



CTPR 385: Colloquium on Motion Picture Production Techniques

Units: 4

SPRING 2021: Session 060 | CTPR-385 | Section 18516 |
TUESDAY 2:00 - 4:50 p.m. ONLINE

Instructor: Joselito Seldera 773.458-0476 seldera@usc.edu

Office Hours: By appointment.

Teaching Assistant: Kevin Ung kcung@usc.edu

Course Description

From idea and script, to shooting and editing, you will learn the fundamental components of motion picture production while collaborating with classmates on short form digital video projects.

The class will take a hands-on approach and introduce you to both the creative side (script analysis, working with actors, visualization, etc.) and the basic technical side (camera, lights, editing, etc.) of the filmmaking process.

No experience necessary. This course is ideal for students seeking an introduction to all aspects of film production, and for students who have some experience but are seeking to continue expanding their knowledge and experience.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes

Beginning with a well-written scene, we will uncover:

- Character emotional beats, beats that the actors and director will develop;
- Body language, shot selection and blocking of action that is as powerful as dialogue;
- Cinematic elements (lighting, visual design, picture editing and sound design) that grow out of these elements and magnify their effect a thousand-fold.

Through class exercises, analysis of films and completion of your own projects you will begin to understand how the many layers of cinematic storytelling - technical, aesthetic, and emotional- work together to reach an audience. Students will also become familiar with the business side of filmmaking through class assignments, lecture, and discussion.

Co-Requisite(s): Mandatory Safety Seminar required at the beginning of the semester.

Recommended Preparation: Reading of screenplays, both produced and un-produced, viewing of movies and television shows.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Videos/Tutorials on LinkedInLearning/Lynda.com

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Each student must participate in eight main projects/assignments:

1. TRADE ARTICLES (4)
 - On an assigned week, explore one (or more) of the following and the following only:

- i. Variety (Variety.com)
- ii. Hollywood Reporter (hollywoodreporter.com)
- iii. Deadline Hollywood (deadline.com/Hollywood)
- iv. indiewire (indiewire.com)

Choose an article that interests you and GIVE A BRIEF SUMMARY (NO MORE THAN 3 LINES) AND WRITE YOUR THOUGHTS/OPINIONS/ ON HOW YOU FEEL THE TOPIC DISCUSSED AFFECTS THE INDUSTRY. HAVE AN OPINION. We will also have a short discussion on select article the following class.

Label it as such: LASTNAME_TRADE ARTICLE #.

Include your name, class, date, assignment, and hyperlink to the article in the report, as you would any other essay. TREAT THIS AS YOU WOULD AN ESSAY. FORMAL LANGUAGE, PROPERLY FORMATTED, CORRECT GRAMMAR. 1 PAGE.

2. SCENE ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT
3. CAMERA EXERCISE: CHANGE
4. CAMERA EXERCISE: MOVEMENT
5. LIGHTING EXERCISE: 3-POINT LIGHTING DAY AND NIGHT
6. PREVISUALIZATION ASSIGNMENT
7. COVERAGE PROJECT
 - 2-3 page scene maximum, (2-3 minutes) from an existing SCREENPLAY.
 - 2 actors MAXIMUM, 1 location. The actors will have to perform remotely via zoom (or other applicable platform), unless the actors live together. Filmmakers can ONLY interact with their actors remotely via same platform.
 - Each student will act as WRITER, PRODUCER, CINEMATOGRAPHER, PRODUCTION SOUND, EDITOR, AND DIRECTOR.
 - YOU CANNOT ACT IN YOUR SCENE. If you do, you will receive a ZERO for the coverage project.
8. THE PITCH
 - Each student will pitch a script idea for their final project to the class.
9. FINAL PROJECT SCRIPT
 - Each student will write two drafts of a short script, not more than 5 pages in length, to be pitched to the class and voted on to produce for the final group project. DIALOGUE IS ALLOWED.
 - See parameters for final project to be followed for final project script.
10. FINAL PROJECT
 - Students will shoot their final project script.
 - To be produced with limited budget, no more than three actors and a limited number of locations.
 - 2 actors MAXIMUM, 1 location. The actors will have to perform remotely via zoom (or other applicable platform), unless the actors live together. Filmmakers can ONLY interact with their actors remotely via same platform.

- Each student will act as WRITER, PRODUCER, CINEMATOGRAPHER, PRODUCTION SOUND, EDITOR, AND DIRECTOR.
- YOU CANNOT ACT IN YOUR SCENE. If you do, you will receive a ZERO for the coverage project.

VIDEO PROJECT REQUIREMENTS:

- All projects will be shot on digital video and edited in the editing program of their choice.
- Include a mandatory and readable USC credit at the end of your other credits:

“Student Produced at the University of Southern California (year)”

- Project must be brought to class as a Quicktime file on a portable hard drive or flash drive, AND uploaded to Youtube or Vimeo, password protected, as a backup.

