



CPTR 523
Section 18623

**INTRODUCTION TO MULTI-
CAMERA PRODUCTION**

Units: 2

Spring 2021

Tuesdays: 1:00PM-4:50PM

Location: Online

Professor: Robert Schiller

Office: Virtual/Online

Office Hours: By appointment-Zoom conference

Contact Info: Rschille@usc.edu

Teaching Assistant: Josephine Andrews

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856-261-1869

COURSE SUMMARY

This is a 15 week course ONLINE focusing on the “How To” of multi-camera directing and production, more specifically the Situation Comedy or “Sitcom”, although all skills learned are applicable to all multi camera productions including daytime drama, game shows, sporting events, talk shows, news and will be discussed. We will cover the process of producing/directing one episode of a sitcom from pre-production through the live taping of the episode. All aspects of production will be covered including the roles of the stage manager, assistant director, script supervisor, camera coordinator and audience switcher. This is not a “technical course”. The emphasis in this course is on the work of directors, their collaboration with crew and actors, and what is expected of them from the producers, the writers, and the network. You will be working from a two person scene three pages long of your choosing.

LEARNING GOALS and OBJECTIVES

Though this course is modeled after a typical week of a sitcom production, using sitcom scheduling, sitcom scripts, sets, and shooting techniques, the over-arching purpose of this course is to prepare directors for the process of telling a story in multi camera, and how it differs from single camera. There will be an emphasis on considerations in staging actors for multi camera and actual shooting technique. Each student, in their role as director, learns to hone their communication and leadership skills in a collaborative way on set, leading a creative team consisting of actors, assistant directors, associate directors, script supervisors, cameramen, lighting directors, control booth personnel. We will learn how to mark a script. At the end of this course, each student should be able to watch a sitcom with a whole new appreciation of just how much effort and skill goes in to producing one episode of television.

Instructors Statement

The multi camera production/format is alive and well in MOST aspects of TV programming without us even realizing it. Though the emphasis and course work will focus primarily on the Situation Comedy, news, sports, gameshows, daytime dramas and more specifically scripted live action, are enjoying a resurgence due mainly in part to Netflix, Apple TV and Amazon entering the original scripted series marketplace. There also continues to be a robust job market providing young adult content by studios such as Disney and Nickelodeon.

It is the goal of this course to teach student directors the skills required in this genre of production, adapting your story telling skills to multi camera, and in this huge job market not only of the director, but the other positions directly responsible for turning the “page” to the “screen”.

Class Philosophy

A collaborative professional atmosphere. Learn how it takes a team and not an auteur, to make a production successful. High level of enthusiasm and participation is required.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Actor Blocking Script	20	
Mid term	20	
Camera Blocking Script	20	
Line Cut Script	20	
Participation	20	
TOTAL	100	

PARTICIPATION is the engine of Group Learning. It is a crucial element in your grade. It includes commitment to the class, involvement with other students' projects, helping them in its realization, exercising collaboration, engagement with the material and contribution to class discussion.

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

School of Dramatic Arts Actors:

You are strongly advised to cast students from USC School of Dramatic Arts when possible and appropriate. Students who have done so have found them to be well-trained professionals and reliable collaborators. Students may also find other sources of casting their projects.

Production Division Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Two absences will result in a student's grade being lowered by one full letter (IE: A becomes B). A third absence will result in a student's grade being lowered by one, additional full letter (IE: B becomes C). A student's grade will be lowered by one full letter for each additional absence. Two late class arrivals equate to one full absence.

If a student misses class due to an emergency, the student must contact the professor prior to class or contact the Production Office at 213-740-3317.

Late Arrival:

15 minutes late constitutes an official late arrival. In cases where petty tardiness - i.e. of less than 15 minutes becomes chronic, I will give one "warning", and then I will assign penalties.

Deadlines:

Missing deadlines is generally regarded as unacceptable in the Industry, and so it will be in this class. If you know ahead of time that unavoidable circumstances will prevent the timely delivery of your work you must notify me immediately, and the circumstances must be documented. Only genuine "emergencies" beyond your control will be accepted.

Unexcused missed due dates will result in reduction of 1/2 of the point value for each full class period past the original due date.

Unforeseen Circumstances:

If you have life problems or circumstances that might affect your work, please let me know in advance. I want to be understanding and helpful if I can. See me to make arrangements for deadline extensions.

Grading Feedback:

You may ask me for feedback about how you are doing at any time. If I notice that a student is at risk of falling below a B, I will reach out and bring this to the student's attention.

Be aware, however, that the majority of grade value is earned after mid-semester. This can make it difficult for me to give precise warnings early on. I urge you to take responsibility for your work and your grade and stay on top of things.

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.

