CTPR 421 PRACTICUM IN EDITING   **FALL 2021**
USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS
Section 18527
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Class Meetings: Wednesdays, 7-10 p.m.

Office Hours: By Appointment - phone, text, or email.+

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The goal of this workshop is to explore how editing shapes storytelling. It will also greatly deepen your knowledge of modern non-linear editing equipment, primarily the Avid, and techniques.

WELCOME TO THE EDIT!

Let's start out with a question: What is the most purely "cinematic" craft in filmmaking?

My answer to that question (which many will debate!) …is editing.

All other jobs and departments of a film production have earlier artistic or craft roots - directing comes from the theater, cinematography from photography and painting, sound from the days of radio, set design from architecture, and so on. Editing however, is a truly cinematic art, one that literally has changed human consciousness with its invention and evolution. Editing is the first truly "fourth dimensional" art form…it has given us control over the flow, pace, and even the direction of TIME. With this control, we can reshape and enhance story, performance, emotion and rhythm. It's an incredibly powerful craft, and in my opinion, the most central language of film.

Narrative features, documentaries, commercials, animation, television…all forms of cinematic expression meet in the common core of the edit room, and we'll discuss both specific and universal concepts for these and other types of filmmaking.

This course will focus on the brain processes that make the difference between picture editing and *great* picture editing. It will cover both the theory and the technique of editing. You will edit a series of scenes that are designed to gradually expand the types of editing experiences that you have. The accumulation of these editing experiences should give you an overview of the complete process -- aesthetic and the practical -- teaching you to how to make editing choices.

In addition, you will be given a working knowledge of how to organize an editing room and operate the various tools that you need to make your editing decisions. The bulk of your hands-on editing tutoring will be given during Avid Labs (more on these below). You will start out in these Lab classes learning all of the technical aspects that you will need for this class. As the semester continues you will also learn skills that may take you beyond what you do in this class but are essential if you are to work in any capacity in an editing.

Projects will be edited using Avid Media Composer. You will also get an overview of the entire filmmaking process from the point of view of the editing room. How to look at a scene as an editor in order to best bring out your artistic ideas. You will discover editing principles and aesthetics that you can use no matter which format you edit with and what format your project is intended for (television, feature, documentary, etc.).

During your time in this class you will be editing solo or in pairs, learning as many techniques as possible in order to prepare you to undertake the editing process in other USC courses and in your post-school careers, on projects edited either by you or by others. You will be expected to edit your projects outside of class time and bring them into the class to present and discuss with others. **It's VERY important to keep up with the work assignments - these factor greatly in your final grade!**

Because of the amount of material we need to cover, time periods for our classes will get pretty intense. Be prepared for the possibility of some classes going past the official finish time.

CLASS FORMAT:

The class is structured to give you an overview of how a film is made from the point of view of the editing process (and, recently, more and more things are being made the responsibility of the editing staff). Along the way, you will get a sense of the entire flow of film editing – including its thought processes, technical needs, scheduling, and politics.

The first week will be an introductory week in which I will discuss a large variety of topics including how the class will work, the process of editing, the nuts and bolts of the editorial process, and present a piece or two for examination. We will also discuss variations on the syllabus that we may want to make. I'll also "deep dissect" a favorite scene of mine to examine the editing and how it relates to the story, characters, cinematography, sound design and the rest of the film in its flow. **Watch this carefully, because you'll all be doing this during the semester!**

After that, our weekly meetings will generally include a presentation by one student who will "deep dissect" a scene from a favorite film of theirs, emphasizing the editorial choices made in the creation of that scene. I will also discuss different aspects of editing, using clips to illustrate the topics. There is a possibility that we might have a guest, working professionals besides me.

At least half of each class will be devoted to the screening and critiquing of the scenes that you will have edited during the preceding week. Your fellow class members and I will engage each of you in a critique of your work, and you will return to the editing room during the next week for a second cut. THIS IS THE CORE OF THE CLASS…showing your cuts for an intelligent (and fun!) discussion/critique with your classmates and learning from those notes. PARTICIPATION IS KEY TO A GREAT CLASS and will be part of your grade! A final component of our classes will be a discussion of the politics of editing — from working closely with directors, producers, musicians and writers, to interactions with the studios and the preview process.

