



Practicum in Directing
CTPR 478 - Section 18575D

ACTING ON CAMERA: THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS
THTR 475 Section 63090D

Fall 2020—Wednesdays—10:00 – 12:50

Location: Online – Zoom

478 Instructor: Helaine Head

Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:00 – 6:00 or by appointment

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Timeline for replying to emails/calls - within 48 hours

475 Instructor: Andrei Belgrader

Office Hours: by appointment

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Timeline for replying to emails/calls - within 48 hours

Student Assistant: Kevin Maxwell

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I am only impressed when the actor's technique is so perfect that it has become invisible and has persuaded the audience that they are in the presence of a living human being who makes it possible for them to empathize with all his foibles and struggles as they unfold in the play. It is my firm belief that when you are aware of how a feat has been achieved, the actor has failed.

Uta Hagen, A Challenge for the Actor (p. 36)

The director's main responsibility -- and prerogative -- is telling the story. This means finding a structure to the script and setting up the events so that they are at once surprising and inevitable. You give the actor direction in order that the actor's actions and interactions illuminate and create those events. The actor has a responsibility -- and prerogative -- to create truthful behavior while following direction and fulfilling the requirements of the script. Actor and director must respect each other's creative territory.

Judith Weston, Directing Actors (p. 9)

Course Description

The major goal in this class, for the directors, is both to be able to analyze and break down a full length screenplay by a an author other than yourself and to be able to communicate that vision to the actors and help them achieve strong performances. The major goal for the actors is to understand the differences between acting for the camera and acting for the theater audience and to become comfortable with the craft of acting on film.

Over the course of the semester directors and actors will work together breaking down screenplays and discover in rehearsal methods to clarify and analyze their scene. In class we will work on rehearsal techniques such as improvisation and beat-to-beat breakdowns. Over the course of the semester each director will rehearse two scripted scenes and shoot them. Both of your scripted scenes will be rehearsed partially in class and partially outside of class. One will be your mid-term assignment and the second will be your final assignment for the class. Reading assignments will be tested over the course of the semester with take home quizzes. Film clips will be analyzed and both directors and actors will write journals that will be sent to their individual instructors on a weekly basis over the course of the semester.

Learning Objectives

To develop a director's ability to communicate effectively with actors. No matter how good the other creative elements, unless the actors engage the audience as credible intriguing characters, the film will rarely succeed in *memorable* fashion. In this class, directors will learn how to shape the essential structure of a scene by breaking it down into its component parts, and how to guide actors into realizing their roles with spontaneous, organic behavior so as to effectively mount the scene in order to best tell the story.

The goal is to help the director sharpen their powers of observation, being able to see and hear better, and to discover how to motivate the actor's performance. The goal for the actor is to be able to understand what the director wants to communicate and how to incorporate that in their performance. The emphasis of this class will be on communication between director and actor.

Prerequisite: Directors – CTPR 310
Actors – must be Juniors or Seniors

Course Notes

The course is Web-Enhanced using Blackboard and Zoom. We will also use Discussion Boards and Journals to support the learning.

Required Reading For Directors & Actors which can be purchased from the USC Bookstore or from Amazon

- Directing Actors by Judith Weston (required for actors and directors)
- Action by Robert Benedetti (Required only for acting students)

Supplementary Materials

William Ball handout on Objectives
The Clurman handout
Scripts for the final project TBD

Grading Breakdown

Grading will be based on the extent of preparation, and the growth and development evidenced by the final project:

Preparation For, and Full Engagement with, Every Session (Includes Discipline, Collaboration, Attitude & Weekly Journals .)	35%
Midterm Project	25%
Take Home Quizzes	10%
Final Project	30%

Assignment Submission Policy

Assignments will be given during class and also put on Blackboard. They are due the following week.

Grading Timeline

Midterm pass/fail and Final grades will be given.

Additional Policies

Attendance

No unexcused absences. Because of the highly structured nature of this class, one person's absence makes your team (often 3 people) unable to work. Any absences must be accompanied by a doctor's note. Even if you are sick and have a doctor's note, your absence will not be excused unless you have called the S.A., before 10 p.m., the evening prior to the class meeting, so that alternate arrangements can be made.

An unexcused absence results in a 2/3 grade point being deducted from your grade (meaning one unexcused absence reduces your grade from A to B+).

Late-comers to class will be penalized if this becomes a habit or excessive.

Don't even think about turning in an assignment late

*Production Numbers:

Production Numbers will be given to any class who normally receives numbers. Students will be instructed when it is possible for them to go onto SCAcommunity and create numbers where authorized for their class. Class SAs will aid students in making, or correcting, production numbers if needed. Note many classes work in teams where they share a production number. Ask your SA about the needs for your particular class.

Insurance

This semester, the School of Cinematic Arts will be covering all student Insurance Premiums and Lab Fees which are normally charged to students. Students will be required to use approved "Fast Track" Insurance companies only for rentals and equipment. No other insurance requests will be honored. USC does not insure Sharegrid or companies not on the "Fast Track List."

Students may still make requests for location insurance verifications (or COIs) when requested by locations. Students are reminded that these requests can take 3-10 days from request to final approval.

All necessary forms and online request forms are available on SCAcommunity under the "Student Productions" heading. Contact your SA with any questions that you may have.

