



# USC

SPRING, 2022

## CTPR: 533 - DIRECTING TECHNIQUES

**Professor:** Katy Garretson

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**Office Hours:** *By Appointment Only - contact Katy directly to schedule. I'll provide my cell phone# once the class roster is finalized. I'm cool meeting in person before my evening classes (between 4pm & 5:30pm or so) on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays.*

**Wednesdays:** 7:00pm- 10:30pm

**Units:** 2

**Class Location:** SCE Stage 2 unless otherwise noted.

**Instruction Mode:** Lecture & Participation & Filmmaking!

**Grading Option:** Letter

**Student Assistant:** Sid Dalvi (also a former 533 student)

**SA Contact Info:** [dalvis@usc.edu](mailto:dalvis@usc.edu)

**Overall USC SCA Degree Goal:** *"To develop the student's ability to express original ideas on film or video and to instill a thorough understanding of the technical and aesthetic aspects of motion pictures and television. Courses in production provide individual and group filmmaking experiences and the opportunity to learn all aspects of filmmaking in a collaborative environment."*

**533 Class Philosophy:** This is a second semester of Intermediate Directing, intended to prepare you for your life in showbiz after graduation. The goal for this interactive course is for you to further your ability to develop your own style and communicate your vision, as well as to enhance your leadership skills on set and feel more comfortable in "the real showbiz world."

**NOTE: THINGS HAPPEN. THIS SYLLABUS IS ALWAYS TENTATIVE.**

## What is Directing?

A question with many answers, none of them necessarily wrong, but for our general purposes, directing is story interpretation and execution. The script provides the story. The director tells that story as they want it to be told, how they interpret the script and want it to be viewed by an audience – keeping in mind who their audiences are for their various projects. This is why the *directors* own the “A FILM BY” credit.

Directing includes recognizing and delivering the overall story/beats, character arcs, dialogue and behaviors that reveal character and plot, and a *complete visual representation* of the story told in the script – this is **The Director’s Vision**.

*We will discuss the above more in class.*

*This course will be both hands-on and discussion oriented.*

Using examples from various productions, we will discuss overall *style* and the elements that go into making it – basic coverage of characters versus making a film “your own” through camera shots and direction of actors, among other elements. We will break down existing film scenes as well as those directed by students – what worked well, what perhaps did not.

Students will get practical experience directing in multiple genres and styles of filmmaking. There will be THREE short films made.

We will discuss and enhance the students’ interaction with both cast and crew. While it’s The Director’s Vision, it takes a large team to carry out that vision. The Director provides their team of professionals with the goals – for the overall movie as well as each individual scene – every director must be an effective leader and communicator with both actors and crew to achieve those goals.

By the end of the class, students will have a better understanding of how to communicate with and direct actors/crew, how to stage a scene, coverage *needed*, and where to place cameras. We will discuss and deliver various ways the camera can help tell the story, and how it is used (in conjunction with other elements) to create a distinct style.

We will discuss shooting with two cameras simultaneously, as rarely will a professional film shoot use only one camera at a time. Students will also have a better understanding of the teamwork involved in carrying out their Director’s Vision, and will learn general industry practices, a little about agents/managers, and anything the students wish to discuss about the business called SHOW.

*A high level of enthusiasm and participation is expected of every student in this class. Making movies can be challenging, hard work, but if it’s your passion it should also be fun. So...let’s have fun!*

**RECOMMENDED PODCASTS:** The Rewatchables, The Big Picture, Hollywood Breakdown, The Recappables, The Business with Kim Masters, The Watch, The Prestige TV Pod, NPR's Pop Culture Happy Hour, Vanity Fair's Still Watching...*let me know if you know any good ones!*

**RECOMMENDED BOOKS:** Definitely the three-volume set **MASTER SHOTS**, by Christopher Kenworthy (*highly recommend you get these – on Amazon*). A good book on body language that gives Directors great references for directing actors is **THE DEFINITIVE BOOK OF BODY LANGUAGE**, by Allan and Barbara Pease (it's a super fun read). Any book on storytelling...

**RECOMMENDED APPS:** DEADLINE, VARIETY, RUN PEE (some movies are long). I also will provide a list of great production apps & websites in our Google Drive.

### **CLASS ONE – INTRO & OVERVIEW**

Meet & Greet - student intros

Katy's Story. Disclaimers & Expectations

Review of Syllabus

Screen scenes & assign for Project #1

### **CLASS TWO – GENRES & SHOTS**

Discuss and/or screen clips of various GENRES

Discuss and show moving masters, coverage

Discuss single versus multi-cam shooting

Discuss directing an episode of TV from agent call to air

### **CLASS THREE – FIRST PROJECT SCREENINGS**

### **CLASS FOUR – “BREAKING DOWN & SHOOTING THE SCRIPT” – PT 1**

In-class shooting exercises

### **CLASS FIVE – “BREAKING DOWN & SHOOTING THE SCRIPT” – PART 2**

In-class shooting exercises

### **CLASS SIX – “BREAKING DOWN & SHOOTING THE SCRIPT” - PT 3**

In-class shooting exercises

### **CLASS SEVEN –“BREAKING DOWN & SHOOTING THE SCRIPT” - PT 4**

In-class shooting exercises

### **CLASS EIGHT – PROJECT 2 SCREENINGS**

### **CLASS NINE – “BREAKING DOWN & SHOOTING THE SCRIPT” - PT 5**

In-class shooting exercises

### **CLASS TEN –“BREAKING DOWN & SHOOTING THE SCRIPT” - PT 6**

In-class shooting exercises

### **CLASS ELEVEN – DIRECTING ACTORS (POTENTIALLY ON ZOOM)**

GUESTS: ACTORS TBD

## **CLASS TWELVE – WORKING WITH YOUR MUSIC COMPOSER AND COMMUNICATING YOUR VISION TO YOUR TEAM**

## **CLASS THIRTEEN – ACTING, DIRECTING ACTORS, VULNERABILITY. THEN – REELS, LOOK BOOKS, PITCH DECKS**

## **CLASS FOURTEEN - EXECS/AGENTS/MANAGERS & GETTING YOUR 1<sup>ST</sup> JOB**

Guests TBD

## **CLASS FIFTEEN - FINAL PROJECTS SCREENINGS**

### **PROJECTS/GRADING**

20% Duplicate Project  
 25% New Genre Project  
 25% Class Participation/Attendance  
 30% Final Project

### **CASTING**

You may cast students from USC School of Dramatic Arts. Students who have done so have found them to be well-trained professionals and reliable collaborators.

