

# CTPR 557 Advanced Cinematography

Units: 2

Spring 2021—Monday—1:00-4:50PM

Location: Zoom

Instructor: Chris Chomyn, ASC SA: Daphne Daniels

(Please do not call your instructor before 9a or after 5p Pacific Time)

Office Hours: Monday 10a – 12p, by appointment

It is recommended that students enrolling in 557 have completed 546 or 480 as cinematographer. However, 537 or 424 satisfy the prerequisite.

# www.cinematographersportal.com

**USC IT Help** Information Technology Services https://itservices.usc.edu/Computer Loaner Program - https://itservices.usc.edu/spaces/laptoploaner

Phone: 24/7 213-740-5555 Hours: 8-6 M-F

Email: consult@usc.edu

USC Computing Centers

https://itservices.usc.edu/spaces/computingcenters/

## **Equipment Help:**

Camera Equipment Center (CEC) Cameras and Accessories

HOURS OF SERVICE: 8:30am to 6pm, M-Th, 8:30 to 5pm, Friday By Appointment

CONTACT INFO: 213-821-0951, Craig McNelley, <u>mcnelley@usc.edu</u>

Production Equipment Center (PEC) Lighting and Grip Equipment

HOURS OF SERVICE: 8:30am to 6pm, M-Th, 8:30 to 5pm, Friday By Appointment

CONTACT INFO: 213-740-2898, Hector Trujillio, htrujillo@cinema.usc.edu

## Stage Help:

Stage Services

HOURS OF SERVICE: 8:30am to 5pm, M-F

CONTACT INFO: 213-821-0961, Carlos Jauregui, <a href="mailto:stages@cinema.usc.edu">stages@cinema.usc.edu</a>

## **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.

\*We have had, on occasion, a guest who requests that we not record their session. Rather than forego the opportunity to have them join us, we will accommodate their request.

## **Etiquette Rules for the Zoom Classroom**

- Participation is essential.
- You must turn video on unless you have made a previous arrangement with your instructor.
- When you turn off your camera, please use a profile photo that shows your face.
- Mute yourself unless you have a question or comment.
- Only post chat messages relevant to the discussion.
- While it's important to stay hydrated, please refrain from eating during zoom sessions.
- Try to find a quite space and stay in an attentive sitting position. Please no reclining or multi-tasking.
- Avoid sitting in front of a bright background which may either be distracting or render you in silhouette.
- It is essential that we foster an environment that creates a direct sense of engagement that connects us.
- I expect that we all will comport ourselves in a professional manner.

# **Course Description**

**CTPR 557 – Advanced Cinematography** is designed to prepare students for a professional career in cinematography.

At its root, cinematography is about creative problem solving. It is about finding visual solutions to express ideas and emotions in a way that reveals the underlying truth of each moment. The cinematographer uses a wide variety of tools in service of her craft, which ultimately is always in service to the story and the subtext.

CPTR 557 will provide a unique learning environment in which the students can hone their skills, ask questions and learn the ideas and tools of the trade under the guidance of an experienced professional cinematographer.

## **Course Objective:**

557 will address the technical and aesthetic aspects of cinematography with an emphasis on developing techniques and operating methods that will prepare each student to transition to a professional working environment.

In learning to make informed, accurate, and ethically appropriate decisions concerning the cinematography of a film, the students must apply a number of skills necessary for the working cinematographer consistently, effectively, and artistically.

Each student is expected to demonstrate a mastery of his/her ability to:

- 1. Behave in a safe and professional manner at all times
- 2. Break down a script visually in terms of mood, shooting style, and pace
- 3. Make practical and aesthetic choices regarding film stocks and/or digital imaging tools
- 4. Determine the significance of camera placement as it affects the look and feel of a shot
- 5. Understand why and how to control depth-of-field
- 6. Choose an appropriately sized shot and composition for the story
- 7. Stage actors for compelling shots that serve the story
- 8. Maintain screen direction and eye lines
- 9. Design effective camera movement
- 10. Light for the mood and tone of a piece while maintaining continuity within each scene
- 11. Control the four elements of light
- 12. Use the tools of the cinematographer, lenses, cameras, filtration, etc
- 13. Use equipment that is available to achieve the desired effect
- 14. Follow all safety procedures and behave responsibly when making decisions

- 15. Communicate clearly
- 16. Listen carefully
- 17. Earn the respect of one's colleagues

#### **Cameras:**

Students are expected to have access to a digital camera with manual controls for their course work. This can be a digital stills camera that also records HD video, or a digital video camera. For those students who do not have access to a camera, a smart phone with a manual control app, such as Filmic Pro as well as a tripod mount will suffice. Students using a smart phone are free to use external lenses if they choose.

