and *will* factor into your final grade. **Therefore no absences or late arrivals will be allowed.** Participation is weighted at no more than 15% as per University Guidelines.

**Grading Scale:**

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

**Further Grading Notes:**

- When the GPA falls between two grades, the final grade will be weighted toward the positive end of the scale for students with excellent in-class participation. Grades will be weighted towards the negative end of the scale for those with poor in-class participation.
- I am available to discuss work and progress at anytime. I encourage you to open a dialogue with me at any point during the semester.

**Assignment Submission Policy**

Most of the required assignments will be emailed to the instructor, posted on Blackboard or uploaded to Google Drive - provided free for all enrolled students - with the link emailed to the instructor.

**Late Submission Policy**

Assignments are expected to be completed by the due date & time. Grades on late assignments will be deducted appropriately. I reserve the right to not accept late assignments at my discretion.

**USC Technology Support Links**

[Zoom information for students](#)

[Blackboard help for students](#)

[Software available to USC Campus](#)

**Additional Policies:****• Social Media Accounts**

All students should have some Social Media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, SnapChat, etc). I will be checking periodically to ensure consistency of posting content.

- **NETIQUETTE:**

**The online learning modality for the Arts & Entertainment Industry is somewhat of a new frontier for everyone. We are discovering how to best navigate these newer practices together. While certainly not ideal, let's embrace this as an opportunity.**

- I will be expecting that you do your best to treat this as a traditional classroom. Do your best to find a quiet space in your home where you can sit up comfortably and focus with little-to-no distractions or disturbances. No outdoor spots unless you discuss it with me first. I am acutely aware (and sensitive to the fact) that everyone's circumstances vary, so if you're unable to find a reasonable working spot for class, please contact me privately to discuss.
- Even though we will be online and in your homes this semester, students must wear appropriate, casual, classroom clothes - no pajamas. Be professional, mature, and respectful; wear nothing revealing or distasteful.
- Please log-on from a desktop (or laptop) if possible. Oftentimes, I find when students log-on from their phone or tablet, the smaller nature of these devices lends itself to the student being too casual, less alert and easily distracted.
- Remember safety at all times. Do NOT drive while in class. Yes, I've seen it all. You will be logged- off and marked with an unexcused absence if you attempt to take class while driving or exercising or shopping or cleaning or babysitting - you get the idea.
- No 'other' technology during class. Phones must be on silent and put away. Unless I invite you to do so, phones may only be taken out during breaks. I am aware when you are reading your phones unnecessarily - trust me. Any intentional use of your devices for non-class purposes (texting, emailing, viewing of non-class related materials, playing video games, etc.) will negatively reflect your participation grade.
- Except for water, no food or drinks are allowed in class.
- No pets or any other distractions such as toys, video games, etc.
- Do not share personal class dealings and discoveries outside of class. We will be working hard to establish trust with each other. Respect is paramount. Communicate freely, honestly, and frequently, but always be respectful, mindful, mature.

***I pride myself in treating all students like professionals-in-training. It's important that you begin your journey to becoming professionals by behaving as such throughout this course which, at the very least, begins with proper, respectful usage of your devices. No one in the history of the world has died or will die because of you paying attention in class.***

### Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

**\*\*\*SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS NEEDED. WILL NOTIFY OF ALL CHANGES\*\*\***

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1			
8/17	Intro to course. "Intro to Digital Media" / Why?	Begin personal intro/ story on platform	
8/19	Introduction to Storytelling	Continue personal intro/story w/ personal vid. 2 min of your life. Focus on 'theme'.	DUE 8/23 by 12NOON! Upload to Google Drive and email Rodney link.
Week 2			
8/24	Continue Storytelling/ Specificity	Facts questionnaire vid (3 facts / 3 opinions)	Due 8/25 by 12midnight THAT NIGHT. Upload to Google Drive and email link to Rodney.
8/26	Creativity in Media	2min "Passion" vid	DUE 8/30 by 12NOON! Upload to Google Drive and email Rodney link.
Week 3			
8/31	Demonstration videos & specificity	1-2min demonstration video	Due 9/1 by 12midnight THAT NIGHT. Upload to Google Drive and email link to Rodney.
9/2	Styles: Testimonial/ Interview	3min Interview Vid	Due by TUESDAY, 9/8 at 12 NOON! Upload to Google Drive and email link to Rodney

