THTR 467: Going Viral: Performance for New Media
Section: 63075
Units: 2.0
Fall 2021 / Mondays, Wednesdays from 2pm-3:50pm
Location: MCC 107

Instructor: RODNEY TO
Office:
Office Hours: *Hours available upon request*
Contact Info: rodneyto@usc.edu / (917) 445-1040 m.*
* If non-emergency, please text before calling.

Course Description

A writing, performance, & development course where students will gain fundamental understanding of all areas of self-created film & digital content, & its various mediums & platforms.

Course Objectives

The current global climate is fully saturated itself in the Digital Age - there is no turning back. Consequently, the Entertainment Industry necessitates that it, too, entrench itself in digital/web technology & content. It is no longer possible to remain relevant, competitive, or creative without a thorough foothold on Digital Media and self-generated projects. Through research, video exercises, writing exercises, analysis, and performance assignments, students will gain fundamental & practical knowledge in all areas of content creation in order to properly develop their own content.

Learning Objectives

By the end of your time with me, you should be able to:
- Understand all components of creating a digital imprint through self-generated projects such as vlogs, digital shorts, podcasts, etc. Complete individual video assignments using student's own digital equipment (camera, smartphone, computer, etc.) and analyze trends in student's work which will define the student's creative identity.
- Identify - and intelligently speak on - how creating one's own work sets the artist up for success by controlling one's creative expression.
- Identify all aspects of a professional 'pitch'. Create a 'one sheet' document, determine essential visuals, and most importantly, clearly articulate one's work in a public form. Use basic public speaking techniques to guide the spoken pitch and effectively sell the project.
- Identify and understand all major components of collaboration in self-generated content by working with classmates to simulate real-life collaboration. Project manage by combining into groups and assign positions based on need, skill set, and support.
- Present accessible, self-generated digital content (videos, podcasts, social media clips, etc.) that is consistent with the student's personal creative vision, identity and skillset as examined throughout the semester.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required
Students will need internet access as well as access to a working digital camera. Mobile phones or tablets are desirable for easy mobility and access. Basic editing software(ie iMovie, Premiere, Movie Maker, etc.), access to basic sound and lighting equipment may also be useful, but *not* required.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials
Since much of what we will be doing will be digital-based, coursework and assigned reading will be conferred throughout the semester.

Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments
==***SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS NEEDED. WILL NOTIFY OF ALL CHANGES***==
Since the work in this class can be both empirical and subjective, grading will focus on quantitative and qualitative aspects of the curriculum and assignments: proficiency of course concepts, critical thinking, assignments, class participation, collaboration, deadlines, attendance, and of course, the final project.

Grading Breakdown:
- Weekly (video or written) assignments: **60pts*****
- Final video project: **25pts**
- Class participation: **15pts †** (*see Participation Breakdown and Further Participation Notes below*)

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Total: 100 points

Grading Scale:
A work of excellent quality / **A = 100-95, A- = 94-90**
B work of good quality / **B+ = 89-87, B = 86-83, B- = 82-80**
C work of average quality / **C+ = 79-77, C = 76-73, C- = 72-70**
D work of below average quality / **D+ = 69-67, D = 66-63, D- = 62-60**
F work of poor, inadequate quality / **F = 59 and below**

Further Grading Notes:
- When the GPA falls between two grades, the final grade will be weighted toward the positive end of the scale for students with excellent in-class participation. Grades will be weighted towards the negative end of the scale for those with poor in-class participation.
- I am available to discuss work and progress at anytime. I encourage you to open a dialogue with me at any point during the semester.

