



## **CTAN 220 Introduction to Storyboarding**

**Units: 2**

**Fall 2021 Fridays 7:00 PM – 9:50 PM**

**Location: SCB 102**

**Instructor: Katie Smith (she/her/hers)**

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**Office Hours:** Monday nights from 8 – 9 PM via Zoom, email is always always open!

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### **Course Description**

A practical introductory course that emphasizes the fundamentals of digital storyboarding to include storyboarding basics, proper composition, staging for clarity, pitching and critique. This is a required course for all Animation undergraduates in preparation for their Senior capstone film (CTAN 401).

### **Course Goals**

- For the students to leave the class confident in their storytelling and filmmaking abilities, and to be prepared for more complex boarding assignments and sequences.
- Upon completion of the class, they should have:
  - Two sequences for their portfolio, both will include concept and character designs, beat boards, and thumbnails.
  - A 'Next 5' short sequence.
  - A set of reverse storyboards.
  - Guidance on how to craft their online portfolios for internships and positions.

### **Learning Objectives and Outcomes**

The storyboard is the visual blueprint of any animated film. This course provides the foundation for students to learn elements of good draftsmanship, the use of the virtual camera, the performance art of pitching and the basics of writing for animation. Emphasis is on practical exercises done digitally which mirrors the professional setting of storyboarding for films and television.

Upon completion of this course, students will have gained practical experience and demonstrable skills in all aspects of professional storyboarding, which will encompass the

building blocks required for the detailed planning and pre-visualization of most any type of presentation – applicable to TV, film or otherwise - from original concept, to planning, execution and pitching, all culminating in the final representation of the project at hand. They also will have the groundwork for creating a successful portfolio to help stand out when applying for positions and roles. Assessments will be based on in-class participation, as well as the execution of specific assignments covering the various stages of the storyboard process.

**Prerequisite(s):** None

**Co-Requisite(s):** None

**Concurrent Enrollment:** None

**Recommended Preparation:** Basic drawing skills

### **Course Notes**

The syllabus will be posted on Blackboard for students enrolled in this course.

### **Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required**

Proficiency with Photoshop is required.

### **Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

While storyboarding is largely a “learn by doing” craft, several books have been published, which provide, if not fully “how to” information, good inspiration for the student artist. All the books listed below are relatively inexpensive and available new and/or used, and in paperback, on Amazon.com or eBay, as well as book and art supply stores:

***FUN WITH A PENCIL*** by Andrew Loomis

***ANIMATION – LEARN HOW TO DRAW ANIMATED CARTOONS*** by Preston Blair

***HOW TO ANIMATE FILM CARTOONS*** by Preston Blair

***DISNEY ANIMATION – THE ILLUSION OF LIFE*** by Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnson

***SAVE THE CAT*** by Blake Snyder

***STORY*** by Robert McKee

***SCREENPLAY: THE FOUNDATIONS OF SCREENWRITING*** by Syd Field

***ON FILMMAKING*** by Alexander Mackendrick

***THE VISUAL STORY*** by Bruce Block

***5 C'S OF CINEMATOGRAPHY*** by Joseph V. Mascelli

***I MOVED TO LOS ANGELES TO WORK IN ANIMATION*** by Natalie Nourigat

***SKETCHBOOK: COMPOSITION STUDIES FOR FILM*** by Hans Bacher

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

- Students will be required to execute and present their assignments digitally, utilizing storyboarding software and/or Photoshop.
- In order for students to become accustomed to working within cinematic framing, all assignments will be formatted at various common screen-based aspect ratios

most often required for TV or commercial film. (These formats will be provided for student use.)

- Pitches and class critiques will be in a group setting. Class participation, questions and discussions are always encouraged.
- At various intervals, students will be required to participate in in-class Theater Games and Public Speaking exercises to conquer their shyness. Since presenting one's work is an important aspect of the storyboarding process, individual student involvement will play a role in overall assessments. Otherwise, grading will be based on quality of work, progress and grasp of the given assignments.

Please note that one's individual drawing or draftsmanship abilities will NOT be included in any assessment or grading. ANYONE can learn to storyboard in the comprehensive manner this class is designed for.

### Grading Breakdown

Assignment	% of Grade
Participation	15%
Assignments	50%
Mid-Term Exam	15%
Final Exam	20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Grading Scale (Example)

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 Rubrics

While all students will be given the same assignments in the same order, the individualized nature of storyboarding dictates that each student's execution and/or interpretation of those assignments will vary. Students will learn at different paces therefore evaluations will be largely based on one's overall grasp and progress demonstrated over the semester. Instructor and group critiques would be used to guide

learning. In-class feedback will be essential. Group discussion and/or participation in the form of Q&A is always encouraged.

### Assignment Submission Policy

Assignments in the form of various storyboard exercises will be given during each class, sometimes creating a “workshop” environment in where the instructor will devote time for individual instruction and answering questions. The beginning of each class will be a group critique of the previous class assignment.

### Grading Timeline

Grading will be based on weekly assignments. The instructor will provide grades by the next class.