Week 4			
9/7	<b>LABOR</b>	<b>DAY</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>
9/9	Interview Analysis & Discussion	Reverse Interview: pair-up/interview each other.	Due by 12noon SUNDAY, 9/13. Upload to Google Drive and email link to Rodney
Week 5			
9/14	Intro to Formal Script Writing (differences, format, beats, etc.)	Come up with short/sketch idea	
9/16	Script Writing (cont'd.)	Write short script	Email script to Rodney. Due by 12noon SUNDAY, 9/20.
Week 6			
9/21	Table read scripts & Analysis / Revisions	Work on revisions to short script.	(on-going)
9/23	Pitching content: Oral & Written (prep, one-sheet, 2-3 min verbal, etc.)	Written pitch report on previous assignment	Email written pitch to Rodney by SUNDAY, 9/27 at 12noon! Be prepared to present 2-3 min verbal.
Week 7			
9/28	Branding & Platforms	Platform research paper. Pick platform, analyze audience, content, analytics.	Email paper to Rodney. Due by 12noon SUNDAY, 10/4.
9/30	(Digital Content Guest Lecturer - TBA)		

Week 8			
10/5	Collab projects begin / Breakout Rooms - pair up to pitch.	Partner-up / Brainstorm #1	Verbal pitches presented in class that day.
10/7	Collabs (cont'd.)	Shoot partner project #1	Collab project #1 Due 12noon on Sunday, 10/11. Upload to Google Drive and email link to Rodney.
Week 9			
10/12	Critical Analysis Proj #1 / Breakout Rooms - pair up to pitch	Partner-up / Brainstorm #2	Verbal pitches presented in class that day.
10/14	Partner pitches	Shoot partner project #2	Collab project #1 Due 12noon on Sunday, 10/18. Upload to Google Drive and email link to Rodney.
Week 10			
10/19	Discuss Final Projects	Final Project research / Prepare verbal and written pitch	Written and verbal pitches presented in class on 10/21
10/21	Final Pitches - pitch final projects to cohort. Get notes.	Begin pre-production on Final projects	
Week 11			
10/26	THIS WEEK: One on Ones w/ Rodney: You will sign up for a time with Rodney to discuss your final project (goals, limitations, expectations, etc.)		
10/28			Read handout on Financing and Fundraising Content. (Will be posted on Blackboard)



Week 12			
11/2	Financing & Fundraising		CONTINUE TO SHOOT FINAL PROJECT. ROUGH CUT TURNED IN (TBA)
11/4	Business of the Business Lecture		
Week 13			
11/9	FINAL CHECK INS w/ RODNEY		FINAL PROJECTS WILL BE DUE BY SUNDAY, 11/15! NO EXCEPTIONS! I must have plenty of time to screen, grade, and prepare videos for presentation.
11/11			

**\*\*\*\*YOUR FINAL PROJECTS WILL BE SCREENED ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20 from 2PM-4PM\*\*\*\***

### 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 GFS 120 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) 814-4618 (Vidoe Phone), (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:**

#### *Campus Support & Intervention (CSI) – (213) 740-0411*

Campus Support & Intervention is an office within Campus Wellbeing and Crisis Intervention. We are a team of professionals here to assist students, faculty, and staff in navigating complex issues. Whether you are here seeking support for yourself or someone else, we are available to help you problem solve, understand options, and connect with resources. <https://uscsa.usc.edu>

#### *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: <https://titleix.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. <https://titleix.usc.edu/>

#### *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)

#### *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)