

CTPR 465: Practicum in Production Design (2 units) Spring, 2021

Prerequisite: CTPR 310 Intermediate Production (for Production majors), *or* CTPR 456 Introduction to Art Direction (for non-majors)

Classroom: Online through ZOOM, Tuesday's 7-10PM

Instructor: Michael Provart

E-Mail: mprovart@cinema.usc.edu

Office Hours: As needed by Appointment on Zoom

Student SA; Jacqueline Rosenthal; jerosent@usc.edu

Production Designers are responsible for everything that is physically in front of the camera and doesn't move.

The goal of the class is to give students a practical base to implement their design strategies while working on productions here at USC and beyond. What are creative ways to stretch low-budget dollars to enable the design of the films to have more visual weight and a clear reality for the telling of a particular story? This Practicum will also explore in depth the many facets of the Art Department.

When creating any cinematic image, the two elements that limit the work are time and money. You can, in a weekend, make *The Titanic* in a bathtub for a hundred bucks or spend months in the ocean and studio tanks for two hundred million and tell the story differently. But each approach is still *The Titanic* in its own right. The two constraints gravely impact all parts of film production. Generally, films have a better chance of being finished when they reflect a good management of both.

However, no matter how much time and money you have, the one thing that remains constant is how the Art Department should function. One objective of this class is to introduce and examine the collaboration between all of the Art Department's sub-departments including: Set Design, Set Construction, Scenic, Set Decoration, Property, etc. How all of the subsets of the Art Department communicate together to help shape the collective vision of a 'Show'. By exploring these inner departments, my hope is to give you a broader base of understanding about the Art Department as a whole and how you might fit into it after graduating from SC. Not everyone may be cut out to be a Production Designer, but being a Prop Master or Set Decorator for instance, is just as vital to the storytelling and could be more rewarding to certain individuals.

The process of breaking the script down by the Art Department into manageable parts will be explained. How each department within the Art Department budgets differently and what changes a budget during production. We will then alter this standard breakdown procedure a bit and apply it in a different way to USC productions. How to set up and manage a budget will be discussed including the question of what something costs vs. what it's worth?

As we make our way through the many issues that weigh on all choices in the design process, this class will discuss the collaborative and fluid nature of the 'production' from an Art Department perspective.

Areas of focus and learning objectives include: The Art Department team, script breakdown, budgets, research, measuring and dressing a location, ground plans and elevations, white model building, SketchUp, set plotting and set layout, basic use of backdrops and sailboats, basic flat construction and set construction, basic scenic applications, etc.

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is mandatory. Students are required to attend all classes.

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Two unexcused absences will result in your grade being lowered by one full letter (ex: A becomes B). A third unexcused absence will result in your grade being lowered a full letter (ex: B now becomes a C). Your grade will be lowered by one full letter for every absence thereafter. Two late arrivals equates to one full absence.

If you cannot attend, it is your responsibility to get the information and HW assignment from a fellow student or the SA. Please do not leave me a e-mail/voice mail inquiring about what you missed in class.

In order for an absence to be excused the student must have approval from me and provide documentation at the next attended class session.

If you have an emergency and must miss class please contact me prior to class.

ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING:

All class sessions will be Zoom recorded and made available for asynchronous viewing until end of the grading period in early December. Students enrolled in this course from outside the U.S. Pacific Time Zone will still be expected to participate in real time assuming that the official class time falls between 7am and 10pm in their time zones. Wherever possible faculty will be understanding and make accommodations to ease the inconvenience of asynchronous learning.

Students from outside the U.S. Pacific Time Zone for whom the class falls between the hours of 10pm and 7am may still be required to complete certain components of the course synchronously. These components will be announced at the beginning of the semester and students with concerns about meeting these requirements should discuss them with their faculty at that time.

ZOOM-ETIQUETTE:

Please no eating or cooking during class, drinks are fine (coffee, tea & water)

HW ASSIGNMENTS POINTS: Your assignments will be graded 1 through 10, 10 being best. Your assignment will be graded on the following factors:

- > did you follow instructions?
- > is the homework complete and submitted on time?
- > how well you achieved the homework goal?

*** Please DATE each new homework assignment in your folders.**

GRADING TIMELINE: Generally, your assignments will be graded weekly. I try to give feedback to every student. If I miss you, please come and see me to discuss the assignment.

QUIZES: There will be two quizzes. 1 at Mid-Term and 1 towards the end of the semester.

LATE OR INCOMPLETE HOMEWORK: Homework that is submitted **incomplete** will be graded accordingly. Homework that is submitted **late** will lose 1pt. of its possible score for each week it is late. As an example, homework that would have received an 8 but is submitted two weeks late would become a 6.

Homework submitted after two weeks will not be accepted.

