

CTPR 290 CINEMATIC COMMUNICATION

Fall 2022 Syllabus (Section #)

6 units

Open to School of Cinematic Arts students only.

Class hours:

Location:

Instructor: [name]

Email:

Phone:

Office hours:

SA: [name]

Email:

Phone:

OVERVIEW

In this class students will learn to express their ideas through the language of cinema. The basic principles of cinematography, directing, editing, producing, and sound will be introduced, but the class does not aim to produce polished movies or moviemakers.

When you make narratives, we would like you to focus on the expressive potential of physical behavior; reveal emotions and ideas through what the characters *do* rather than say. Dialogue is used sparingly in 290; we make sound pictures, but not talking pictures.

Students are encouraged to explore alternative and non-traditional forms in Fictional Drama, Documentary, as well as Experimental and New Media.

The instructor and class will critique screened projects. The goal of these sessions is to provide constructive criticism that will improve the student filmmaker's understanding of the process and skills required to produce and consume movies.

By the end of the course, students should display basic competence in conceiving and developing movie ideas and in using the techniques of cinema and digital media to express themselves and communicate to audiences.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Understand and begin to apply the aesthetics of visual and aural communication through cinema.
- Use the creative interaction of image and sound for expressive purposes.
- Design and create cinematic structures.

- Introduce the basics of scriptwriting, producing, directing, cinematography, editing, and sound design, and their interrelationship in the creation of a cinematic project.
- Develop ideas into movies.
- Experiment with personal expression through cinema.
- Show skills in characterization and visual story telling.
- Recognize the potential of a variety of cinematic forms: experimental, documentary, animation, etc.
- Deliver and receive effective critiques of work in progress.
- Establish ethical standards for movie making.
- Show ability to collaborate, to both lead and take direction on a crew.

ASSIGNMENTS, AND PROJECTS

The individual projects will center on various themes that will change each semester.

Individual Exercise

1. One day shooting with available light and non-synch (no dialogue) sound recording.
2. Write, produce, direct, shoot, create sound for, and edit exercise.
3. One week to edit exercise.
4. Maximum length 3 minutes, including credits.

Individual Project 1

1. One weekend shooting with available light and non-synch dialogue sound recording.
2. Write, produce, direct, shoot, create sound for, and edit project.
3. One week to edit project*.
4. Length 3-6 minutes, including credits.

Individual Project 2

1. One weekend shooting with available light or light kit and synch dialogue sound recording.
2. Write, produce, direct, shoot, create sound for, and edit project.
3. One week to edit project*.
4. Length 3-6 minutes, including credits.

Crew Project

1. One class day of shooting on location with lighting, and synch sound recording.
2. Serve in one crew position.
3. One week to edit project*.
4. Maximum length 5 minutes, including credits.

It is the student's obligation to provide their actors with a copy of their work via the most up to date industry standards.

Finals Week

1. Crew Project Final Cut
2. Crew Project Production Notebook

*Projects **MUST** have mastering elements to be considered completed.

Written Assignments

- Completed scripts for Projects 1 & 2.
- Complete a *Personal Critique* and *Crit on Crits* for Exercise , Project 1 and Project 2. Personal Critiques are due at time of screening. Projects will not be screened without them. Crit on Crits are due one week after the project is screened. Forms for both are at the end of the syllabus. All documents are to be TYPED and SUBMITTED IN DUPLICATE.
- Five-minute script for Crew Project
- Vagabond Production Notebook

When doing your fictional projects, cast actors, when you want performances, not roommates, friends, and family—use the casting sources at SPO. Since you must operate camera, **you are not permitted to act in your own movies.**

WEEK-TO-WEEK:

CTPR 290 General Calendar Fall '21						
<u>Wk</u>		Monday or Tuesday	Date	Wednesday or Thursday	Date	Weekend & outside class
1	8/22 or 8/23	Introductions; Syllabus; class goals organization and assignments Form groups Directing: Story telling techniques, character, plot	8/24 or 8/25	Directing: Scriptwriting, script format, beats, three act structure. Character motivation, intent Assign Exercise 3 min. max	8/26- 8/28	
2	8/29 or 8/30	Cinematography: checkout cameras and tripods (3 hrs.)	8/31 or 9/1	Directing: Working with actors Collaboration, blocking	9/2- 9/4	SHOOT EXERCISE A Group shoots Friday 9/4 B Group shoots Saturday 9/5 C Group shoots Sunday 9/6