Students with Disabilities:

Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are 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 the Instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday-Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. The office is in Student Union 301, and their phone number is (213)740-0776.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Due Dates
Week 1 1/19	Intro Review Syllabus History/Development of multi-cam Single cam v Multi Cam Genres: Live, News, Sports, Game Show, Daytime Drama, Sitcom	What is your favorite Genre? What are your top 3 favorite television shows and why-in detail. What elements do you like.	1/25 by 5pm to SA
Week 2 1/26	Discuss/Review Favorite choices The stage/control room. Sound/Camera Basic Lighting Behind the scenes in control room	Shoot 8 stills	2/1 by 5pm to SA
Week 3 2/2	Review Stills Departments/Crew personel Production Schedule Reading Floor plans Glossary of Terms		
Week 4 2/9	Mis e en scène -re: TV Production meeting/Table read Protocols 1 AD job <i>Q&A with AD Pinero</i> Rolling Protocol	Find 2 person scene 3 pages long	2/22 by 5pm
Week 5 2/16	Approach to Multi v Single-cam The "Line" The "A B C and X's" Shot sizes/ camera moves		
Week 6	The coverage	In class-watch past	Obtain approval for 2 person scene

2/23	The Quad Split Shot selection and motivation View/Disect Sitcom episode.	quad split videos with scripts. View Blackish/Dr. Ken for shots	
Week 7 3/2	Review the 3 different prepped scripts. Set Plan for approved scenes. Staging-Blocking Actors Business/Motivation <i>Q&A with Victor Williams</i>		
Week 8 3/9	MID TERM EXAM Experiment with OBS/ready 1/Tk 1	Block 2 person scene	3/29 by 5pm
Week 9 3/16	Review Mid Term Marking the script 3 ways: Blocking/lined coverage/shooting Shot Designer		
Week 10 3/23	USC Wellness Day-no class		
Week 11 3/30	Review blocking-2 person scenes How to mark lined coverage	Mark lined coverage	4/5 by 5pm
Week 12 4/6	Review Lined coverage Q&A with Carrie Havel-"GREASE-Live"	Mark Shooting script	4/12 by 5pm
Week 13 4/13	Review shooting script		
Week 14 4/20	Exec Producer Panel Discussion Q&A with Davis/Kendal- Expectations in Production		
Week 15 4/27	The job market Getting the Job Q&A		

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.

Support Systems:

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

engemannshc.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 Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

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

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of 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.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421

studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation 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 Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

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) 442-120 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

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.

PLEASE NOTE:

FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX

SCA PRODUCTION DIVISION

VIRTUAL PRODUCTION PROTOCOLS

And

BUBBLE DEFINITIONS

Adopted Fall 2020

Revised Spring 2021

Due to concerns regarding the spread of COVID-19 in California and around the world, USC and the School of Cinematic Arts (SCA) have taken a strong stance regarding the need for safe and mindful behaviors among all members of the SCA community. Medical authorities agree that even the young and healthy are capable, if infected, of becoming ill, or of being non-symptomatic unconscious vectors of the disease's spread.

The health and wellbeing of all community members has to be our paramount concern as we return to learning and collaborating together. We understand that attentiveness to the concerns of all SCA community members - students, staff and faculty, including those with underlying health conditions -- is simply an extension of the key principle of creative collaboration that has guided our school for decades. We're all in this pandemic together and need to behave accordingly. USC and SCA are governed by LA County Health Regulations, according to which no in-person instruction or collaboration is allowed or sanctioned. This is the case on any USC project or exercise no matter where in the world it is executed. In order to continue instruction and production for the purposes of cinema education the Production Division has adopted Virtual Production Protocols to govern our activities.

The underlying principle of our Virtual Production Protocols is:

NO IN-PERSON COLLABORATION, EXCEPT AMONG MEMBERS OF A DEFINED AND DECLARED "BUBBLE"

The specifics that follow may not apply to all courses but the principles do apply to all.

Certain multi-section courses and groups of courses (e.g. Capstone Production Courses) may have additional guidelines. Those additions will be presented to classes by faculty at the beginning of semester.

By registering for the semester students are automatically subject to the Production Division's Covid Compliance Agreement, also reviewable on SCA Community.

Virtual Production, Safe Bubbles Defined

Virtual Production:

- Pre-production will be done completely online.
- Production will be recorded remotely
- Students will fulfill their roles by working on computers from their separate homes. Communication among the students and between filmmakers and performers will be conducted via Zoom, FaceTime or similar platforms.
- Actors or Documentary Subjects in their own homes will perform and assist in adjusting lighting and sound. They will capture their performances, under student filmmaker direction, using smartphones or approved rental cameras.
- If the director chooses not to use professional actors, they may cast themselves and/or housemates within their defined Bubble.

- Additional photography, such as establishing shots and B-roll, may be shot on the students' own premises or approved adjacent locations. This must be property that the Bubble controls in order to prevent coming into accidental contact with the public.
- The use of stock footage is encouraged.
- Post-production will be done completely online: picture editing on Avid, sound editing on ProTools, remote color grading on Avid, and sound mix.
- Workflow will be modified to support different cameras available to students & actors.
- As with any SCA production class, we will follow current safety and health guidelines for LA County, USC and SCA.

Bubble Definitions:

- **Bubbles** are zones within which safer contact normally occurs for each participant. These are your housemates (people with whom you live and interact without a mask or physical distancing on a daily basis). Each student has their own **Bubble**. They must not meet in person with other students.
- Each actor or documentary subject in a film also has their own **Bubble**. Unless actors/doc subjects live with one another, they will not have any in-person interaction with each other. Filmmakers may not interact in-person with their actors/doc subjects unless those actors/doc subjects are part of the filmmaker's Bubble.
- Note: When you cast an actor, you are also casting a location (the house, yard, apartment, stairway, etc.) available to that actor and controllable for production. You also have potential access to the services of anyone else in the performer's bubble, their roommate, housemate, spouse, etc. as long as they are declared and certified as Bubble members in advance of production.
- You will cast, rehearse, block and shoot remotely as defined above.
- You may support actors only with production gear rented from SAG approved rental houses, or personal gear of theirs that is approved. You may use your own approved gear when you are filming. Any transfer of gear to actors must follow specified Production Division COVID-Safe guidelines posted on SCA Community.