ALL HOMEWORK WILL BE DUE BY 6PM THE FOLLOWING MONDAY -UNLESS NOTED. ALL HOMEWORK IS POSTED TO YOUR FOLDERS AND PLEASE DATE YOUR HOMEWORK. *I will always except Homework earlier.*

FINAL GRADES: I will tally your homework and quiz points. A percentage will be determined by the total points you've earned as compared with the total points possible. This percentage corresponds to a letter grade: A = 100-95%, A- = 94-90%, B+ = 89- 87%, B = 86-83%, B- = 82-80%, C+ = 79-77%, C = 76-73%, C- = 72-70%, D+ = 69- 67%, D = 66-62%, D- = 62-60%, F = 59-0%.

PD PRACTICUM FINAL PRESENTATION:

The following elements will be required:

- > **USING THE SCRIPT THAT I HANDED OUT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEMESTER**
- > **25 reference/research images**
- > A "Key Image" for your sample script that anchors the Design of the show.
- > A Palette for your film
- > An overall Palette design to your film from start to finish, scene by scene.
- > A virtual model using SketchUp of your set utilizing a predetermined interior as your set, TBD. Screen Grabs(minimum 6) or Scenes(minimum 4) are both acceptable.
- > **All** clearly labeled and ready for presentation –loaded to your homework folders.
- > This presentation will be worth 60pts.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES: Are to be purchased by each student. Supplies are needed by the second week of class and considered a Homework assignment.

- 1- 9"x 12" spiral sketchbook, 30-70 sheets is plenty.
- 1- Four color pen
- 1- 25' long measuring tape, "Stanley Powerlock" or typical
 - > Model-Making Materials;
- 1- "X-Acto" knife with extra #11 blades
- 1- "Sobo" brand glue, a small bottle will suffice(4oz. or smaller)
- 1- Glue Stick
 - 1- "AlumiCutter 12" ruler or similar metal ruler
- 1- "Blick" or "Alvin" self healing cutting mat, 12" x 18" or 18" x 24"
- 1- 1/8" or 3/16" thick, White foamcore board, approximately 18"x 24" or 20" x 30"
 - ***This White foamcore board will be needed for week 5 and not needed for week 2***

OPTIONAL:

- 8-1/2"x 11" "**Clearprint**" **No. 1000HP-4 grid paper**, Fade-Out design and sketch vellum pad.
- Architects scale ruler
- 8" 45/90 triangle
- Yellow pads
- Highlighters
- Electric eraser
- Eraser shield
- Mechanical pencil and multiple leads
- Different sized metal rulers, drafting triangles and templates

THE COURSE, APPROXIMATE WEEK BY WEEK:

all classes on-line unless specified

Week 2- 01.19, Syllabus Breakdown and Script Breakdown

The Practicum Class Pipeline

The Art Department as a whole, broken down. -Positions

Discussion: What part of the Art Department are you going to get a job in?

Developing "hindsight" and Presentation, the backbone of the Art Department.

Handouts- sample scripts

Where to start?

Breaking the script down, breakdowns per department.

Exercise: A USC breakdown.

HW: Break down the script. Post by 6 pm. Monday- 01.25

Gather supplies for the semester.

Week 3- 01.26, Set or Location?

Discussion: What determines a Set Build or a Location?

The issues that drive the crucial choice of building a set vs. using a location?

Practical exteriors with stage interiors. -Matching

Exercise: How to Measure and photograph a location.

Windows, Doors and Mold Details

Handouts-Molding styles

HW: Photograph and Label Mold Details, Re-Do the Script Breakdown

Post by 6pm. Monday- 02.01

Week 4- 02.02, Dressing the Set

The Set Decorator and the Set-Dressing department, -Positions

Leadman, Swing Gang, On-Set Dresser, etc.

LA. 411 and Debbie's Book

Dressing for character, broad strokes moving into details.

Dressing a set and dressing a location, tricks and mindset

Building a low-budget "kit"

Exercise: Location set dressing Demo

Week 5- 02.09, Dressing a location

Set Decoration: Layering the set with meaning.

Handouts: Mildred Pierce & Genius and character questions.

Texture and Color

Scenery and how we use it as a story telling tool.

Wild Walls and Flying Scenery, In-Camera usage

HW: Home Set Dec. lists.

Using your script that I gave you, make a new Set Dressing break down only.

Purchase White Foamcore and model making materials.

Post by 6pm. Monday -02.15.

Week 6- 02.16, Plans, Elevations and White Models

Plans- where everything starts, blocking, exits and entries.

Elevations- architectural style applied.

Presenting a visual idea- physically.

The White Model and how it's used.

