

## **CNTV-411 Creating the Short Film**

**Section: 17808**

**Units: 4**

**Summer—MWF—9:00am - 11:50am (PST)**

**Location: Online**

**Instructor: James Savoca**

**Office: Virtual**

**Office Hours: By appointment only.**

**Contact Info: [jsavoca@usc.edu](mailto:jsavoca@usc.edu)**

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## Course Description

An overview of the concerns, functions and responsibilities of the Director. The core of the course will be the individual project. Each student will write/direct/edit a 3-5 minute film. These will be screened and critiqued by Instructor, SA and the class during the final week sessions.

In addition, each student will “workshop” their project, consisting of a deep dive into their Director’s Notebook and script. For each script workshop; every student will have their scripts read out loud in class/Zoom, with Instructor highlighting what works and doesn’t, incorporating the entire class; adding suggestions for improvements.

## Learning Objectives

To develop the fundamental skills of filmmaking - from the POV of the Director. Learn/develop what makes a short film work, the function of a scene, moments: how to develop and shoot them, how to create a contemporary frame, coverage, and how to develop character.

## Online Learning Format

We will conduct all classes via Zoom. Students are expected to log in on time and have their audio and video feeds enabled at all times unless otherwise instructed. Failure to do so can and may affect your overall grade. Please make certain to find a quiet and private area with a strong internet connection. All assignments will be distributed and delivered via email and/or google drive. Please note that per University requirements, all lectures will be recorded by the faculty only and may only be accessed by students upon request.

## Recommended Preparation / Script Development:

If you do not arrive with a 3-5 page screenplay, you should have at least two story ideas written out, ready to be developed.

## Course Notes

Our Workshop will be conducted online using the Zoom platform, and every student must participate in all class Zoom sessions for the duration of each class meeting. There is no eating during class time, and students will promptly log in to the Workshop at the start of class with their web cameras turned on and their microphones muted until they’d like to speak. The link to the Zoom sessions will be emailed to every student before the start of the course, and only those students who are officially registered for the class can participate in the Zoom sessions.

All class materials - including the Course Syllabus, Class Schedule, Assignment and Exercise Sheets, technical manuals, production form templates, etc - will be uploaded by the Professor to our Workshop Google Folder, which all students can access on Google Drive. The link to the Folder will be emailed to every student before the start of the course. These documents are essential to the success of our Workshops and your projects, and so it is very important to check our Google Folder on a daily basis as we will be frequently updating it with additional documents.

This folder is also where students will upload all of the Project Scripts, Production Materials, and the QuickTime files of your finished films prior to screening them on your assigned day.

Students will receive a letter grade at the end of the Workshop as an evaluation of their overall work in the course, in accordance with the policies and practices of USC and the School of Cinematic Arts. (Please see the “Grading” section in the Syllabus for further details.) Any student wishing to take the class with a “Pass/No Pass” assessment must contact the SCA Summer Office to make these arrangements.

## Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Workshop Equipment List (provided by each Student)

- Digital device for recording motion pictures, such as a DSLR Camera, iPhone, Smart Phone, etc., with external or built-in microphone
- One 32gB SD memory card for use on projects
- A laptop or desktop installed with editing software (AVID Licenses will be provided)

- AVID MEDIA COMPOSER HARDWARE SPECIFICATIONS: [http://avid.force.com/pkb/articles/en\\_US/Compatibility/Media-Composer-System-Requirements](http://avid.force.com/pkb/articles/en_US/Compatibility/Media-Composer-System-Requirements)
  - AVID is the Industry standard editing software and is encouraged to be used during the summer; however is not required.
- A pair of quality headphones for use in sound recording and editing

### **Hardware/Software Recommended**

- An external Hard Drive that meets these Minimum Technical Specifications:
  1. Drive speed of 7200rpm
  2. Minimum storage capacity of 500GB
  3. USB 3.0 (or higher) connection
  4. A second hard drive or a 32GB flash drive is **RECOMMENDED** to back up material in the case of drive failure.

