SCOR503A

Advanced Scoring for Motion Pictures and Television

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classroom: SWT, Tuesdays 10:00-12:00 a.m.
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Course Description:

The curriculum is designed to explore a myriad of composition techniques that are invaluable in the film scoring 'deadline' oriented work environment. It is constructed to allow the student maximum "hands-on" experience. It will examine in detail the many different musical styles that a working film composer may be called upon to produce. The student will study and then produce a series of music cues in the style of classic Warner Bros and Disney animation, and contemporary film and television scoring. They will have an opportunity to record, with a live orchestra, an original composition of their own.

In addition, other industry issues will be addressed. Including topics such as: sound-a-likes, temp tracks, pre-records, ghost-writing, session prep and the work flow, and career management. Each student shall have numerous opportunities to present their work, in class, for evaluation by the instructor and other class members.

Requirements, Exams and Grading Information:

Student evaluation in SCOR503A will consist of a variety of factors and includes: take home assignments, in-class participation and recording session performance. No exams or tests are given.

Grading is divided into four components and evaluated upon the following criteria:

1. Composition - 8 assigned cues (75%)
    > Proper use of specific compositional tools discussed.
    > *The ability to follow the given instructions* and the overall effectiveness
    > of the composed cue within the assigned 'style' (your first jobs will require this).
    > On time completion of a professionally competent and sounding work.

2. Class Participation (10%)
    > Regular and engaged classroom attendance.
    > An ability to gracefully accept criticism of ones work.
    > A willingness to offer helpful, insightful and meaningful critique of others.
    > Professional presentation of the assigned report.

3. Class Report (10%)
    > A professional looking visual/audio presentation (using something such as Powerpoint) that is a 6 to 8 minute musical analysis of a television series selected by the instructor. Include a brief biography/credits on the composer and analysis of music cues from several scenes.

4.   Final Project (5%)

Additional Policies: Professional responsibility, common courtesy, and respect for one's instructor, guest speakers, and fellow students require that all class members attend all sessions, arriving in time to be seated at their desk or workstation at the scheduled start time. Students who fail to honor these protocols will receive reduced grades in class participation.

Regular and engaged attendance is mandatory. The designed curriculum relies extensively on in- class presentation, student involvement and instructor critique. As there is no text book, being present and taking detailed notes is of paramount importance. Students should approach the instructor ahead of time to discuss any anticipated class absence that is due to a conflicting schedule involving another Scoring program element.

Recommended class materials:
1. Richard Bellis "The Emerging Film Composer" (required)
2. Karlin/Wright "On The Track"
3. Music sketch and score paper

Week 1

Introduce class format, focus, schedule and requirements. How to handle your student films.
Lecture: Composition Tools.1
"How To Begin": methods for starting the composing process. Harmony as the driver of drama.

Assignment 1: Prepare a 4-8 bar harmonic progression reflecting one of the following dramatic categories: joyful, triumphant, mysterious, horrific or sad. Using this material as a starting point, compose and sequence for 4-5 part string section and piano. Make an audio file and upload to the instructor's teacher folder on the programs server. Title it as, "Your first name/category".

Assignment 2: Select 2 film cues that you believe are representative of a 'great' melody. Prepare a lead sheet of each (following the format provided). Make a pdf copy and email to the instructor by next class meeting.

Week 2

Present, in class, your harmony assignment. Instructor will critique and classmates will guess the emotion.

Lecture: Composing in a specific style

The techniques of composition utilized in the music of the classic Warner Bros. style of animation

Assignment: Compose and sequence a 1:00-1:30 WBros. style cue. Sync with picture and place on server. Due next week.

Week 3

Present WBros. cues for critique by instructor. Can he hire you?

Lecture: Composition Tools.2
Creative ideas for composing loops. The concept of 'bricks' in composition. A few ways to write quicker: larger units, ostinatos, copy and paste.

Assignment: Compose a :45-1:00 cue utilizing todays techniques that reflects one of the following emotions: Worrying, Confused, Irate, or Relaxed. Place on server labeled, "Your first name/category". Due next week.

Week 4

Present, in class, your cue. Instructor will critique and classmates will guess the emotion.

Lecture: Composition Tools.3

Melodic writing. What makes a great melody. Examining the selected "great" melodies of the students and comparing them to the instructors selections.

Assignment: Select a video from the server and compose a cue that's 1:00-1:30 in length that features a strong and memorable melody. Choose an ensemble that is appropriate. Sync with picture and place on server. Due next week.

Week 5

Present your melody cue for critique by instructor.

Lecture: Composing in a specific style

The techniques of composition for a Disney animated production.

Assignment: Prepare a 1:00-1:30 cue in the Disney style. Due next week.

Week 6

Present your Disney cue for critique by instructor.

Assignment: none

Week 7

Lecture: Hybrid scores
How to write for ensembles utilizing a combination of samples and live players (not just over dubbing soloist). Turning 12 players into 52. Examine scores to several series.
Composition Tools.4   How to handle a static or 'drone' tone.

Assignment: Select a scene and set up your template. Compose and sequence a 1:09 'drone' cue. Be creative, but FAST. Time yourself from the moment you start composing and sequencing.

Week 8

Present 'drone' cue. (Quickest time wins a fabulous prize).

Lecture: Composition Tools.5   12-tone technique. Where it works and how.

Assignment: Select a scene and set up your template. Compose and sequence a 1:03 12-tone cue. Be creative, but FAST. Time yourself from the moment you start composing and sequencing.

Week 9

Present 12-tone cue. (Quickest time wins another fabulous prize).
Lecture: On creating 'sound-a-likes', handling temp tracks. copyright concerns and pre-records.

Assignment: Produce a piano arrangement of each assigned title (see additional handout for specific instructions). Due next week.

Week 10

Present and critique assigned 'sound-a-like' cues.

Lecture: Compositional Tools.6 Structure and Form. Analyze 3 cues.

Discuss upcoming live session. Roles of those involved.

Assignment: Select a 1:30-2:00 scene to score for our live session. Place on the server. You will 'spot' this with the instructor next week. (Do not compose it yet).

Week 11

'Spot' your scene with instructor. Class will divide into two groups with assigned meeting times.

Assignment: Compose and sequence cue. Due next week.

Week 12

Instructor to critique mock-up versions.

Lecture: Compositional Tools.7   "Schmidty's Helpful and Inventive Tricks"

Examining the use of non-triadic harmony, floating tonality, bass ostinato lines, changing meters, using small ensembles and copy & paste idea.
Assignment: Make any changes to your cue suggested by the instructor. Orchestrate and prepare parts. Select your conductor.

Week 13

View student cues from recording session.

Discuss how session ran. What worked and what didn't.

 Assignment: none

Week 14

Lecture: "Ghostwriting", it's perils and pitfalls. Union rules and other ways. Discuss work-flow and how to organize for a large session. Various orchestration fees and payments.
Assignment: none

Week 15

Review semester material. Discuss the Bellis' book.what we have learned this semester and how
Assignment: Prepare your final project, a student film of your choice. Place on server by date of final exam.

Finals Week

Submission of the final project during the finals time (Place on the server).
For the date and time of the final for this class, consult the USC *Schedule of Classes* at classes.usc.edu/.

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.

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.

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