† *Participation Breakdown:*
† 15pts EXCELLENT participation. Demonstrates active, everyday engagement. Shows willingness & enthusiasm in discussions, class activity, and collaborations
† 12pts GOOD participation. Frequent active participation. Engaged, willing semi-regular participation in discussions, class activity, and collaborations
† 9pts AVERAGE participation. Semi-regular, but active participation in discussions, class activity, and collaborations
†6pts BELOW AVERAGE participation. Infrequent participation. Predominately passive and rarely demonstrates willingness to contribute to discussions, class activity, and collaborations
† 3pt POOR/INSUFFICIENT participation. Does not participate willingly. Extremely passive and lacks enthusiasm. Poor, if any, contribution to discussions, class activity, and collaborations

Further Participation Notes:
If it were up to me, I would base your entire grade on how you participate in class. Alas, I cannot. That said, I can't emphasize enough how important participation is in this class and all aspects in the life of professional actor/artist. You will (also) learn from your cohort - from sitting and watching, to contributing to discussions - in a much more nuanced and valuable way than any empirical grade can show. Engaging with and being available to your fellow actors/cohort is not only respectful, but ***essential*** work. ***No absences or late arrivals will be allowed.*** Participation is weighted at no more than 15% as per University Guidelines. But again, if it were up to me, this would be the entire grade. Take heed.

Assignment Submission Policy
Most of the required assignments will be emailed to the instructor, posted on Blackboard or uploaded to Google Drive - provided free for all enrolled students - with the link emailed to the instructor.

Late Submission Policy
Assignments are expected to be completed by the due date & time. Late assignments will NOT BE ACCEPTED. I reserve the right to enforce this policiy, however, if I do accept a late assignment for whatever reason, grades will be deducted appropriately. I am going to treat you like mature, professionals-in-training. I expect a lot from you, as you should expect from yourselves.

USC Technology Support Links
Zoom information for students
Blackboard help for students
Software available to USC Campus

RODNEY'S CLASS POLICY REGARDING COVID AND SAFETY

- ALL STUDENTS WILL WEAR A KN95 MASK AT ALL TIMES FROM THE MOMENT YOU WALK INTO MY CLASS, TO THE MOMENT YOU LEAVE IT. I (RODNEY) WILL WEAR ONE AS WELL.
- I reserve the right to enforce this policy and either not allow you in class or dismiss you during class. Such dismissals will count as absences.
- We must NOT take wearing a mask lightly. It must be fitted over your nose and mouth. This is non-negotiable. If for any reason you do not agree or feel indifferent or anticipate not wanting to wear a mask at some point or feel like you 'won't be able to act' with a mask on your face, MY CLASS SECTION IS NOT THE CLASS FOR YOU.
- Students and faculty (including myself) have household members who are immunocompromised and it's imperative that we not put them at any more risk than necessary.
- NO EATING OR DRINKING IN CLASS because in order to do so, you would have to remove your mask. So if you even want to sip water, step outside of the building. Again, no excuses.
- Once again, if you feel like you will not be ok with my policies, that is your right, however, my class section is not for you.

NOTE: I have been working professionally (as an actor) and teaching online while using face masks for the past year and a half. I am aware of its limitations, but I TRULY believe we can focus on what works in this vein and become better artists. If you don't agree, one last time, you are free to choose another class.

NETIQUETTE POLICY (KEEPING ON SYLLABUS IN THE EVENT WE HAVE TO PIVOT ONLINE)
The online learning modality for the Arts & Entertainment Industry is somewhat of a new frontier for everyone. We are discovering how to best navigate these newer practices together. While certainly not ideal, let's embrace this as an opportunity.

- I will be expecting that you do your best to treat this as a traditional classroom. Do your best to find a quiet space in your home where you can sit up comfortably and focus with little-to-no distractions or disturbances. Ideally, you have a little bit of room to move around as well. No outdoor spots unless you discuss it with me first. I am acutely aware (and sensitive to the fact) that everyone's circumstances vary, so if you're unable to find a reasonable working spot for class, please contact me privately to discuss.

- Even though we will be online and in your homes this semester, students must wear proper rehearsal clothes - loose fitting, comfortable clothing that you are ok moving around in and (possibly) getting a little dirty - no pajamas. Be professional, mature, and respectful: wear nothing revealing or distasteful.