## Software:

Students are expected to have access to basic photo editing software and an NLE of their choosing. Students are expected to have a working knowledge of the software they use for the class.

#### **Class Structure:**

Class sessions may include:

- 1) Presentations by the faculty on concepts and practices of cinematography.
- 2) Presentations by the students on key concepts for the cinematographer.
- 3) Guests will visit online to share their insight and experiences.
- 3) Online "field trips" to industry vendors.

In addition to the in-class work, students will be assigned a number of assignments designed for them to demonstrate fundamental principles of cinematography, collaboration.

Finally, students will create their own digital cinematography projects.

#### In-class:

During our class period, there will be presentations and time to work on specific exercises.

# Out of Class:

Homework assignments will provide an opportunity for students to practice the concepts discussed in class, and demonstrate their understanding and competency with the topics covered.

## **Out of Class Projects:**

This is your chance to create something extraordinary, to push yourself and demonstrate your un-tapped talents. It is expected that you make the most of every opportunity. Even in this time of rather extreme limitations, there is the opportunity to excel, to push oneself to expand one's creative limits

Your out of class project may be photographed traditionally, or with the permission of your instructor, you may create your images digitally using any of a number of software platforms. Among them: Frame Forge Pro, Blender, Cine Tracer or Unreal Engine. (This is not a comprehensive list, if you prefer to work with another software, discuss it with your instructor.)

Any physical production must adhere to SCA guidelines for a P3 and must follow accepted Covid 19 protocols. You must have the permission of your instructor and the Director of Physical Production before engaging in production for this class.

Your out of class project is your project. You may not create a project for another student or for another class and submit it as your own for this course.

- 1. Each student will meet with the professor to consult regarding their plans for this project.
- 2. Each student is responsible to arrange actors, props, set design and any additional elements needed to mount your production.
- 3. Before you shoot: A) you will need to submit a brief statement of intent a series of bullet points indicating what you were trying to accomplish, why and how; and, B) You will need to submit your completed crew list (The template is on the website).
- 4. Following your shoot: you will submit a DPR and a self-critique of your experience, what went well, what could have gone better, what you learned from the experience. Please label your self-crit as follows: first initial last name\_557crit.docx
- 5. All work for this class, must be completed before we screen final projects. An assembly of your in-class projects and out of class project must be uploaded to the Google Drive folder for which I will send you a link.
- 6. Final format for the screening QT.mov file.

Be safe, inventive, experiment, and create a visually arresting piece that challenges you.

#### **Dress Code:**

The sound stage is an industrial work environment. All students must come to class prepared for physical work. You must wear long pants and close toed shoes. Shorts, skirts, dresses, sandals and flip-flops will not be allowed. If you come inappropriately attired, you will be asked to leave and will be marked absent. I also strongly suggest you bring leather palmed work gloves and appropriate tools.

# **Recommended Reading Materials:**

- o American Society of Cinematographers Manual, 10th Edition
- o Kodak Cinematographers Field Guide
- o Digital Cinematography: Fundamentals, Tools, Techniques, and Workflows by David Stump

#### **Recommended Websites:**

- o www.cinematographersportal.com
- o https://www.oscars.org/science-technology/projects
- o www.theasc.com
- o https://rondexter.com/
- o <a href="https://www.dga.org/Craft/VisualHistory.aspx">https://www.dga.org/Craft/VisualHistory.aspx</a>
- o https://www.cambridgeincolour.com/
- https://www.linkedin.com/learning (formerly Lynda.com)

## **Grading:**

The work you create in class will be its own reward. Your grade for this class will be based on your collaboration and support of your fellow classmates, as well as on your participation in the various support positions (ie. AC, electrician, grip, etc.). Additional consideration will be given for those students who push themselves to take creative risks. Finally, too much ambition that results in not completing your goals, will adversely affect your grade.

20% Presentations

40% Class Participation

40% Out of Class Project

#### Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Engaging in a professional manner is an integral part of a cinematographer's formal training. By learning the details of the job, a cinematographer can better understand the inner workings of the set and the crew at large.

Arriving early to class is on time, arriving on time is late. Late arrivals are disruptive to the class. Should circumstance necessitate your absence, then you are expected to call your instructor before the beginning of class.

All assignments are due on time. Absences and Late arrivals are considered when evaluating your class participation.

#### **Additional Policies**

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.