Grading Breakdown

Your grade for 385 will be based on your personal growth as a filmmaker, your willingness to explore themes and techniques, your mastery of craft and your development in relation to your classmates. It will be measured with a variety of assignments (see following assignment page). You will be graded A through F (including pluses and minuses) upon completion of the course. Grades of "Incomplete" are given for medical emergencies only. Emergencies are narrowly interpreted.

385 Grading Breakdown - Attendance and promptness mandatory

15%	Class participation (discussions, feedback, etc...)
5%	Four Trade Articles
5%	Scene Analysis Assignment
5%	Camera Exercise: Change
5%	Camera Exercise: Movement
5%	Lighting Exercise
5%	Previsualization Assignment
15%	Coverage Project
5%	The Final Project Pitch
15%	Final Project script (first and second drafts combined)
20%	Final Project
	Planning & preparation tools
	Production Book – assembled and a copy turned in on Finals Day.
	Personal Reflections on collaboration experience

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

Assignment Rubrics

For Coverage and Group Projects: Delivered films will be assessed on the following components, on a scale of 1-5, 1 being poor and 5 being excellent:

1. Story (clarity)
2. Performances
3. Composition/Shot Selection
4. Lighting
5. Editing
6. Sound (including post)

Written assignments (except creative workouts) will be based on the same scale, except on the following components:

1. Clarity (including grammar)
2. Point-of-View (Exploration of arguments/opinions)
3. Adherence to guidelines

Assignment Submission Policy

Assignments will be due as specified by the Instructor. All assignments will be uploaded by the date and time due to Google Classroom, and all video projects will be submitted by class time on Google Classroom, a shared Google Drive folder, and with an online link in reserve.

Grading Timeline

The instructor will return assignments with grades and feedback by the following class after it was due.

Additional Policies

MID-SEMESTER CONFERENCES:

Your instructor may request a mid-semester conference. At your request, your instructor will definitely allow time for mid-semester conferences to discuss your work and your progress. Your instructor may also request a mid-semester conference if he feels it is necessary. If at any time you wish to discuss your work, your progress, or anything else, please contact your instructor to set up an appointment. My office hours will be done by appointment primarily on Thursdays, by phone or Skype.

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.

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.

In terms of shooting plans, student 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.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

DATE	IN CLASS	DELIVERABLES	ASSIGNMENTS
WEEK 1 1/19/21	INTRODUCTION Introductions Syllabus Review Story of Self WHAT IS PRODUCING? Creative vs. Line Producing LECTURE: IDEA TO STORY) What is story? Where does it come from? Architecture of a Movie Who, not what. Why, what, where, how. Character, Objective Backstory Obstacles Stakes Conflict – Change VISUAL LANGUAGE Shot selection Composition Camera Movement DISCUSS: COVERAGE PROJECT. START THINKING ABOUT WHAT SCENE YOU WANT TO DO AND WHEN YOU WILL SHOOT.	NONE	SCENE ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT: Choose a short scene (no more than 3 minutes) from a favorite movie and identify the shots used to make up this scene. Use a screen-capture program such as VLC to capture the shots in the scene from the movie. CAMERA EXERCISE: SHOWING CHANGE VISUALLY
WEEK 2 1/26/21	WATCH: Pink Grapefruit WATCH: Camera Exercise REVIEW: Scene Analysis Assignment LECTURE: The Production Crew <i>Show clip from: Living In Oblivion</i> LECTURE: PREPARING FOR PRODUCTION/PRODUCTION PREP Tech scout of final locations Production Design Wardrobe/Props Final Budgets Call Sheets Production Book Lighting Review Blocking review	SCENE ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT CAMERA EXERCISE 1	DECIDE ON COVERAGE PROJECT SCENE TRADE ARTICLE 1
WEEK 3 2/2/21	WATCH: A Reasonable Request LECTURE: Review: WORKING WITH ACTORS (AND NON-ACTORS) Rehearsals	SCRIPT FOR COVERAGE PROJECT TRADE ARTICLE 1	PREVIS FOR COVERAGE PROJECT (SHOTLIST, STORYBOARDS, OVERHEADS). DUE: SUNDAY 9/6 @ NOON.