- Please log-on from a desktop (or laptop) if possible. Oftentimes, I find when students log-on from their phone or tablet, the smaller nature of these devices lends itself to the student being too casual, less alert and easily distracted.

- Remember safety at all times. Do NOT drive while in class. Yes, I've seen it all. You will be logged- off and marked with an unexcused absence if you attempt to take class while driving or exercising or shopping or cleaning or babysitting - you get the idea.

- No 'other' technology during class. Phones must be on silent and put away. Unless I invite you to do so, phones may only be taken out during breaks. I am aware when you are reading your phones unnecessarily - trust me.

- Except for water, no food or drinks are allowed in class.

- No pets or any other distractions such as toys, video games, etc.

- Do not share personal class dealings and discoveries outside of class. We will be working hard to establish trust with each other. Respect is paramount. Communicate freely, honestly, and frequently, but always be respectful, mindful, mature.

Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment
USC policy prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment:

> *SCampus Section 11.12(B)*
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> *Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (SeeSection C.1 Class Notes Policy).*

Course evaluation
Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students' experience in the class. You should expect to receive an email update once the system has launched to provide your feedback on this course. In addition, you are always welcome to connect with with me to offer any feedback on the course.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown
==***THIS *WILL* CHANGE AS NEEDED. WILL NOTIFY OF ALL CHANGES***==

	Topics/Daily Activities	Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1 8/23	Intro to course. "Intro to Digital Media" / Why?	Begin personal intro/ story on platform	
8/25	Introduction to Storytelling & Theme	Continue personal intro/ story w/ personal vid. 2 min of your life. Focus on 'theme'.	DUE Sat, 8/28 by 12NOON! Upload to Google Drive and email Rodney link.
Week 2 8/30	Continue Storytelling/ Specificity	Facts questionnaire vid (3 facts / 3 opinions)	Due 8/work 30 by 12midnight THAT NIGHT! Upload to Google Drive and email link to Rodney.
9/1	Creativity in Media	2min "Passion" vid	DUE Sat, 9/4 by 12NOON! Upload to Google Drive and email Rodney link.
Week 3 9/6	LABOR	DAY	NO CLASS
9/8	Continue on Specificity/ Demonstration videos	1-2min demonstration video	Due Sat, 9/11 by 12NOON! Upload to Google Drive and email link to Rodney.
Week 4 9/13	Styles: Testimonial/ Interview	3min Classmate Interview Vid	Due by SAT, 9/18 at 12 NOON! Upload to Google Drive and email link to Rodney
9/15	NO	CLASS	*EDI / COMMUNITY DAY: SEPT 15 See '*' below!*

	Topics/Daily Activities	Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 5 9/20	Intro to podcast	Pair up: Brainstorm podcast idea	
9/22	Pitch podcast idea to class	Record podcasts	
Week 6 9/27	Continue podcast	Continue recording podcast	Podcasts due 9/28
9/29	Intro to formal script writing (formatting, beats, etc.)	Come up with sketch ideas (3)	
Week 7 10/4	Continue Script Writing/Pitch lab for sketch ideas	Write sketch script	Bring sketch in to class on 10/6
10/6	Table read of scripts w/ notes	Revise sketch scripts	Final scripts to Rodney; DUE by 12NOON on SATURDAY, 9/25!
Week 8 10/11	Intro to Collabs/Lab w/ partners, pair to pitch	Partner up and brainstorm	Verbal pitches presented in class that day.
10/13	Collabs (cont'd)	Shoot partner project #1	Collab Project #1 due 12NOON on SUNDAY, 10/17!
Week 9 10/18	Begin FINAL PROJECT discussion.	Research final project/ prepare verbal and written pitch	
10/20	LAB: continue FINAL PROJECT pitches	Begin pre-production on FINAL PROJECTS	