Along the way, you're going to learn how to make sense of, how to use your NLE (non-linear editor) in a professional way, how to work better in Avid, how to think about music, sound, and effects to tell your story. You will gain a whole slew of skills that will better prepare you for the more advanced work here at USC and in the "real world".

Just like movie theaters and playhouses, I'm going to ask every one of you to turn off all cell phones before coming to class (**AND NO TEXTING**!) Please save electronic communications for the breaks. Ringing and buzzing phones are really disruptive in class and just plain rude to me and your fellow classmates. Unlike movie theaters and playhouses, I have no problem if you keep your laptops or smartphones/iPads/tablets/phablets etc. **open and active FOR ON-TOPIC INTERNET USE AND NOTE TAKING** during class.

THERE WILL BE NO EATING IN CLASS. YOU WILL GET A BREAK, YOU CAN EAT THEN, THANK YOU. .

Please take notes in class as needed.

During all phases of class I encourage questions and comments. We all need to be challenged. That includes me. There are many topics open for discussion, and in many cases, I'll have real world stories to match your questions and comments, and at the same time, I want to learn from your ideas as well.

Asynchronous Learning

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

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 2020.

WEEKLY COURSE BREAKDOWN

This breakdown may change several times during the course of the semester, depending on feedback and the progress of your own work.

Hello! Week 1 08/25/21	**Intro: Editing as an Idea**	**Layout of the semester, class and syllabus** Demo of scene commentary - How to Think Like An Editor - Review of Basic Principles. - Focusing the story. - The emblematic image. - The first shot we see. - The first character we see. - Starting an Avid project. - Importing user settings.	**ASSIGNMENT:** Solo Ballet Movie Load Media Sc 2 Load Media Sc 3 Ingest Link doc in Google Drive Start pulling selects

Week 2
09/01/21
	AVID LAB:
	
	LAB
		1) **Reviewing workflow:**
		   a. Offline/online
		   b. Central drive (Nexis Workspace) vs local drive (external hard drive)
		   c. Organization for drive:
		      i) Avid Projects
		      ii) Avid Users
		      iii) Avid Exports
		2) **Creating and working within the Avid project:**
		   a. Creating the project
		   b. Project setting/User Settings
		   c. Working with bins from Classroom Exercises
		   d. Organization/naming conventions
		   e. Accessing Mastering Elements and putting them on your drive
			ASSIGNMENT:
			
			Selects/edit first pass
			
			Sc 3 intercut with Sc 2
			
			TAKE NOTES,
			
			ASK QUESTIONS,
			
			PRACTICE THE AVID!

| | | f. Customization of keyboard and workspaces
g. Saving your project
h. Saving your User Settings
3) Prepping:
a. Synching using slate/in points and waveform analysis
b. Naming tracks and adjusting their size
c. <mark>Bring in music and sound effects, using Opus 1, Sound Miner, and free sfx</mark>
d. <mark>Bringing in sounds from the Internet</mark>
4) Editing Skills:
a. Creating titles
b. Overview of visual effects, other editing techniques
c. Quick overview of Avid Color Grading
5) Exporting:
a. Using Mastering Elements
b. How to do a video and audio mixdown
c. Making a QT movie for viewing dailies and cuts

d. Make sure you export an H.264 movie file for Google Drive uploads. (Avid MC2020 Guide. Page 31) | |
| Week 3
09/08/21 | **Working with Shots and Scenes**

LAB | Scene construction
Genres, beats and rule of three
Practical discussion of setting up an edit room, working with AEs, and more | Sc 2/3 edit notes
Begin second scene edit
Sc 3a |