Exercise: Building a $\frac{1}{4}$ " scale white Model

HW: Continue construction of the White Model

THE COURSE, APPROXIMATE WEEK BY WEEK: CONT.

Week 7- 02.23, White Models, Finish Models

Continue building the White Models

MID-TERM QUIZ *Imperative to be in-class*****

HW: FINISH the White Model and photograph it by 6pm. Monday-03.01

Week 8- 03.02, SketchUp, Another way to Present Visual Ideas

Guest: Ryan Garton presents SketchUp, the bells and whistles of the program.

Begin SketchUp exercises. *****Imperative to be in-class*****

Handouts: Homework Guide

SketchUp HW: Post screen-shots of your homework by 6pm. Monday-03.08

Week 9- 03.09, SketchUp, Continued

Guest: Ryan Garton, adding texture and finishes, set dressing.

Continue Plan and Elevations exercises. *****Imperative to be in-class*****

Handouts: Homework Guide & Short Cuts

SketchUp HW: Post screen-shots of your homework by 6pm. Monday-03.15

Week 10- 03.16, SketchUp, Continued

Guest: Ryan Garton,

Presenting what you see in your mind's-eye. *****Imperative to be in-class*****

SketchUp HW: Post screen-shots of your homework by 6pm. Monday-03.22

Week 11- 03.23, STUDENT HEALTH DAY – NO CLASS

Week 12- 03.30, Construction Department

Positions

Materials Used, Tools- Pneumatic and Mechanical, Lumber, Kits and Vendors
Spotting and Layout of a set, Firelanes, Backings, Sailboats and lighting space discussion.

Basic Flat handling and safe connection of flats.

Bracing of flats and flat safety, usage of "wailers/hog troughs" and "jacks"
"wild walls"

Week 13- 04.06, Scenic Department

Positions

Prep of walls, Low Budget and Normal Prep

Materials and Tools Used, Building a "kit"

Seams and corners –inside/outside and Surface fills

Paint application, priming/underpainting and "mud" paint discussion.

Ageing and glazes

"Blocking"

Demo of a basic Wood Grain Faux finish

HW: Photograph 10 examples of age.

Post by 6pm. Monday -04.05

THE COURSE, APPROXIMATE WEEK BY WEEK: CONT.

Week 14- 04.13, Imagining the Design

Quantifying mood and tone- the tools at a designers' disposal. Inspirational films, photographers, tear sheets, research, etc.
Developing a design concept and using visual metaphor. Inspirational imagery and research imagery.

HW: Your **FINAL PROJECT** due Week 15- 04.27. It is based on the script I handed out and uses your pre-determined set as one of your locations in the story, TBD by me. In your Final Project, you must present the following:

> 25 reference/research images

- > A "Key Image" for your sample script that anchors the Design of the show.
 - > A Palette for your film
 - > An overall Palette design to your film from start to finish, scene by scene.
 - > A virtual model using SketchUp of your set, using Screen Grabs (minimum 6) or Scenes (minimum 4) are both acceptable.
- ***Make sure they work???**
- > **All** clearly labeled, in one folder and ready for presentation –loaded to your homework folders.
 - > This presentation will be worth 60pts.

Week 15- 04.20, Guest Speaker

Week 16- 04.27, Guest Speaker

FINAL QUIZ & FINAL PROJECTS DUE BY 6PM

Final Projects Due posted by 6PM on: 04.20 into your folders.

*Please **check** your presentations so they open easily in your folders.*

SUGGESTED READING:

Hollywood Art - Art Direction in the Days of the Great Studios
Beverly Heisner; McFarland & Company; 1990
A scholarly study.

By Design - Interviews with Film Production Designers
Vincent LoBrutto; Praeger; 1992
Interviews with a wide range of designers.

The Art Direction Handbook for Film
Michael Rizzo, Focal Press, 2005
Describes today's art department in detail.

Setting the Scene - The Great Hollywood Art Directors
Robert S. Sennett; Harry N. Abrams, Inc.; 1994

DESIGNS on FILM: A Hundred Years of Hollywood Art Direction
by Cathy Whitlock and the Art Directors Guild; Harper Collins; 2010

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. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *Scampus*, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A:

<http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at:
<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

Assignment: Create 2 construction budgets. A build from scratch and renting of a predetermined set.

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” <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>.

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. <https://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. <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. <https://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: <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. <https://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://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. <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. <https://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. <https://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, <http://emergency.usc.edu>

USC Department of Public Safety – 213-740-4321 (UPC) and 323-442-1000 (HSC) for 24-hour emergency assistance or to report a crime.
Provides overall safety to USC community. <http://dps.usc.edu>

**PLEASE NOTE:
FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER, TEA, JUICE, SOFT DRINKS OR
COFFEE) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN ZOOM!**