

**CTPR 327, MOTION PICTURE CINEMATOGRAPHY**  
**Units: 3**  
**Thursday 6:30pm - 9:30pm Online**  
**USC Fall Semester 2021**

**Location: SCC Stage 3**

**Instructor: James O’Keeffe**

**Office: online**

**Office Hours:** Contact professor for zoom meeting or in-person meeting or phone consults

**Contact Info:** [okeeffe@usc.edu](mailto:okeeffe@usc.edu) , (626) 695-8631

**Student Assistant: Graham Byers**

**Office: online**

**Office Hours:** Contact SA for zoom meeting or phone consults

**Contact Info:** [gbyers@usc.edu](mailto:gbyers@usc.edu) , (802) 881-3225

*“Art is the lie that makes us realize the truth.”*

Pablo Picasso

## **Course Description**

Cinema-TV 327 is an excellent introduction to the creative and technical challenges of motion picture photography. The content of the course will emphasize how to express ideas, moods, story and character using basic photographic and lighting principals.

## **Communication Policies:**

Students are encouraged to contact the instructor by USC email. The instructor will reply to emails within 24 hours during the school week, 48 hours over a weekend, and the workday following a holiday.

Many questions can be answered by our SAs, so please ask them first. If they are unable to help you or you feel you need to see me, request an appointment..

## **Learning Objectives and Outcomes**

- Students will be able to shoot with a HD Motion picture video class exercises. Faculty member and Student Assistant will be available to help in this process.
- Students will be able to use the basic functions of a lens: focal lengths, aperture, depth of field, and focus, and how they are used in visual storytelling.
- Students will work at home, and on USC stage, with instruction from the professor, will be able to work with basic power distribution, and motion picture lighting.
- Students will be able to use professional set protocol.
- Students will light and shoot assigned short scenes and/or class exercises during class period.
- Students will be able to block and cover a scene. Then they will use those principles to complete self- shot assignments.
- Students will be able to utilize pre-visualization techniques to plan shots and coverage for their scenes. Students will be able to execute visual and lighting continuity.

## **Course Notes**

This will be an in person course, if Covid restrictions are put in place and lockdown mandated by the state and USC the class will resume online. Resources and uploading will be via a Google drive. Enrolled students will be given access to drive at beginning of the semester.

## **What to expect from the course:**

You will be exposed to a wide variety of cinematic challenges, you will develop your "eye". You will be able to properly expose video, as well as manipulate the light, camera and content of your "scenes" into a meaningful, conceptual presentation. If you commit to this process you will finish the course with a basic competence in these areas and should have a more refined idea concerning how best to pursue your development in filmmaking and in particular, cinematography. This is an ideal introduction to motion picture photography for aspiring cinematographers, as well as for those interested in directing, editing, art directing, writing and producing. The first few class meetings will be lectures designed to give you the basics to get you going. The remainder of the meetings we will delve deeper into the principles of Cinematography and after each class lecture and professor led lighting demonstrations, you will be assigned a weekly "Scene Project," the guidelines for which will be provided to you. These shooting assignments will be shot during the class then shared with the class then be viewed and discussed.

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

Laptop loaner: (This program may not be available during Covid-19 distance learning, please visit the website for up to date guidelines)

If you require an internet-enabled device, the USC Computing Center Laptop Loaner Program - USC Information Technology Services provides loaner laptops at the general-use computing centers in King Hall, Ahmanson Information Commons at Leavey Library, and Waite Phillips Hall. This service is only available to currently enrolled USC students with a valid USC ID Card. To check out a laptop, go to the service desk at an USC computing center and log into the laptop checkout webpage: <https://itservices.usc.edu/spaces/computingcenters>.

For more information about the program, see: <https://itservices.usc.edu/spaces/laptoploaner>

### Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Throughout the semester I will refer to information and articles. You will be responsible to read the material. Weekly handouts, downloadable PDF files, and/or links to on-line information will be available online on a 327 folder on "Google Drive."