Week 4 09/15/21	**Examining The Sequence**	Restructuring and rearrangement in sequences Dailies notes Television, features, documentaries and other forms of edit politics	Review second scene edit recut 2nd scene 3a begin third scene 10
Week 5 09/22/21	**Music Design**	Using music to tell a story Spotting music Moving towards a final mix Musical style	Review third scene 10 recut third scene 10 begin fourth scene 18/2
Week 6 09/29/21	**Sound Design/Post Post Production (Finishing)**	Spotting effects How to use sound to fulfill your scene and script analysis Pre-mixing, final mixing Finishing process workflow Post scheduling	Review fourth scene 18/2 Catch up on scene evaluations in class and review/Q&A up to now. Recut fourth scene 18/2
Week 7 10/06/21	**VFX** **LAB**	Manipulating the film image within the context of the script analysis Traditional opticals, CGI Blue Screen and how to use How an editing team works with creation and editing of VFX/CGI	Review fourth scene 18/2 recuts begin fifth scene 19
Week 8 10/13/21	**The Action Sequence**	Creating an action sequence Action threads and subplots How a scene analysis may differ in an action sequence. How it doesn't	Review fifth scene 19 Recut fifth scene 19 Begin FINAL PROJECT multiple scene
Week 9 10/20/21	**Documentaries**	Telling a story with real footage How it is the same as the dramatic footage we've been studying, how it is different Style in documentaries Storytelling in documentaries	FINAL PROJECT: CUT SC 1-4 Bingo Nights Start Cut Sc 1-2

Week 10 10/27/21	**Humor in Editing**	Structure in comedy editing Action and reaction Rule of Threes as it applies to comedy. Setting up beats	FINAL PROJECT: CUT SC 1-4 Bingo Nights Review Sc 1-2

Week 11
11/03/21
	AVID LAB 2
	
	<mark>LAB</mark>
		1) **Overview of workflow, starting from camera card:**
		  a. Proper saving of camera card onto hard drive, including naming conventions
		  b. Linking to raw media inside properly named Avid bin
		  c. Transcoding to editing codec
		  d. Demonstrate successful relinking to raw footage after editing
		2) **Preparing for Online:**
		  a. Cleaning up Video and Audio Tracks
		  b. Adding final titles and end credits
		  c. Keeping track of and adding final VFX
		  d. The use of mixdowns
		3) **Preparing turnover for picture:**
		  a. Relinking to raw footage
		  b. Transcode to higher resolution codec
		4) **Preparing turnover for sound:**
		  a. AAF export for sound
		  b. Adding visible timecode burn-in
		  c. Exporting reference QT for sound
		5) **Other Turnover Topics:**
		  a. Exporting AAF for picture conform
		  b. Adding visible timecode for picture conform
		  c. Outputting EDL for picture conform
			FINAL PROJECT:
			CUT SC 3-4 Bingo Nights

Week 12 11/10/21	**Experimental Films Editing the Boundaries**	Structure in less-obviously structured material Museum films. Films as art. Examples from across the alternative film world Editing difficult material	Review Scenes 3-4. Complete all notes on FINAL PROJECT Bingo Nights Sc 1-4
Week 13 11/17/21	**Short Films: Commercials YouTube Music videos and more**	How short films and videos use the same rules as long form How they differ Impact on editorial style Examples of various genres The real world of new media and distribution	Review skills to complete for "in person" one on one zoom demonstrating competence in editing.
Week 14 12/01/21	**Editor Life Wrapping Up, Moving Ahead**	How editors can be key players Freelance life. How to define yourself as an editor but not pigeonhole yourself Festivals and deadlines How to market yourself as an editor	FINAL PREP Review of skills to be demonstrated in class.
Week 15 12/08/21	**FINAL**	Farewell inspirations	

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Beginning with the first week, you will be required to edit and/or re-edit a scene **every week.** You will present it at the next class and accept criticism from your classmates and me so you can re-edit the scenes for a screening during the following week. My comments will be given **verbally** during the class.

Once during the semester, you will be required to choose a short scene from a project you admire and analyze it from the point of view of its editing — its style, content, character

construction and anything else that we have learned up until that point. The scene can be from a film of any kind, a television show, a commercial or a music video – whatever. In short, you can choose anything where editing is involved. **You will screen the scene in class and present that analysis following the screening,** *both written and orally*. You will be expected to bring a copy of the film scene OR link to class **along with your typed report** on the date it is due. We can all watch the scene on our own then rejoin Zoom. Once again, my comments will be given verbally during the class. You won't get a written critique.

