Recording, Mixing and Editing for the Screen Composer (Scor521a)
Course Syllabus, Spring 2021 – Remote Learning

Instructor
Charles Gutierrez
E-mail: chgutier@usc.edu
Mailbox: TMC 118
Office: TMC 107
Office Hours: M-T-W by appointment

Course Description
Recording, Mixing and Editing for the Screen Composer is an introduction to techniques and applications of recording sound on personal computers. Discussions will also include a study of the hardware and software required as well as editing music, dialog, and sound effects for song, commercials and film.

Requirements, Exams and Grading Information
Student evaluation in 521a will consist of practical assignments, quizzes and exams. The assignments include short exercises and a final project. In general, students will be given one week to complete and turn in exercises. Assignments turned in late will be lowered one grade per week and will not be accepted beyond three weeks late. All assignments must carefully follow file management and format guidelines. Instructions for the final project will be available at a later date.

Quizzes will be given via BlackBoard and will cover assigned research, reading and video assignments, as well as, instructor notes and handouts. The midterm exam will consist of both written and hands-on questions. The final will be a hands-on exam designed to test the practical skills developed during the semester. All exams and quizzes must be taken during the scheduled times and cannot be made up at a later date.

Attendance is taken at each meeting and scored into your final letter grade. After two absences your grade will be lowered one-half grade for each additional absence. Because of the importance of hands on experience with this subject, attendance to all classes is the only method of understanding the concepts of this specialized topic.

Remote Learning
Spring 2021 is scheduled for distance remote learning. This pedagogy may not be a static method and can could be changed based upon issues such as social considerations and/or technology changes. Therefor course instructor requests all students be practical and flexible to the possibility of change - if needed. Any possible changes will be discussed with students and then announced as timely as possible. The course student learning outcomes are to be as standardized and directed towards the current music industry at all times, when possible.
Grading Summary

1. Participation 15% Attendance and online participations
2. Quizzes 20% Assigned research and reading content
3. Lab Exercises 25% Group class works and self study works
4. Midterm Exam 20% Based on quiz content
5. Final Project 20% Assigned student project

Class Materials – Highly Recommended Only

2. Lynda.com videos available through BlackBoard: Pro Tools 12 Essential Training; Foundations of Audio series: EQs and Filters; Compressions and Dynamic Processing; and Reverb, Delay and Modulation.
4. Instructor handouts and lecture notes (available on BlackBoard under Course Documentation)
5. Reference headphones are required and should be brought to all classes. All assignments will be evaluated using Sony MDR 7506 reference headphones!
6. USB Memory Stick and/or other external storage device! – not needed for remote learning

Communication

Please make it a habit to use/check your USC E-mail account. Any E-mail I send to the class will use that account. ***Please add “521a” in the subject header of any and all email that you send me.*** This will help me to organize all the emails that I receive and enable me to respond to you more quickly. In addition, most course materials, quizzes and class grades will be posted on Blackboard (http://blackboard.usc.edu). For example the course syllabus can be found under Syllabus, instructor handouts and project instructions under the Content tab. All exercise materials and instructions will be posted to the class folder (instructions on how to access this folder will be provided during week 2 and will be posted to Blackboard).

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 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.
Academic Integrity
Academic Integrity-Students are expected to adhere to the Academic Integrity Guidelines of USC as outlined in the current edition of SCampus. Work found to contain plagiarized or uncited materials will be referred to the USC Office of Student Conduct for review. Academic Integrity violations will result in a failing grade for submitted material and for the course, and dismissal from Thornton School of Music majors and minors.

***Please be advised anyone found surfing the web will be asked to leave the class. Before you can be readmitted to the class you must meet with the program chair.

Course Schedule (Schedule and Content Subject to Instructor Changes)
Week 1 - Class Introduction and Review
Native system setup
PTs Playback Engine and H/W buffer and system latency
Navigating a PTs session
Changing zoom level, track height, rulers, Edit window options
Playback and scrolling options
Making selections
PTs file types and management
Exercise Procedures and Expectations
Reading: 101 – 1 and 2
Exercise 1: Navigating the Edit Window