	<p>On Set Objectives Beat Breakdowns (go over sample scene)</p> <p>DEMO: Rehearsal with Guest Actors</p> <p>AUDITIONS Actors Access, L.A. Casting, etc. Breakdowns Sides</p> <p>RUN MOCK AUDITION</p> <p>LECTURE: VISUAL PLAN - Storyboards - Overheads - Shotlists</p>		
<p>WEEK 4 2/9/21</p>	<p>Watch: Long Way Back Home (Lucero/Michael Shannon)</p> <p>DISCUSS: Trade Article 1</p> <p>CAMERA AND LIGHTING WORKSHOP</p> <p>CAMERA BASICS The Lens Camera Support Basics of Exposure</p> <p>CAMERA DEMO - Varying lenses - Movement</p> <p>LIGHTING AND SOUND DESIGN Terms, Properties of light 3-point lighting.</p> <p>LIGHTING DEMO 3-Point Lighting</p>	<p>PREVIS FOR COVERAGE PROJECT</p>	<p>CAMERA EXERCISE 2: SHOT SIZES</p> <p>LIGHTING EXERCISE</p>
<p>WEEK 5 2/16/21</p>	<p>Watch: Spike Jonze</p> <p>REVIEW: CAMERA EXERCISES, LIGHTING EXERCISES</p> <p>LECTURE: POST-PRODUCTION Workflow Working with picture editors and sound editors Assemblies, rough cuts, fine cuts, picture lock, sound design and dialogue editing Music/composers Color correction/DI Finishing/Final</p>	<p>CAMERA EXERCISE 2: SHOT SIZES</p> <p>LIGHTING EXERCISE</p>	<p>SHOOT AND EDIT COVERAGE PROJECT. DUE CLASSTIME 9/29/20.</p> <p>TRADE ARTICLE 2</p>

	<p>Delivery/Deliverables</p> <p>WATCH: WALTER MURCH CLIP https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcBpXLNmS3Q</p> <p>REVIEW: CINEMATIC TIME & SPACE Continuity 180 Degree Rule 30 Degree Rule</p> <p>WATCH: CLIP FROM <i>The Hobbit</i></p> <p>LECTURE: SOUND DESIGN AND EDITING</p>		
WEEK 6 2/23/21	<p>DISCUSS: Trade Article 2</p> <p>LECTURE: SCREENPLAY AND STORY STRUCTURE Development/Treatment/Outline Format Screenplay language and style Rewriting Go over examples</p> <p>SCREENPLAY STRUCTURE</p> <p>WATCH: Caroline, The Climb</p> <p>PITCHING</p> <p>MID TERM: Faculty Evals</p>	TRADE ARTICLE 2	FINISH COVERAGE PROJECTS: Due 1:45pm Tuesday
WEEK 7 3/2/21	VIEW: COVERAGE PROJECTS	COVERAGE PROJECTS	TRADE ARTICLE 3
WEEK 8 3/9/21	PITCH FINAL PROJECT IDEA	PITCH FINAL PROJECT IDEA TRADE ARTICLE 3	WRITE FIRST DRAFT FINAL PROJECT (GROUP A & B). DUE CLASSTIME 3/16
WEEK 9 3/16/21	<p>DISCUSS: Trade Article 3</p> <p>FIRST DRAFT: Common Mistakes.</p> <p>WORKSHOP: Final Project First Drafts (GROUP A)</p>	FIRST DRAFT FINAL PROJECT SCRIPTS	GROUP A WRITE SECOND DRAFT FINAL PROJECT SCRIPTS DUE: SUNDAY 3/21 @NOON
WEEK 10 3/23/21	WELLNESS DAY – NO CLASS		
WEEK 11 3/30/21	WORKSHOP: Final Project First Drafts (GROUP B)	GROUP A SECOND DRAFT FINAL PROJECT SCRIPTS (Due Sunday 3/21 @ Noon)	<p>GROUP B WRITE SECOND DRAFT FINAL PROJECT SCRIPTS DUE SUNDAY 4/4 @NOON</p> <p>PREVIS FINAL PROJECT</p>

WEEK 12 4/06/21	DIRECTING WOKSHOP: 1 SCENE FROM YOUR FINAL PROJECT SCRIPT GUEST TBD (Writer?)	PREVIS FINAL PROJECT	SHOOT FINAL PROJECT. DUE FINALS DAY. PREPARE DAILIES/ASSEMBLY/ROUGH CUT. DUE: CLASSTIME 4/13
WEEK 13 4/13/21	WATCH AND DISCUSS: DAILIES/ASSEMBLY/CUTS GUEST EDITOR: TBA	DAILIES/ASSEMBLY/ROUGH CUT	EDIT COVERAGE PROJECT. PREPARE FINE CUT. DUE CLASSTIME 4/27 TRADE ARTICLE 4
WEEK 14 4/20/21	DISCUSS: Trade Article 4 WATCH AND DISCUSS: CUTS GUEST: NICOLAAS BERTELSEN, P.G.A.	MOST RECENT CUT TRADE ARTICLE 4	EDITORS/SOUND DESIGN complete picture edit and sound design.
WEEK 15 4/27/21	WATCH: FINE CUTS LECTURE: AFTER THE FILM IS COMPLETED Film Festivals and Markets Distribution Sales Agents Exhibition (theatrical,VOD,online, etc.)		FINISH FINAL PROJECT: DUE ON FINALS DAY (ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY)
STUDY DAYS: 5/1-5/4	NO CLASS		FINISH FINAL PROJECT
FINAL EXAM: DATE TBD	SCREEN FINAL PROJECTS	FINAL PROJECT AND COMPLETE PRODUCTION BOOK	ENSURE ALL ACTORS GET COPY OF MOVIE

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.