Shooting Plans

Students are required to vet their plans with their faculty including discussing any Hazardous Shooting Conditions as defined by the SCA's Safety Book as posted on SCAcommunity. **This semester students will also be required to vet their plans for remaining Covid-safe with our Covid Safety Monitor. Ask your SA if you are unclear about these protocols.**

Notes regarding Video Projects:

1. Directors sharing the same production number can work together. As the director, you may arrange to have a person other than the person who shares your production number act as the DP, but you are still responsible to act as the DP for the other director if called upon.
2. All projects must be presented in class from an online link viewable in class. A link must be sent or left with the instructors and be given to each of the actors in their scene. The link

must be good till the end of the year. Students are responsible for ensuring that their link is viewable from a browser.

3. All directors will burn a watermark disclaimer that will run the length of the final project. The disclaimer should read: "This is a classroom exercise and not intended for distribution."
4. Each copy of your project that you give to your actors must have a letter accompanying it with the following wording:

LETTER TO THE ACTORS

Date:

Dear _____,

Please find one copy of our 478/475 class project titled, _____

The enclosed Project Link is a result of our class project and not intended for placement on the internet, or any kind of public screening outside the classroom – that is prohibited by law. You may share it with, if applicable, your agents, managers, and casting directors.

Because of the exercise nature of this project and in consideration of the rights, legal and ethical, of the original creative forces, please do not place this project on the internet. In doing so, you may be liable for prosecution by the owners of the copyrights.

Thank you,

A Note from Your Instructors

You will be expected to work hard, both in and out of class. You have a responsibility to yourself, to your fellow directors and actors and to the class as a whole. Together we are a production company – we, instructors, are your producers, the student assistant is the production coordinator/A.D. and you are the talent - the actors and directors. We all have to work together to deliver the product and to keep the chains of communication clear. (i.e. Directors call Actors, Actors call Directors, Director calls S.A. in regards to scheduling and then contacts the actor.) . You will be expected to push yourself beyond the comfort zone. Class participation, discipline and enthusiasm/rigor will be reflected in how prepared and committed your work is. Absorb criticism and avoid going to a defensive place. The people who process information are the ones who work.

A note to aspiring actors/directors/DPs/producers/writers, etc. - I have never asked an actor/director how good their grades were in high school or college, nor do I know of another actor, director, producer, studio executive, casting director or agent who asks actors/directors about their grade point average. The people that hire you are only interested in what you are able to create and produce, and if you are reliable, responsible and flexible - mentally, emotionally, and physically. However, we are required to give you a letter grade. They can be useful because they give you an idea of how you are doing, and how you are applying yourself in the context of this class, thereby enabling you to maximize your strengths and minimize your weaknesses. As with most things, you will get out of it what you put into it.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings/Preparation	Deliverables
Week 1	Introductions	Read the Syllabus Weston Chapter 1 & 8	
Week 2	Auditions	Read the Script for the Sides Uta Hagen 6 Steps Read Weston Introduction Bill Ball on "Objectives" Benedetti Chapters 1 & 2	Pictures & Resumes Uta Hagen 6 Steps
Week 3	Casting & Preparation	Read the Open Scenes Read Weston Chapter 2,3,4 Read Benedetti Chapter 3,4	
Week 4	Script Analysis Discussion & Moving Masters	Mark Beats in the Script Read Weston Chapter 7,9 Benedetti Chapter 5,6	Take Home Quiz
Week 5	Group A Rehearsal & Beats discussion	Uta Hagen 6 Steps Preliminary Blocking Read Weston Chapter 6 Appendix B & C Read Benedetti 10 - 13	Uta Hagen 6 Steps, Lines Down
Week 6	Group B Rehearsal & Blocking Discussion	Uta Hagen 6 Steps Preliminary Blocking ReRead Weston Chapter 1	Uta Hagen 6 Steps, Lines Down
Week 7	Group A Screening & Scene Evaluation	Shoot & Edit the Scene Read Weston Chapter 10 & the Epilogue Read Scripts for the Final Project	Production Book
Week 8	Group B Screening & Scene Evaluation & Structure	Shoot & Edit the Scene All Choose 3 Final Scenes Read Weston Chapter 5	Production Book
Week 9	Casting & Discussion of Shoot Problems & Discoveries		Take Home Quiz
Week 10	Discuss Blocking For Camera		MidTerm Conferences
Week 11	Group B Rehearsal	Uta Hagen 6 Steps Preliminary Blocking	Uta Hagen 6 Steps, Lines Down
Week 12	Group A Rehearsal	Uta Hagen 6 Steps Preliminary Blocking	Uta Hagen 6 Steps, Lines Down
Week 13	Group B Screening	Shoot & Edit the Scene	Production Book
Week 14	Group A Screening	Shoot & Edit the Scene	Production Book
FINAL			Refer to the final exam schedule in the USC <i>Schedule of Classes</i> at classes.usc.edu .

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.

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.

Stressful Times:

These are stressful times in our country, and Graduate School in and of itself is stressful. I encourage you to take care of yourself and your fellow students. USC provides opportunities for Mindful Meditation <http://mindful.usc.edu> and Mental health counseling is available at the Engemann Student Health Center, 1031 W. 34th Street, 213-740-9355.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.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 and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by 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. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual

sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, 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 Campus Support & Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

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) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

ombuds.usc.edu

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

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.