### Additional Recommended Reading:

*The Bare Bones Camera Course for Film and Video*

By: Tom Schroepel

*The Filmmaker's Eye: Learning (and Breaking) the Rules of Cinematic Composition*

By: Gustavo Mercado

*Motion Picture and Video Lighting*

By: Blain Brown

Cinematography Theory and Practice

By: Blair Brown

Cinematic Storytelling

By: Jennifer Van Sijll

### Grading Breakdown

Including the above detailed assignments, how will students be graded overall? Participation should be no more than 15%, unless justified for a higher amount. All must total 100%.

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Midterm	25	25
Notebook Assignment	20	20
Class participation	10	10
Weekly assignments	25	25
Final exam	20	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</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 Submission Policy

Assignments will be uploaded to a google drive or emailed to TA and Professor

### Missing a Quiz or Exam and Incompletes:

The only acceptable excuses for missing a quiz or exam or for taking an incomplete in the course are personal illness or a family emergency. Students must inform the instructor **before** the quiz or exam in order for a make up to be scheduled. Students who wish to take an incomplete must also present documentation of the problem to the instructor before the final grades are submitted.

### Course Schedule: Topics and Lectures subject to change according to wants and needs of students and professor.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1	Lecture: Intro to class, class overview. Mechanics of camera and lenses,	Assign Notebook Read: #1,2 PDF Camera	Notebook due week 9
Week 2	Lecture/Demo: Intro to grip & electric equipment	Reading: Color and color temperature Assignment: Color temperature exercise	Due: week 3
Week 3	Lecture/Demo: "Quality of light" soft lighting for faces, replicate scenes from movies	Reading: TBD Assignment: TBA	Due: week 4
Week 4	Lecture/Demo: Hard light for faces, replicate scenes from movies	Reading: TBD Assignment: Hard light exercise	Due: week 5
Week 5	Lecture: 3 point lighting, lighting for story	Assignment: 3 Point lighting	Due: week 6
Week 6	Lecture/Demo: Depth of field	Reading: Depth of field Assignment: Depth of field exercise	Due: week 7
Week 7	Lecture/ demo: Shooting for coverage/ Understanding the line Review for the midterm	Reading: TBD Assignment: Coverage exercise Watch the movie Take on Prime for week 9 discussion	Due: week 8

Week 8	Midterm exam		
Week 9	Lecture: creating the Look (from ideas to finished film)	Reading: exposure and Latitudes Lenses Assignment: 3 shots that show different emotions	Due: week 10
Week 10	Lecture/Demo: "making the light look real" motivated source lighting demo	Reading: TBD Assignment: motivated light in 3 different locations at 3 different times of day exercise	Due: week 11
Week 11	Lecture/Demo: "From storyboards to finished product" shooting product or insert shots, tabletop lighting. Intro to Pitches for next week assignment	Reading: TBD Assignment: shooting Product shot with natural light exercise	Due: week 12
Week 12	Lecture/Demo: lighting for Night interior	Reading: TBA Assignment: Pitches for Final project	Due: week 13
Week 13	Pitches for Final: All students pitch a short story they want to produce, each team will vote on what to shoot for final.	Reading: Assignment: final Project and written	
Week 14	Thanksgiving break	NO CLASS	
Week 15	Final project shot in class		
FINAL	Final written exam		Date: Dec 15 emailed to instructor and TA by 9:30 PM

### 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).

#### 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.

**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 <http://mindful.usc.edu> and Mental health counseling is available at the Engemann Student Health Center, 1031 W. 34th Street, 213-740-9355.

**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/sssa](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/sssa)

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:**

You will be expected to shoot your projects safely and follow the University's guidelines on practices and protocols during the Covid-19 pandemic

## **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 2021 might 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 with whom you live 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.

\*\*“Actor” also refers to “Documentary Subjects.”

## **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 2021.

### **Asynchronous Learning**

All class sessions will be Zoom recorded and made available for asynchronous viewing until the 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.