As this class has a Production # and/or you are shooting an ultra-low-budget film (which you are), you may cast SAG actors for free. See Sid for info.

Remember, you may use the same actors (or not) for Projects 1, 2, and 3 – the scene duplicates and the two genre variations. Actors may love to switch it up and play different characters/genders/accents with the same words (more or less). Could be three interesting and creative shorts for your reel and theirs!

### **PRODUCTION DIVISION (and Katy's) POLICIES (*You should read these!*)**

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Two unexcused absences will result in a student's grade being lowered by one full letter (i.e. an A becomes a B). A student's grade will be lowered by one full letter for each additional unexcused absence. Two late class arrivals equate to one full absence. *Just come to class and be on time, it'll be fun.*

In order for an absence to be excused, the student must have approval in advance from me for a *verifiable*, good reason. Last-minute emails will never be excused, and the university policy states that NO absences may be excused, although I can occasionally make an exception.

**Late Arrival:** 15 minutes late constitutes an official late arrival. In cases where petty tardiness – i.e. of less than 15 minutes becomes chronic, I will give one “warning”, and then I will assign penalties. SA will keep track of late arrivals.

**\*\*\*Cell phones, tablets, laptops:** Here's my feeling: Cell phone usage during class is disrespectful to me, your fellow classmates, and the professional standards for which you all are striving. Absolutely no video or audio recording of class is permitted. Violation of this policy is subject to a discretionary grade deduction.

**Deadlines** Unexcused missed due dates for projects will always result in a reduction of your final grade. Missing deadlines is regarded as unacceptable in the industry – no studio, network or production company will ever say it's ok to deliver a project late - and so it will be in this class.

If you know ahead of time that unavoidable circumstances will hinder the timely delivery of your work you must notify me immediately, and the circumstances must be verifiable. Only genuine “emergencies” beyond your control will be accepted.

**Unforeseen Circumstances:** If you have life problems or circumstances that might affect your work, please let me know in advance. I want to be understanding and helpful if I can. See me to make arrangements for deadline extensions. We're all human.

***Also, if you are overwhelmed and overstressed and would like to schedule a time out of class to talk it all through with me, please don't hesitate to reach out. I've been there and would like to help.***

**Grading Feedback:** You may ask me for feedback about how you are doing at any time.

**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.

### **Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems Academic Conduct:**

\*\*\*For your first two projects, because you are using existing material, you must put a disclaimer at the head or tail of your scene stating that this is an interpretation of X scene, from X film, originally directed by X. Let's be respectful and safe, because:

**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).

## **CAMERA, G&E EQUIPMENT AND CINEMATOGRAPHER POLICY FOR CTPR 533 – Directing Techniques**

**SID WILL CONFIRM ALL OF THIS**

**RESERVATION PROCEDURE:** Students must contact the SCA Camera Dept. to confirm a camera's availability and verify that the student cinematographer has taken the required classes.

**Reservation Priority Ranking:**

1<sup>st</sup> Priority: CTPR 581 – Thesis Project

2<sup>nd</sup> Priority: CTPR 552 – Advanced Directing

3<sup>rd</sup> Priority: CTPR: 533 – Directing Techniques

4<sup>th</sup> Priority: CTPR 532 – Intermediate Directing

5<sup>th</sup> Priority: CTPR 565 – Making Media for Social Change

6<sup>th</sup> Priority: CTPR 497 – Music Video Production

Priority & Bumping: A higher priority class can bump a lower priority class up to 7 days before a shoot (Example: 2<sup>nd</sup> priority Advanced Directing can bump 3<sup>rd</sup> priority Directing Techniques).

NOTE: A 581 can bump any reservation up to 7 days before a shoot.

**CTPR 552, 533, & 532 Classes:**

1. Students enrolled in 552, 533 and 532 have access to Sony EX3 cameras (if available) or Canon XC15 cameras. These are the standard, officially supported cameras for these classes.
2. If a student in 552, 533 or 532 wants to use the Sony F3 camera (with or without USC lenses) the cinematographer must be currently enrolled in SCA and have completed CTPR 424 or 537.
3. If a student in 552, 533 or 532 wants to use a USC Red Dragon, the cinematographer must be currently enrolled in SCA and have completed CTPR 557 Advanced Cinematography. Only the camera body is offered; all accessories and lenses must be rented from USC approved vendors and paid for by the student enrolled in the class. USC insurance never covers unapproved vendors.
4. The F-65 camera is only available to thesis projects.
5. Directing class students are the only person listed on the production number and are responsible for covering the deductible if equipment is lost or damaged. The deductible is \$2,500 per item per occurrence (Example: if a single event damages a camera and a lens, the deductible payment due is \$5,000). This applies to equipment from USC and rented from USC approved vendors. USC insurance never covers unapproved vendors. Student owned equipment is not covered by the USC insurance policy.
6. USC Insurance only covers approved vendors up to \$200,000. Any additional coverage must be provided by the student enrolled in the directing class.

## 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/ssa](http://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](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)