### Additional Policies

- Attendance will be taken by the Student Assistant 10 minutes after the class start time
- 3 lateness (arriving 10 minutes late) = 1 absence
- 3 absences = 1 full downgrade of the student’s letter grade

### Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
<b>Week 1</b> Aug 27	<b>-Introduction</b> -What is Storyboarding! -The Storyboarding process -Film language -Reverse Storyboarding	<b>Homework:</b> -Choose a sequence from a film that’s in the AFI top 100 list and reverse storyboard it. -Story prompt for first sequence assignment: there are two characters, and one wants something. What happens next? Create 3 log lines/ideas for story sequence #1.	Due Week 2  -The reverse storyboards can be reviewed digitally on screen or physically brought into class.  -Log lines/ideas must be written down and presented to the class.
<b>Week 2</b> Sept 3	<b>LECTURE: Camera, Composition, Story structure</b> -Discussion of silhouette and how it’s a key element to boards -Perspective, use of grid lines, concept design  -Review reverse storyboards, pick one log line to move forward with	<b>Homework:</b> -Syd Field & Blake Snyder worksheet for ‘Toy Story’. This will be an exercise in breaking down/studying story structure. -Create design & expression sheets for characters for sequence #1. -Thumbnail 5 beats for sequence #1 (focusing on beginning, middle, end.)	Due Week 3

<p><b>Week 3</b> Sept 10</p>	<p><b>LECTURE: Storyboarding Basics 1 – the Set Up</b>          -Character performance          -Staging and blocking          -Thumbnailing demo          -How to use Photoshop to craft your Storyboards</p> <p>-Group critique of previous assignment</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b>          -Thumbnail sequence #1 (this should not exceed 50 panels.)</p>	<p>Due Week 4</p>
<p><b>Week 4</b> Sept 17</p>	<p><b>LECTURE: Storyboarding Basics 2 – The 5 C’s</b>          -Camera angles          -Continuity          -Composition          -Close-ups          -Cutting (Film examples will be shown)</p> <p>-Group critique of previous assignment          -Student Q&amp;A</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b>          -Draw 1 example of a single shot, which tells a simple story. Then redraw the same shot using different compositions (no limit) to describe different aspects of emotions or mood.</p> <p>-Revise/add thumbnails for sequence #1</p>	<p>Due Week 5</p>
<p><b>Week 5</b> Sept 24</p>	<p><b>LECTURE: Writing for Storyboarding</b>          -Discuss and show examples of the writing planning process and setup.</p> <p>-Group critique of previous assignment          -Student Q&amp;A</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b>          -Rough out sequence #1</p>	<p>Due Week 6</p>
<p><b>Week 6</b> Oct 1</p>	<p><b>LECTURE: PITCHING!</b>          -What the pitch is          -How to pitch          -Show examples          -In Class Workshop as students develop sequence #1. Instructor will do walk-around to view progress and advise. Theater Games as prep for next week’s pitches.</p> <p>-Group critique of previous assignment          -Student Q&amp;A</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b>          -Continue on sequence #1 (revisions, add panels, etc)</p>	<p>Due Week 7</p>

<p><b>Week 7</b> Oct 8</p>	<p><b>LECTURE: 'Next 5'</b> -Discuss 'Next 5' Assignment</p> <p><b>STUDENTS PITCH SEQUENCE #1!</b></p> <p>-Group critique of pitches -Student Q&amp;A</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b> -'Next 5' story assignment -Come up with three log lines/ideas for sequence #2.</p>	<p>Due Week 9</p>
<p><b>Week 8</b> Oct 15</p>	<p><b>Fall Recess</b></p>	<p><b>Homework:</b> Take a breather, go outside, eat something delicious - take care of YOU!</p>	
<p><b>Week 9</b> Oct 22</p>	<p><b>LECTURE: Portfolio Discussion + Editing and Music for Storyboards</b> -Review various online story portfolios - How to set it up: -Websites, format, tabs. -What recruiters/board artists look for in portfolios when considering for an internship. -How social media fits in. -How to create clickable panels for the site. -Discuss how music and editing can add (or subtract) from your boards.  -Choose one idea of the three to storyboard for sequence #2. -In class: create concept/character designs for sequence #2.</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b> - Continue concept and character designs if need be. -Thumbnail 10 story beats (beginning, middle, end) for the sequence.</p>	<p>Due Week 10</p>
<p><b>Week 10</b> Oct 29 Happy (early) Halloween!</p>	<p><b>LECTURE: Action vs Comedy vs Drama boards</b> -Shorthand and Clarity for boarding  -Group critique of assignment -Student Q&amp;A</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b> -Thumbnail sequence #2</p>	<p>Due Week 11</p>

<b>Week 11</b> Nov 5	<b>LECTURE: In class demo using script pages</b> -How a sequence is broken down  -Group critique of assignment -Student Q&A	<b>Homework:</b> -Rough out sequence #2	Due Week 12
<b>Week 12</b> Nov 12	<b>LECTURE: Working in this business and how to succeed!</b> -Applying for jobs -Freelancing -Moving from gig to gig -Rates  -Group critique of assignment -Student Q&A  <b>Possible Guest Lecturer</b>	<b>Homework:</b> -Continue sequence #2 roughs	Due Week 14
<b>Week 13</b> Nov 19	<b>STUDENTS PITCH SEQUENCE #2!</b> -Students will decide if they'd like to focus on sequence #1 or #2 to pitch for their Final pitch.  -Group critique of assignment -Student Q&A	<b>Homework:</b> -Revise sequence #1 or #2 based on notes	Due Week 15
<b>Week 14</b> Nov 26	<b>Enjoy Turkey Day!</b>		
<b>Week 15</b> Dec 3	<b>Last Class before Final Exams: Class time will be open for questions, in class workshopping, notes, etc.</b>	<b>Homework:</b> <b>Prep for Final Pitch!</b> -Make revisions, clean up boards, add tone	
Dec 4 - 7	<b>STUDY DAYS</b>		
<b>FINAL</b> <b>*Attendance is mandatory*</b>	<b>PITCH REVISED SEQUENCE #1 or #2!</b>  <b>Possible Guest Lecturer</b>		<b>Date: Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup></b> <b>7 – 9 PM</b>

## 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:

*Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*  
[engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](http://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](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 Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call*

[engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](http://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](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://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](http://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](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.



*USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710*

[studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssu](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssu)

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) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://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](mailto: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**