Week 2 - Audio Editing Review
Importing audio
Audio clip attributes and management
Separate, break, heal clip
Copy/paste, duplicate, repeat, loop, and loop trim clips
Clip trim, trim to insertion, trim from insertion
Conform clip to tempo
Fades: in/out, cross fade, equal power vs. equal gain
Master Fader Tracks
Introduction to dither and noise shaping
Bounce to disk, bounce “rules”
Reading: 101 – 5, 7 and 8; Pro Tools 11 Essential Training chapters 3 and 6
Exercise 2: Audio Editing Basics
Week 3 - Recording Audio
  Creating PTs sessions: file types, sample rates, bit depth, I/O considerations
  Creating and naming tracks, track I/O, phantom power
  Setting record levels/gain structure
  PTs signal path, recording with a “pre-disk” aux track
  Click tracks, countoffs, tempo and meter
  Punch record and pre/post roll
  Monitoring options, Input Monitoring
  Introduction to volume editing/automation
  Reading: 101 – 3 and 4; Pro Tools 11 Essential Training chapter 4
  Exercise 3: Voice Over Recording and Editing

Week 4 - Working with Playlists and Alternate Takes
  Playlist overview
  Create, duplicate and delete playlist
  Switching playlists
  Playlist use and strategy
  Playlist view, comping tracks from multiple takes
  Crossfade use, issues and solutions
  Clip consolidation
  Track freeze
  Reading: Instructor handout
  Exercise 4: Playlist Comping Exercise

Week 5 - Plug-ins
  Adding and removing plug-ins
  Copying settings
  Recalling and saving presets
  Copying plug-ins
  Bypassing and inactivating plug-ins
  Multi channel and multi mono plugs
  Plug-in formats (AAX, RTAS, AU, VST, etc.)
  AudioSuite plug-ins
  Reading: Instructor handout; Pro Tools 11 Essential Training chapter 12
  Exercise 5: Using AudioSuite plugins
Week 6 - The Mix Window: Inserts, Sends and Groups
  Mix window overview
  Track signal path and routing
  Track inserts (series processing)
  Bus effects and sends (parallel processing)
  Creating headphone cues
  Prefader sends, using mono vs. stereo sends
  Solo safe
  Master fader track signal path and use
  Creating and using submixes
Reading: 101 – 9
Exercise 6: Insert, Sends, Bus Effects, and Submixing

Week 7 - Mid-Term Exam

Week 8 - Drum Sound Replacement and Enhancement
  Old school sound replacement
  Sample replacement with Sound Replacer
  Sample enhancement with Slate Trigger
  Strip Silence
  Audio editing to enhance groove (“Pocketing”)
Reading: Instructor Handout
Exercise 7: Drum Sound Replacement and Enhancement

Week 9 - Organizing the Mix
  Relinking source files
  Marker and none type memory locations
  Color coding tracks and markers
  Track groups
  VCA Faders
  Setting levels and pans
  Term Project Explanation
Reading: Instructor handout
Week 10 - Drum Editing and Processing
  Timbre and the “magic frequencies”
  Filter shapes, parameters and use
  Parametric EQ parameters and use
  Basic applications of audio filters and equalization
  Compression overview
  Compression parameters: threshold, ratio, attack/release, makeup gain
  Basic pop/rock applications of compression
  Other dynamic processors: limiters and noise gates
  Reading: Instructor handout; Lynda.com *Foundations of Audio: EQ and Filters* chapters 2-3

Week 11 - Bass and Guitar Editing and Processing
  Bass and Guitar EQ, filters and compression
  Track duplication
  Intro to groove editing
  Reading: Lecture Notes; Lynda.com *Foundations of Audio: Compression and Dynamic Processing* chapter 2

Week 12 - Vocal Processing; Delay and Reverb Processing
  De-essers: parameters and use
  Vocal EQ and Compression
  Reverb: setup, parameters and application
  Creating a session tempo map, adding tempo markers
  Delay: setup, parameters and application

Week 13 - Introduction to Automation
  Real-time automation
  Graphic automation basics
  Automation breakpoints, tools
  Create, edit, copy, paste and nudge automation
  Override automation
  Reading: Instructor handout, 101 – 09

Week 14 - File and Session Management
  Clip management
  Archiving sessions
  Reading: Instructor handout, 101-10

Week 15 - Final Project progress check
Final project due 8pm in the course server drop box by last day of USC “Study Days” semester schedule. No direct emails with attachments will be accepted.

Final Exam – Date and Time published online via USC Finals Schedule

*** Important Note! TMC G-147 will be closed end of study week. There will be no open lab time after that date. There will be no exceptions to this policy so, please plan accordingly. Does not apply to remote learning presentations