### **Description and Assessment of Assignments**

There are three assignments: turning in a shooting script, a Director's Notebook and a final short film. The assessment of the script will be based on clarity of idea and character. The assessment of the Director's Notebook will be based on how the director communicates his/her vision. The assessment of the final film will be on clarity of the central idea, running time of under 5 minutes, blocking, camera and performance.

All films must follow USC approved crediting found on the USC Knowledge Base in Post Production.

## Grading Breakdown

Assessment Tool (assignments)	Points	% of Grade
Script	20	20
Director's Notebook	20	20
Class Participation	10	10
Final Project	50	50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

## 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

## Assignment Submission Policy

All scripts and Director's Notebook will be due on 7/12 and 7/19, where they are to be uploaded to the class' SCA Google Drive.

All final films are due on week 6.

## Grading Timeline

Feedback will be given for scripts in class during week 3 and for DIR's notebook in week 4.

## Additional Policies

Scheduled topics, assignments and due dates are subject to change.

No projects will be accepted later than the final class date. All late projects will receive a grade deduction for each class day they are late.

### Non-attendance policy:

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. When assignments are late or not completed the grade may be lowered up to one full grade. Two absences will result in a student's grade being lowered by one full letter (IE: A becomes B). Each subsequent absence will result in a student's grade being lowered by one, additional full letter (IE: B becomes C).

Two late class arrivals equate to one full absence.

In order for an absence to be waived, the student must have approval from the professor.

If a student misses class due to an emergency, the student must contact the professor prior to class or contact the Summer Program Office at Summer@cinema.usc.edu.

## Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics/Daily Activities	Deliverables
	<b>WEEK 1</b>	
Class 1 6/28	Introductions, read syllabus out loud. <i>Scene: Purpose of Scene. Develop character.</i> Screen short films & clips & discuss.	
6/29	Cinematography class: 1:00-4:00pm	
Class 2 6/30	<i>Creating a Visual Frame.</i> Screen clips/ discuss. Pitch ideas.	
7/1	Editing class: 9:00-12:00pm	
Class 3 7/2/20	<i>Beats, moments &amp; Conflicts.</i> Screen clips/ discuss.	Weekend: develop ideas
	<b>WEEK 2</b>	
7/5	<b>**NO CLASS FRIDAY, 7/3/20**</b>	NO CLASS MONDAY, 7/5
7/6	Cinematography class: 1:00-4:00pm	
Class 4 7/7	<i>Coverage.</i> Screen examples.	
7/8	Editing class: 9:00-12:00pm	
Class 5 7/9	<i>Creating The Director's Notebook</i> Workshop Ideas	
	<b>WEEK 3</b>	***All first drafts due***
Class 6 7/12	Script workshop	
Class 7 7/14	Script workshop	
Class 8 7/16	Script workshop	
	<b>WEEK 4</b>	***All DIR's Notebooks due***
Class 9 7/19	Director's Notebook workshop and Production update	
Class 10 7/21	Director's Notebook workshop and Production update	
Class 11 7/23	Director's Notebook workshop and Production update	Weekend: begin production
	<b>WEEK 5</b>	

Class 12 7/26	Screen Rough Cuts	
Class 13 7/28	Screen Rough Cuts	
Class 14 7/30	Screen Rough Cuts	Weekend: pickups, final editing, sound design, titles. Output films.
	<b>WEEK 6</b>	
Class 15 8/2	Screen Final Cuts	
Class 16 8/4	Screen Final Cuts	
Class 17 8/6	Screen Final Cuts	

## 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](http://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](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

### Support Systems:

*Counseling and Mental Health* - (213) 740-9355 - 24/7 on call  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://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.symplcity.com/care\\_report](http://usc-advocate.symplcity.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  
[dsp.usc.edu](http://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.

*Campus Support & Intervention* - (213) 821-4710  
[campussupport.usc.edu](http://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](http://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](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://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](http://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Office of the Ombuds* - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)  
[ombuds.usc.edu](http://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.

<p><b>PLEASE NOTE:</b> <b>FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACE IN THE SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX</b></p>
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