There will be two required Avid Lab sessions on the SECOND WEEK and later in the semester. While there you will learn the techniques that good editors and assistant editors need to know about the editing process and be able to ask questions that arise during the editing of your own scenes. ***Attendance will be taken there and passed along to me***.

Students will be required to attend and participate in all classes. **ATTENDANCE WILL BE TAKEN AT EVERY CLASS**. Written explanations will be necessary *in advance* for all excused absences. **Unexcused absences will be reflected in the course grade.** In addition, students will be expected to be at class on time; *lateness will also be reflected in your grade*. Please make use of my email address or phone service number above if you have an unavoidable problem. If you cannot make the class or will be late, <u>let me know by the evening before the class</u>. [**Sorry for all of the bold facing, underlining and italics, but this section cannot be emphasized enough. Responsibility is an important skill for an editor.]**

Since film editors are judged on their ability to complete their work in a timely manner, you will likewise be responsible for completing each stage of every project on time and in a professional manner

There are no official textbooks for this class, though I highly recommending your purchase or library checkout of ***In The Blink of An Eye*** by Walter Murch. It's an excellent perspective on editing.

GRADES:

The primary component of your grade will be your weekly editing assignments. This involves several factors. The first is your ability to complete these assignments every week, whether they are original edits or recuts. The second is your ability to verbally present a cogent case for every editorial choice you have made during the editing of your scenes. I will challenge you on your decisions as often as I can. This is not because I disagree with them. I need to make sure that each decision was conscious and thought out. As the term progresses, this thoughtful aspect of your editing will become more and more important. Third, you will be graded on your progress during the semester. You will be expected to begin to think more like an editor in your work and your discussions of that work. Your thoroughness, completeness and attention to detail any instructions will all contribute to your grade

You will also be judged on your ability to work constructively with others, to accept criticism, and to refine your work on the basis of that criticism.

The above work will constitute **approximately 50%** of your grade. The following skills will also contribute to your grade:

Prompt attendance **and participation in** all class meetings. The participation aspect can't be stressed enough. (**approximately 20%**). I will tend to notice those who don't offer contributions to our critique sessions…being quiet and shy in class is not a great strategy! Also note my use of the word "prompt." We will stress professionalization here – so you can actually get work when you leave USC. Being on time is important. In fact, being *early* is important.

In lieu of a final, you will need to complete an edited sequence, constructed from a number of scenes that you will have been editing over the final weeks of the course. (**approximately 20%**). You will also need to demonstrate your editing skils in a one on one zoom (**approximately 10%**).

Meeting all scheduled dates for all projects will be factored into the above numbers. Late weekly class assignments and the final project (especially the final project) will be reflected in your grade. *If you hand it in late*, *expect me to deduct from your grade*.

There will be no incompletes granted except in the case of severe medical or serious emergency.

It is your responsibility to be aware of USC's add/drop and withdraw deadlines.

PRESENTATION OF EDITED MATERIAL:

We will generally be screening your cuts off Vimeo. We will go over output specs. **Just like in the real world, all material must be properly prepared for screening.** It will be your responsibility to make sure that your outputs are complete, with sound, and in viewable condition. You should check your materials *before leaving the editing station*. We will discuss proper leadering and slating at various points during the semester. You will then be expected to leader/slate your projects every week after that.

OFFICE HOURS AND OUT OF CLASS CONSULTATION

I'm a working editor and as such am always in the middle of projects. I maintain a home office and will be available via phone, email or Zoom by appointment. PLEASE honor these hours and stick to your appointments…I promise to let you know individually if I have to cancel an appointment…please do me that courtesy also! I look forward to talking about both the class materials and the "real world" with you.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

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, policy.usc.edu/scientific- misconduct.

Support Systems:

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

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

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

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, 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 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

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/ssa

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

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, 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

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. 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.