#### Couse Evaluation:

Student feedback is essential to making this course the best it can be. In addition to the standard USC course evaluation survey at the end of the semester, your feedback throughout the semester is always welcomed and appreciated.

## **Wait List**

Any student interested in taking 557 must attend the first class to be eligible for the roster. Missing a class in the first three weeks removes you from eligibility.

# **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" <u>policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b</u>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <u>policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct</u>.

## 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

## **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.

## **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 <a href="http://mindful.usc.edu">http://mindful.usc.edu</a> and <a href="Mental health">Mental health</a> counseling is available at the Engemann Student Health Center, 1031 W. 34<sup>th</sup> 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 <a href="mailto:dsp.usc.edu">dsp.usc.edu</a>

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.

# **Schedule**

(This schedule is subject to change as necessary and at the discretion of the instructor)

## Class Topic

Week 1 1/18 • MLK Day - Holiday - No Class

Week 2

1/25

Introduction to class

Presentation on creativity and what it means to be cinematic

• Discuss online and software tools - Guest Presentation on Pre-Viz (Shot Designer, Frame Forge, CineTracer, Unreal Engine, etc.)

•Assign: Students will each prepare a presentation around one clip (under 5 min) of an example of cinematic story telling due Week 2 –

• Assign: Each student to acquire and have access to the tools and supplies in the DIY Lighting Handout before the next class.

#### Week 3

2/1

Student Presentations on Cinematic Storytelling

- Instructor presentation on electricity and building a DIY Lighting Kit
- Assign: assemble the fixtures listed on the DIY Lighting Handout for the next class.
- Assign: Each student to have one 10' length of rope (cotton sash cord/clothes line is fine) for the next class

#### Week 4

2/8

• Each student to show us their operational DIY lighting kit

- Quiz on Electrical Wiring
- Instructor to teach the tying of 4 basic and essential knots.
- In Class Assignment (1 hour)

Practice four knots – square knot, two half hitches, clove hitch and bowline Tie each and photograph it – present it to the class.

- Demonstrate live online that you can tie them.
- Assign: In Class Presentations Due Week 6 Outlines for Presentations due no later than 12 noon on Tuesday week 5

## Week 5 President's Day - Holiday - No Class

2/15

Tuesday 12p – Presentation Outlines Due

#### Week 6

2/22

- Quiz on knot tying
- Students to upload their presentations to the Google Drive no later than 12p:

Presentation on the four	Photosites v Pixels & Bayer Sensor
characteristics of light ACES	
Bit Depth and Exposure	HDR v SDR
Latitude	
ACES	Illusion of movement & Flicker Free
	Photography
SSI	Depth of Field
Using Mired Values	Perspective

- Objective: students will demonstrate their understanding of key concepts related to the creative use of the technology of cinematography. They will also demonstrate their ability to make a concise, interesting and informative presentation using Power Point, Key Note or Slides.
- Review knot tying
- Assignment: Identify a famous painting or still frame from a well-known feature film, and using your DIY light kit, along with what you have available in your home, recreate it with the items at your disposal.

**Due Next Class:** Present your work in a power point to the class. Show the original image, your rendition of it, and behind the scenes images to show us how you did it. Be prepared to explain your process. Include what worked and what didn't. Did you have to redo anything? Don't only share your success, share your challenges as well.

# Week 7 3/1

- Screen Homework Presentations and discuss (I hour)
- In Class Assignment: Using your DIY lights, you will light and create three photographs. Each should present a different character and quality of light. A different mood. Each should tell their own story. Include (BTS) photos your lighting set ups along with your portraits. (90 min)
- Present these in a power point presentation. (80 minutes)
- Presentation on Camera Movement
- Assignment: Camera Operation stage a scene as a master, in which your subject, enters the space, looking for something. As they move around the space on their search, use their movement to motivate your camera movement. You will shoot 3 versions using three different focal lengths (wide, medium, long). A) the subject enters in a wide shot, moves through the space, comes into a close up, then continues until they settle into a full body shot; B) They repeat the same action, but you photograph it with a medium length lens. (Adjust your camera position if necessary); C) They repeat the same action, but you photograph it with a telephoto lens. (Adjust your camera position if necessary). \*(The action should include the character sitting into a chair and rising out of the chair.)

# Week 8 3/8

- Screen assembled edits of the Wk 7 Homework Assignment
- Presentation on creating a treatment and pitch-deck
- Assignment: Work with your assigned partner to create a simple scene with two
  people. Each of you will work in your respective homes. One of you will block,
  light and photograph a master as well as necessary coverage. The other will
  shoot an opposing master as well as corresponding coverage from the other
  side of the scene. In order to match these, communication and coordination
  between the two cinematographers will be essential.