3	9/5 or 9/6	Labor Day (no Monday class)	9/7 or 9/8	WEDNESDAY CLASS Editing: AVID LAB: Group Tutorial, AVID Instructor (3 hrs)	9/9-9/11	Edit Exercise A Group Project 1 scripts due, Sunday 12PM A PREPS Project 1
		TUESDAY CLASS Editing: AVID LAB: Group Tutorial, AVID Instructor (3 hrs)		THURSDAY CLASS Editing: AVID LAB: Basic AVID Editing, AVID Instructor (3 hrs)		
4	9/12 or 9/13	MONDAY CLASS Editing: AVID LAB: Basic AVID Editing, AVID Instructor (3 hrs) Script Conference Project 1: A Group (concurrent last hour)	9/14 or 9/15	WEDNESDAY CLASS Screen Exercise; A Group & ½ B Group 3 min max	9/16-9/18	B Group Project 1 scripts due, Sunday 12PM A SHOOT'S Project 1 B PREPS Project 1
		TUESDAY CLASS Screen Exercise; A Group & ½ B Group 3 min max Script Conference Project 1: A Group		THURSDAY CLASS Screen Exercise; ½ B Group & C Group 3 min max		
5	9/19 or 9/20	MONDAY CLASS Screen Exercise; ½ B Group & C Group 3 min max Script Conference Project 1: B Group	9/21 or 9/22	Sound: AVID LAB Basic Avid sound editing (3 hrs)	9/23-9/25	C Group Project 1 scripts due, Sunday 12PM B SHOOT'S Project 1 A EDITS Project 1 C PREPS Project 1
		TUESDAY CLASS DIRECTING: TBD				
6	9/26 or 9/27	Editing: Avid Lab Basic Avid editing 2 (3hrs) Script Conference Project 1: C Group (concurrent last hour)	9/28 or 9/29	SCREEN Project 1 A Group Announce script assignments for Crew Projects, due Week 8	9/30-10/2	C SHOOT'S Project 1 B EDITS Project 1
7	10/3 or 10/4	Directing: Blocking, the 180 degree line, use of camera angles in story telling	10/5r 10/6	SCREEN Project 1 B Group Vagabond scout (1hr end of class)	10/7-10/9	Every student writes a five (5) minute script for the Crew Projects. C EDITS Project 1

8	10/10 or 10/11	Monday Class: Directing TBD	10/12 or 10/13	Wednesday Class SCREEN Project 1 C Group	10/14- 10/16	A Group Project 2 scripts due, Sunday 6PM
		Tuesday Class SCREEN Project 1 C Group		Thursday NO CLASS FALL RECESS		A PREPS Project 2
		Crew Project scripts submitted online by 6 PM Monday				Class reads Crew Project scripts online during week and votes for top three by 12PM Sunday
9	10/17 10/18	Directing: (Hopeful producers pitch for crew projects. Define different crew positions. Working as a crew. 2 hrs. Script Conference Project 2: A Group	10/19 or 10/20	Cinematography: Demonstrate light kits, (3hrs) Students bring cameras and tripods to class	10/21- 10/23	First Weekend Light Kit Available for Checkout
						B Group Project 2 scripts due, Sunday 12PM A SHOOTS Project 2 B PREPS Project 2
10	10/24 or 10/25	Hopeful directors pitch to writers and producers of Crew Projects Producers & Directors assigned casting call times Script Conference Project 2: B Group	10/26 or 10/27	Sound: Sound editing and mixing concepts on Avid, in lab (3hrs.)	10/28- 10/30	Crew Project <i>producers/writers/</i> <i>directors</i> work on rewrite
						C Group Project 2 scripts due, Sunday 12PM
						B SHOOTS Project 2 A EDITS Project 2 C PREPS Project 2
11	10/31 or 11/1	In-class casting sessions Script Conference Project 2: C Group	11/2 or 11/3	SCREEN Project 2 A Group	11/4- 11/6	Crew project <i>producers/writers/</i> <i>directors</i> work on rewrite
						C SHOOTS Project 2 B EDITS Project 2
12	11/7 or 11/8	Crew Project Technical Rehearsal Working as a crew w/ students as actors (3hrs)	11/9 or 11/10	SCREEN Project 2 B Group	11/11- 11/13	C EDITS Project 2
						Crew Project producers & directors work on rewrite
13	11/14 or 11/15	Directing and Cinematography: Prep & Rehearse Crew Projects in Vagabond (3 hrs)	11/16 or 11/17	SCREEN Project 2 C Group	11/18- 11/20	Possible voluntary extra rehearsal for Crew Projects (yoyo)
14	11/21 or 11/22	Directing and Cinematography: Shoot Crew Projects in Vagabond (3 hrs) One Day shoot during class time only	11/23 or 11/24	THANKSGIVING: LAB CLOSES WED-FRI	11/25- 11/27	Editors edits first cut Crew Projects