	Topics/Daily Activities	Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 10 10/25 10/27	ASSIGNED CHECK-INS w/ Rodney GROUP A ASSIGNED GROUP CHECK-INS w/ Rodney GROUP B	Continue pre-production on FINAL PROJECTS.	Shooting schedule, budget, and prep documents must be presented by the end of this week!
Week 11 11/1 11/3	Acting in one's own projects/Acting on camera Acting in one's own projects/Acting on camera		
Week 12 11/8 11/10	Acting in one's own projects/Acting on camera Acting in one's own projects/Acting on camera		
Week 13 11/15 11/17	ASSIGNED CHECK-INS w/ Rodney GROUP A ASSIGNED GROUP CHECK-INS w/ Rodney GROUP B	Continue work on FINAL PROJECTS	* By this week you should be in the final stages of shooting your project!
Week 14 11/22 11//24	GUEST LECTURER, Content Creator *TBA* NO CLASS	Continue work on FINAL PROJECTS THANKSGIVING	* You want to be in the can before break, so you can be editing the last week before the final presentation! BREAK

	Topics/Daily Activities	Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 15 11/29 12/1	FINAL PROJECT FINAL CHECK-INS LAST CLASS!!!		FINAL PROJECTS DUE TO RODNEY *TBA*

Final Projects Screening: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2pm to 4pm.

* EDI @SDA: Professional Development/Mandatory EDI Training

Wednesday, September 15, 2021

As part of our EDI initiatives and call to action, some workshops will be offered to faculty and staff and to students. Competencies that will be included: Anti-Racism (Faculty/Staff) and Equity Mindedness (Faculty/Staff), and then Theater Intimacy & Building Cultures of Consent (Students, Faculty/Staff). More details will follow. **NOTE: All SDA classes will be cancelled to support involvement in this effort.**

SDA PRODUCTIONS, ISPS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
 SDA productions, ISPs and Extracurricular Activities* will not excuse you from any class work.   There will be no exceptions made for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, homework or lack of class participation resulting from your involvement in any of the above.   Your grade will reflect your work in this class, independent from work in any other class or activity.

*Activities that have been officially sanctioned by the larger university (such as marching band, song girls, or varsity sports) are exempt. You must submit official documentation to your professor regarding your participation in an event prior to your absence.

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, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Statement for Students with Disabilities
Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for DSP and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 814-4618 (Vidoe Phone), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university's site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

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Health and Participation in Class
You are expected to complete your Trojan Check screener daily and, as your instructor, I may ask you to show your daily screening in class. Your health and safety, and the health and safety of your peers, are my top priorities. If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, or if you discover that you have been in close contact with others who have symptoms or who have tested positive, you must follow the instructions on Trojan Check. My hope is that if you are feeling ill or if you have been exposed to someone with the virus, you will stay home to protect others. I will ensure that you can continue to participate in class remotely so that your education is not disrupted.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, USC requires that face coverings (masks) be worn indoors including in classrooms. Face coverings must cover your nose and mouth and be worn throughout the class session. A mask with a valve is not considered an adequate face covering and should not be used, as it can expel exhaled air, increasing the risk to others. Eating or drinking during class is prohibited because of the risk posed by removing your mask for these activities. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in your being asked to leave the classroom immediately. Requests for accommodations related to the face covering and eating/drinking policies should be directed to the Office for Student Accessibility Services (https://osas.usc.edu/).

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SDA Student Support & Reporting Form:
To facilitate a supportive environment of accountability, SDA has created an internal system of reporting for students to address issues/concerns and to offer feedback or suggestions for improvement. This mechanism provides a pathway for reporting and offering feedback without fear of retaliation or judgment. Any submission filed through this form will be reviewed and processed accordingly through SDA Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. To file a report, please visit: http://bit.ly/sdasupport
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Support Systems:
Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

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) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call

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.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

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

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.