Camera & Improv THTR 250

Units: 2
Term—Day—Time: Spring 2021 - Thursday- 2:00-:4:50pm
Location: Zoom Meeting: https://usc.zoom.us/j/99561388859?pwd=anRQb2tqTVZnZVRvalh2dmpq-MU5HUT09
Instructor: Julián Conde
Office Hours: By appointment: 5:00pm- 7:00pm
Contact Info: jconde@usc.edu
IT Help: Digital Art Lab support staff
Hours of Service: 24 hours
Contact Info: digilabsupport@usc.edu or 213-740-0000

Course Description

Welcome to Camera & Improv! This course provides an introduction to the basics of being in front of the camera as well as behind the camera. Learn the skills and terminology behind the camera to become more efficient when putting your projects together. Expect to be putting films together as well as improvising for the camera. Become proficient in iMovie and recognize the basics of storytelling.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:
1. Apply basic concepts and tools of filmmaking.
2. Create your own film content from beginning to end.
3. Develop a comfortable presence in front of the camera.

Prerequisite(s): THTR 220A or THTR 252A
Co-Requisite(s): None
Recommended Preparation: getting familiar with iMovie.

Course Notes

We will develop film and story telling content by just doing. A great deal of what we learn will be through trial and error experimenting in front of the camera as well as behind the camera. The more we practice the better we get.

Communication

I want you to feel comfortable asking questions and giving me feedback on this course just as I, and your classmates, will be providing you with feedback on your projects. If you have questions or comments, please speak to me directly after class or during my posted office hours. You can also email me Jconde@usc.edu. I will respond to emails within 24 hours Monday-Friday, and on the Monday following a weekend or holiday break.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Students will be asked to use their phones to film their content and have sufficient space on a hard drive. We will be editing on a basic software like iMovie. Please have an editing platform available and ready to work.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Selfie Story
Students will film themselves selfie style, telling a comedic or dramatic story. It should be 45 seconds to a minute. No cuts, one take.

Buster Keaton project.
Students will make a silent film black and white, one minute long. Tell a story using physical gestures and a prop. The story should have a beginning middle and end.

Recreate a scene: Students will find a scene from a movie or a tv show and bring it in to class. We will analyze the equipment and tools used for the production. Then we will reproduce The scene using the tools and equipment available to us.

Action sequence.
Students will write an action sequence of one to two minutes long. They will shoot, edit and add music. The students have the choice to be in front or behind the camera, or both, for this project.

Editing project.
Students will gather footage and pictures of themselves and edit a one minute and a half story with narration.

2 Page scene.
Students will write a two page scene. They will then shoot the project and edit it into a final piece. Students have the choice to be in front or behind the camera, or both, for this project.

Monologue project.
Students will write a monologue for themselves. The monologues will be shot and edited and presented in class. The monologue should be about a minute long. The students have to be in front of the camera for this one.

Grading Breakdown

Grades will be recorded in the Blackboard gradebook and updated weekly

Assignment		% of Grade
Selfie story		10
Buster Keaton project		10
Recreate a scene		15
Action sequence		15
Editing sequence		15
2 page scene		20
Monologue project		15
Final		100

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

Course-specific Policies (Assignment Submission, Grading Timeline, Late work, and Technology)

Assignment Submission
Video projects should be uploaded to dropbox or vimeo and share the link via email.

Grading Timeline
Grades will be given a week after projects are presented.

Late work
If work is submitted late you will lose HALF of the grade for the project and it will not be shown in class.

Technology in the classroom
Put your phones to the side unless you are editing on them. I recommend you use your computer for editing.

Attendance

Regular class attendance is necessary as students are required to present their projects every week.

Classroom norms

Sharing our art with others and opening ourselves to critique (or peer feedback) can be a vulnerable process. To model the expectations of a professional work environment in our field, and promote a respectful classroom environment, we agree to the following:
- Allow people to finish their thought before you interject
- Critique work, not people
- Support critique with evidence, or speak from personal experience
- Allow everyone to critique (i.e., don't dominate or remain silent)
- Keep a positive tone when offering critique and responding to it
- Accept critique in the positive spirit with which it is given as a means of development

Course evaluation

Student feedback is essential to making this course the best it can be. Students will have an opportunity to submit comments on the mid-semester evaluation and the standard USC course evaluation survey at the end of the semester.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Video projects will be uploaded to Vimeo or dropbox and be reviewed in class the day they are due.

Understand that things may change depending on the progress of our class and the creative factors that are presented, be ready to switch gears.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Assignment Dates
Week 1	Course overview and filmmaking goals. Filmmaking discussion	Selfie story.	
Week 2	Review our selfie story. Buster Keaton Discussion	Write and create your buster Keaton project	Bring in your selfie story.
Week 3	Review Buster Keaton Projects Lecture: basic film concepts and story telling		Buster Keaton Project is due.
Week 4	Begin to edit project. Basic concepts of editing.	Have your Footage from your phone or past pictures and edit them together into a film.	
Week 5	Review edit project Bring in a scene that you really like and would like to recreate. We will watch the scenes and talk about the elements involved.		Find a scene you like and would like to recreate. Bring in your edited scenes.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Assignment Dates
Week 6	We will spend this week continuing to recreate your scene.	Bring in a scene you really like. We will begin the process of recreating it.	
Week 7	We will watch your recreated scenes.	Complete editing project.	
Week 8	Action sequence lecture.		Bring in your Recreated scenes
Week 9	Review our action sequences.		Bring in your action sequence.
Week 10	Lecture: How to shoot 2-page scene.		
Week 11	Review our 2 page scripts.		
Week 12	Finalize 2 page scripts. Shot list and storyboard for 2 page script	Filming your movie should start this week	
Week 13	Rough edit review for 2 page script.		Rough edit.
Week 14	2 page script movie presentations.		Your two page movies are due.
Week 15	Wellness day (No Class)	No Class	
Final	Bring in re-edited piece.		

SDA PRODUCTIONS

SDA productions are courses and therefore do not supersede any other courses in which you are enrolled. When in an SDA production, students must not register for evening classes that conflict with regularly scheduled rehearsals. In short, being involved in an SDA production is a curricular assignment and must be treated as any other curricular assignment.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR COMMITMENTS AND ISPS

Should you choose to participate in any extra-curricular project, such as an Independent Student Production, the SDA administration and faculty will not make allowances or exceptions for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, home work that is required as preparation for class, or lack of participation in class resulting from your extra-curricular involvement.

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, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

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 GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for DSP and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 814-4618 (Vidoe Phone), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis
In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university's site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

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Support Systems:
Campus Support & Intervention (CSI) – (213) 740-0411
Campus Support & Intervention is an office within Campus Wellbeing and Crisis Intervention. We are a team of professionals here to assist students, faculty, and staff in navigating complex issues. Whether you are here seeking support for yourself or someone else, we are available to help you problem solve, understand options, and connect with resources. https://uscsa.usc.edu

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. 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. 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. 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: https://titleix.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. 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://titleix.usc.edu/

The Office of Disability Services and Programs
Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

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. 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. emergency.usc.edu

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