# Week 9 3/15

- Assignment: With new partner assignments: Work with your assigned partner
  to create a simple scene with two people. Each of you will work in your
  respective homes. One of you will block, light and photograph a master as well
  as necessary coverage. The other will shoot an opposing master as well as
  corresponding coverage from the other side of the scene. In order to match
  these, communication and coordination between the two cinematographers
  will be essential.
- Screen assembled edits of the Wk 7 Homework Assignment
- Discuss larger group shoot
- 5 of 50 x2 in one place
- Guest Speaker

Week 10 Screen assembled edits of the Wk 9 Homework Assignment 3/22 • Out of class project pitches • Discuss larger group shoot • This is not a quiz • Day/Night Breakout Rooms Week 11 • Guest Speaker 3/29 • Update on Out of Class Projects Week 12 • Guest Speaker 4/5 • Stage Demo Week 13 Create a class project – remote shoot that involves all the students 4/12 Week 14 • Guest Speaker 4/19 • Stage Demo

Week 15

4/26

## **Covid Safety Compliance Understanding and Agreement**

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.

All of SCA's production work, whether "Virtual" or "in-person, will be governed by rules laid out in each course syllabus. Compliance with these regulations will be monitored by faculty in conjunction with SCA designated Covid Monitors. The rules follow the guidelines in SCA-Covid Production Protocols, which follows SAG/DGA and other industry protocols, and are being interpreted by a SAG-certified SCA Covid Advisor.

Students indicate their agreement to abide by these regulations by enrolling in the production program fall semester 2020.

# **Virtual Production and Safe Bubble defined**

Student film production continues during this pandemic, including quarantine or lockdown conditions. Because of the current situation in Los Angeles County, filmmaking in Fall 2020 will be done with Virtual Production. This will provide a safe environment for the students and cast. It will also be in compliance with SAG's regulations working with their members. Students will receive instruction in the crafts and artistry of traditional filmmaking as well as new virtual production while collaborating to make their films.

Filming plans during the time of coronavirus are subject to change.

## **Virtual Production:**

- Pre-production will be done completely online.
- Production is filmed remotely with students fulfilling their roles from their homes. Each student will work
  on computers from their separate homes. The communication between the students and the performers
  is through Zoom, Facetime or another remote service. Actors\*\* in their own homes will perform and
  assist in lighting and recording sound. Performers will capture the performance with smartphones or
  approved personal or rental cameras as directed by the students. If the director chooses not to use
  professional actors, they may cast themselves and/or their own housemates.
- Additional photography, such as establishing shots and B-roll, may be shot in the students' own houses or approved safe locations. Projects may also include stock footage, still photographs, self-generated VFX and animation.
- 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, students will follow current safety and health guidelines for LA County, USC and SCA.

## **Bubble Definitions:**

- Student **Safe Bubbles** are zones within which safe contact normally occurs for each participant. These are your housemates (people <u>with whom you live</u> and interact without a mask or physical distancing on a daily basis). Each student has their own **Safe Bubble.** They must not meet in person with other students.
- Each actor in a film is also in their own **Safe Bubble**. Students may not interact in-person with their actors. Unless actors live with one another, they will not have any in-person interaction with each other.
- Note: When you cast an actor, you are also casting a location (their house, yard, apartment, stairway, etc.) available to that actor for production as well as others in the actor's bubble their roommate, housemate, spouse, etc.
- Students will sign a **Bubble Lock Agreement** signifying who is in their Bubble at the beginning of the semester. Actors will sign a Bubble Lock Agreement certifying that everyone in their Bubble has been in it at least 14 days prior to the start of production; thereafter actors will not be able to add anyone to their Bubble.
- Students will cast, rehearse, block and shoot remotely as defined above.
- Actors may use their own faculty-approved equipment. Students may furnish actors with production gear
  purchased or rented (from SAG approved houses). Students may use your own faculty-approved gear
  when filming, and/or may send actors their gear directly. All equipment sent must be sanitized and
  transferred back to students or sent to another actor for additional filming. Equipment transfer will
  follow SCA guidelines.
- Physical location work must be approved by your producing faculty on a case-by-case basis and comply
  with COVID Precautions (i.e. masks & physical distancing) and conform with all LA County Dept. of Public
  Health Guidelines & SCA Safety Rules.

<sup>\*\*&</sup>quot;Actor" also refers to "Documentary Subjects."