

CTPR 425 PRODUCTION PLANNING
SECTION 18538
UNITS: 2
FALL 2021, WEDNESDAYS, 7 PM TO 8:50 PM PACIFIC TIME
SCA 356

USC Cinematic Arts

Instructor: *Robert L. Brown*
Office: *SCA 410*
Office Hours: *By Appointment*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

How long will it take to shoot your movie? How much will it cost? What's the most efficient way to schedule the scenes? Who and what need to be there? This course will give you the tools to answer those questions by examining the process of production planning. By the end of the semester, each student should not only have a conceptual grasp of how to line, breakdown, schedule, and budget a screenplay, but also have the practical skill to actually do it. The goal of the course is not to make you into professional production managers, but rather to introduce you to the basic principles of production planning with an emphasis on scheduling and budgeting.

Although, there are differences in scale and detail, the processes involved are essentially the same whether one is making a major studio feature, a low-budget feature, a movie-of-the-week, an episodic television show, an educational film, an industrial film, or a student film.

Using a script from a one-hour episodic television show, each class member will line a script, develop a shooting schedule and create a day-out-of-days. The class will also create a film budget for a low budget independent in order to reach an understanding of the various elements that go into the making of a film.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- ◆ Identify the shooting sequences in a script and mark them appropriately.
- ◆ Create a shooting schedule in a way that is efficient yet preserves a director's freedom as much as possible and fosters a comfortable and creative atmosphere to help the actors reach their best performances.
- ◆ Construct a film budget.
- ◆ Demonstrate a knowledge of best practices for film production in crew management, working with minors, and maintaining a supportive and creative on-set atmosphere.

As the course is open to students who are not Cinema majors, there are no prerequisite or co-requisite courses. There is no concurrent enrollment in any other course required.

COURSE NOTES

The course meets once a week on campus. I will use Blackboard to deliver course materials, give assignments, and post grades. Each week will be presented as a learning module on Blackboard and will require preparatory work.

TECHNOLOGICAL PROFICIENCY AND HARDWARE/SOFTWARE REQUIRED

Since we will be meeting in the classroom, you will be able to use a physical copy of the script for you breakdown. If you would prefer to line the digital script, *Adobe Acrobat Reader* can be used for the script lining assignment. This software will allow you to mark up the script PDF. It's a free download at <https://acrobat.adobe.com/us/en/acrobat/pdf-reader.html>.

Movie Magic Scheduling published by Entertainment Partners will be used for all scheduling and breakdown work. Students will be given a coupon to purchase this software at a discounted rate of \$149. Without the coupon, the academic edition sells for \$185. This software is the industry standard and is used by all the major studios and production companies.

Legacy Movie Magic Budgeting will be used for the budgeting assignment. This will be done in class and you will be able to use the software installed on the class computers.

REQUIRED READING

The required reading is a necessary reference for the course work. It will be closely tied to the course content and will cover in great detail the subjects we address in class. The book is available at the USC Bookstore and online at Amazon.

[Planning the Low-Budget Film, 2nd edition](#) by Robert Latham Brown. Please be sure that you get the 2nd Edition.

OPTIONAL READING

The optional reading listed comes with my highest recommendation and will prove useful for anyone wanting to deepen his or her understanding of production and production planning. It is not necessary for this course.

[The Producer's Business Handbook, 4th edition](#) by John J. Lee, Jr. and Anne Marie Gillen

[The Complete Film Production Handbook, 4th edition](#) by Eve Light Honthaner

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

Grades will be awarded based on six assignments and a final exam. The due dates of the projects are specified in the Course Outline. I will grade them based on rubrics with which you will be provided. Grades will be returned within one week of the due date.

Assignment	% Of Grade
LINED SCRIPT	
Each student will line a one-hour episodic television script indicating shooting sequences, their length, and essential elements.	15%
BREAKDOWN SHEETS	
Each student will create a set of breakdown sheets from the lined script using Movie Magic Scheduling.	10%
SCHEDULED PRODUCTION BOARD	
Each student will create a production schedule for the script showing the order in which the sequences will be shot, using Movie Magic Scheduling and good scheduling practices.	20%

Assignment	% Of Grade
SHORT ESSAY After reviewing video clips and background material, each student will write a 1-page essay analyzing two specific production accidents.	10
DAY-OUT-OF-DAYS Using the DOOD generated by Movie Magic Scheduling and an Excel spreadsheet which will be provided, each student will devise a plan to meet SAG's Diversity in Casting requirements.	10%
BUDGET The class will taken through the process of setting up and building a film budget. Each student will select four accounts to budget, one from each of the production levels.	20%
FINAL EXAM The exam will be drawn from the assigned reading, lectures, and in-class work.	15%
TOTAL	100%

GRADING SCALE

Assignment grades and course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-69
A-	90-94	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62
B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	59 and below

All assignments will be submitted through Blackboard.

COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to attend each class. If you must miss a session, please let me know so that we can work out an accommodation for you.

Most assignments will be done asynchronously outside of class. Setting up the Movie Magic Scheduling and Budgeting files will be done in the classroom. The final exam is currently planned to be administered in the classroom as well.

ZOOM SYNCHRONOUS SESSIONS

If the occasion should arise requiring the class to be moved online, you will be given advanced notice and supplied with a Zoom link.