15	11/28 or 11/29	Screen 1 st cut of Crew Projects Production debriefing	11/30 or 12/1	Screen final cut of Crew Projects Wrap party -last class	12/2 Last Day of Classes Final Exam: Vagabond Production Notebooks Due No 12/8
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ETHICS

It is extremely important that you protect your opportunity to learn and not hand it over to someone more experienced. **We expect you to operate your own camera**, plan your own lighting, etc. ***You may not have people from outside the film school or in advanced classes crew or edit for you***; this is the equivalent of asking someone else to write a paper for you, which is a violation of academic integrity. We DO encourage you to help out on each other's shoots by carrying equipment, dressing sets, watching over safety, and so on; it's more effective and more fun!

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Cinema school is intense. One important aid in coping is managing one's time, energy, and health. This translates into: scaling projects to do-able sizes; having back-up ideas, locations, equipment and actors in case of problems (weather, accidents, camera break-downs, etc.); realistically estimating time; protecting time to eat and sleep!

If you are feeling stressed out, please talk with your instructors or SA. USC also provides a Student Counseling service which has helped pull many students through rough spots; you can reach them at (213) 740-7711. Chances are that as the semester progresses you will be amazed at how much you are capable of and how quickly you are becoming a seasoned filmmaker.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

Final grades will be issued only upon completion of all required movies and documents; grades will be calculated on the following percentages:

Individual Exercise	10%
Individual Project 1	20%
Individual Project 2	20%
Crew Project (Final Exam)	25%
Documents*	15%
Class participation	10%

*The 15% of the overall grade for Documents is based solely on the percentage of times the student's scripts, Personal Critiques, and Crit on Crits are delivered at the requested time. Blank or nonsensical documents will be considered late.

"Participation" is defined as constructive in-class activity, including, but not limited to, asking questions, giving constructive opinions on lessons and other students' work.

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Production Division Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Two absences over the entirety of the course will result in a student's grade being lowered by one notch (IE: B becomes B-). A third absence will result in a student's grade being lowered by one more notch, (a B becomes a C+.) Four absences will result in lowering the student's grade by one full letter; (a B becomes a C.) Each subsequent absence will lower the student's grade an additional full letter. Four greater than seven-minute late class arrivals equate to one full absence.

If a student misses class due to an emergency, the student must contact the professor prior to class or contact the Production Office at 213-740-3317.

Turn your phone off in class This applies to **ALL INTERNET-CONNECTED PERSONAL**

ELECTRONIC DEVICES (known or unknown throughout the present or any expanded universe). This is under grades because the success of this class is depends on every student's full presence. Or, as Ram Dass said, "Be *here* now." Students will receive a downgrade of one notch for violation of this policy more than two times.

Recommended Texts

Producing and Directing the Short Film and Video, Second Edition, Peter W. Rea and David K. Irving. Focal Press, 2001

The Bare Bones Camera Course for Film and Video, Tom Schroepel. Allworth Press.

Practical Moviemaking; A Handbook for the Real World, Joe Wallenstein, McFarland & Company

The Avid Media Composer Cookbook, Benjamin Hershleder, Packt Publishing,

<http://tinyurl.com/avidmc-book>

Avid Editing, Sam Kauffman and Ashley Kennedy, Focal Press (with DVD of practice materials)

The Healthy Edit: Creative Editing Techniques for Perfecting Your Movie, John Rosenberg, Focal Press, 2011

Recommended Viewing

DVD: *Visions of Light, The Art of Cinematography*

DVD: *The Cutting Edge: The Magic of Movie Editing*

SAFETY

SAFETY SEMINAR – MANDATORY ATTENDANCE

All students are required to attend the safety seminar in order to obtain a Production Number. The production number covers, actors, equipment, stages, insurance, additional equipment, locations, on and off campus permits, audition rooms and access to SCA facilities for filming (Courtyard, class rooms, bathrooms, stairwells).

Three seminars are offered at the start of every semester.

There are NO MAKE UP seminars.

All students MUST attend the SCA Safety Seminar and present proof of attendance to their instructor before any equipment may be issued.

Students must adhere to the USC School of Cinematic Arts Safety Guidelines as well as professional, ethical and safety standards that will protect everyone on the set. They can be found at [https://scacommunity.usc.edu/resources/physical production/pdf/SafetyRulesHandout.pdf](https://scacommunity.usc.edu/resources/physical%20production/pdf/SafetyRulesHandout.pdf)

The following policies are applicable to CTPR 290.