As class dynamics are substantially compromised without the ability for us all to see each other, it is expected that students will have their cameras on during the Zoom sessions. If there are privacy concerns, the Zoom software can substitute a virtual background behind your image. If it is not possible to have your camera on during the sessions due to bandwidth issues, please contact me so that I can accommodate you.

ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING

Zoom class sessions (if any) will be recorded and made available for asynchronous viewing until end of the grading period in December.

OFFICE HOURS

Office Hours will be by appointment on Zoom so that I can be more flexible to make the best use of time for all of us. Please don't hesitate to request a session if you feel it would be helpful. These sessions can be recorded at the student's request. When requesting an appointment, please indicate the desired possible times in U.S. Pacific time. I am also available anytime by email. My email address is listed on the front of this syllabus. I will always endeavor to answer your email as soon as I possibly can.

GRADING TIME LINE

Graded work will typically be returned 1 week after it is submitted.

LATE WORK

Each of the steps in a production is based on the previous steps. Therefore is important to keep up with the assignments. If you are having difficulty in completing the work, please contact me. Late assignments will be subject to a 5 point grade reduction.

COURSE SCHEDULE: A WEEKLY BREAKDOWN

	Topics	Readings/Preparations	Assignment Due
<i>Week 1</i> <i>Aug 25</i>	Intro to Production Planning. The <i>shooting sequence</i> . The Script. Lesson Objective: Students will be able to divide a script into shooting sequences.	♦ View <i>1917</i> video (link is in Blackboard, Week 1 Module)	
<i>Week 2</i> <i>Sep 1</i>	Production Problems. Lining the script. Adobe Reader. Lesson Obj: Students will be able to line a script.	♦ Read and visualize the script. ♦ Read Brown, chapters 3 & 5.	
<i>Week 3</i> <i>Sep 8</i>	What's not in the script. <i>Movie Magic Scheduling</i> . Lesson Obj: Students will set up their scheduling files.	♦ Read Brown, chapter 4. ♦ View <i>Life Of A 1st AD On A Movie Set</i> by Joe Bohn. ♦ Download and install <i>MM Scheduling</i> .	Lined script.
<i>Week 4</i> <i>Sep 15</i>	MM Scheduling (continued). The breakdown sheet. Lesson Obj: Students will be able to create breakdown sheets for all shooting sequences.	♦ Brown, chapter 6. ♦ View the Movie Magic Training video if you wish.	
<i>Week 5</i> <i>Sep 22</i>	Scheduling the board. Lesson Obj: Students will be able to create an efficient shooting schedule..	♦ Brown, chapter 7.	MMS file with completed breakdown sheets (Week 4 assignment).

	Topics	Readings/Preparations	Assignment Due
<i>Week 6</i> <i>Sep 29</i>	Location vs. Stage work. Lesson Obj: Students will know the advantages and drawbacks of each.	♦ Brown, chapter 8. ♦ Think about which sets you would shoot on location and which on stage.	
<i>Week 7</i> <i>Oct 6</i>	Management & ethics. Review scheduling. Shooting schedules. Day out of days. Lesson Obj: Students will know the best methods of film set management.	♦ Brown, chapter 9, 10, 11.	Scheduled production boards.
<i>Week 8</i> <i>Oct 13</i>	SAG-AFTRA diversity in casting DOOD. Introduce <i>Movie Magic Budgeting</i> . Lesson Obj: Students will be able to use the DOOD to determine if they can meet the diversity in casting requirements.	♦ Brown, chapters 12, 13, 14. .	Week 7 Assignment: 1-page essay.
<i>Week 9</i> <i>Oct 20</i>	<i>Movie Magic Budgeting</i> . Above-the-line accounts. Lesson Obj: Students will set up their budgeting files and begin the ATL accounts.	♦ Brown, chapter 15	Completed DOOD.
<i>Week 10</i> <i>Oct 27</i>	<i>Movie Magic Budgeting</i> . Shooting Period part I. Lesson Obj: Students will be able to fill in shooting period accounts.	♦ Brown, chapter 16, pp 181-230	
<i>Week 11</i> <i>Nov 3</i>	<i>Movie Magic Budgeting</i> . Shooting Period part 2.	♦ Brown, chapter 16, pp. 231-270	
<i>Week 12</i> <i>Nov 10</i>	<i>Movie Magic Budgeting</i> . Post Production Lesson Obj: Students will be able to fill in post production accounts.	♦ Brown, chapter 17 & 18.	
<i>Week 13</i> <i>Nov 17</i>	<i>Movie Magic Budgeting</i> . General Expense (Other). Lesson Obj: Students will be able to fill in general expense accounts.		Week 9 Budget Assignment.
<i>Nov 24</i>	Thanksgiving Holiday		

	Topics	Readings/Preparations	Assignment Due
<i>Week 14 Dec 1</i>	Course review.		
<i>Final Dec 8</i>	Final Exam		The final exam will be given in the classroom via Blackboard.

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, 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 college 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:

Counseling and Mental Health — (213) 740-9355 — 24/7 on call
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
<https://policy.usc.edu/student-health-leave-absence/>

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.

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) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours — 24/7 on call
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, 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.symplicity.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

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 Campus Support and Intervention — (213) 821-4710
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

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.

Office of the Ombuds — (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)
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.