1. Motor Vehicles

With the exception of POV shots from inside a closed automobile, no moving motor vehicles are to be used in CTPR 290 productions. POV shots do not include using a motor vehicle as a dolly to record staged action.

All work involving non-moving motor vehicles must be done on private/non-commercial property.

- a.If you have scripted a moving automobile shot film you must use a “Poor Man’s Process” technique on private property or on University property. Your faculty will instruct you how to do this.
- b.You may not place a camera or a crew member on a street.
2. Minors (actors under 18 years of age) are not permitted in CTPR 290 projects.
3. No guns, weapons, stunts, fire or water work of any kind may appear in a 290 project.
4. USC Insurance never covers any vehicle of any kind.
5. Jib arms, cranes, scissor lifts, camera cars are not allowed on student projects.
6. No animals are permitted in CTPR 290 projects.
7. The use of motor boats/speed boats is prohibited, as are helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft.
8. Students are authorized to use 290 light kits and practical lights (300 watts and under) only. No lights are to be rented or donated from vendors. Generators are not permitted.
9. The maximum shooting day for USC projects is 12 hours. The minimum turn around

time before the next shooting day is 12 hours.

10. No open-toed shoes on sets, stages, or around any heavy equipment.
11. Students may not go beyond the 50 Mile Studio Zone.

Failure to follow these policies may result in:

1. Confiscation of the student's film.
2. Lowering of the student's grade. Serious violations will result in a grade of F for the project.
3. Suspension of the student's production number.
4. Class failure.
5. Appearance before the SCA Academic Violation Committee of both peers and faculty members.
6. Appearance before the University Judicial Affairs Committee.

All students must consult with the instructor on any shot that might raise a safety issue

Do not store equipment in your car, even in a locked trunk. It is not insured for loss if stolen from a vehicle.

EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

All 290 projects MUST be shot on the camera provided to students by the School of Cinematic Arts and edited in the SCA AVID labs. Use of personal or rented professional cinema equipment is prohibited in 290. No Exceptions.

Projects not shot on SCA camera and/or edited outside of the SCA AVID labs will be graded as an "F" and confiscated by the class instructor.

The School will provide digital cameras, tripods, and editing stations. Students must pay an Insurance Fee of \$250.

Students will provide their own:

1. **Headphones (required) for Avid lab.** We recommend Sony MDR 7506, which are available at the USC *Bookstore*.
2. **2 SD Memory Cards (4GB & 64GB) for the camera** Any of the following ones will work
 - https://www.amazon.com/SanDisk-Extreme-SDSDXVE-064G-GNCIN-Newest-Version/dp/B01LORO7BA/ref=sr_1_9?s=electronics&ie=UTF8&qid=1497534425&sr=1-9&keywords=64gb+class+10+sd+card+sandisk
 - <http://www.bestbuy.com/site/sandisk-ultra-plus-64gb-sdxc-uhs-i-memory-card-black-gray-red/3142571.p?skuId=3142571>
 - http://frys.com/product/8879282?site=sr:SEARCH:MAIN_RSLT_PG
 - Cards will also be stocked at the Bookstore.

3. **One of the following approved External Hard Drives:**

The following is the list of SCA approved and supported hard drives. Any student purchased drive must meet the requirements below.

- Samsung T3 SSD Portable (bus-powered, USB-C**, laptop friendly), approximate retail price \$170 - \$370
- Glyph Black Box Plus (bus-powered, USB-C**, laptop friendly), approximate retail price \$99-\$120
- Glyph Studio (requires AC power), approximate retail price \$149
- G-Tech G-Drive Mobile USB-C (bus-powered, USB-C**, laptop friendly), approximate retail price \$130
- G-Tech G-Drive (requires AC power), approximate retail price \$230 and up
- G-Tech G-Drive Mobile USB-C Bus-powered, USB-C**, laptop friendly (Approximate retail price \$130)

Notes: The hard drives listed are recommended to have a drive speed of 7200rpm. Capacity: 500GB to 2TB. We do not recommend hard drives over 2TB.

**All of the "mobile" drives are USB-C, also known as USB3.1

Check SCA Approved Drives on Supported Hard Drive document at <https://cinema.usc.edu/Laptops/> before purchasing a drive.

A 16GB flash drive is required to back up your project and material in case of drive failure.

The School will provide:

1. Canon XC15 HD Cameras and tripods.

N.B. WITH THE XC15 CAMERA, THIS SETTING IS THE ONLY SETTING THAT WILL ENABLE YOU TO EDIT YOUR FOOTAGE ON AVID:

HD 23.98P 35Mbps MXF

2. Access to lighting kits after the 9th week of classes
3. Limited grip/electric equipment for the crew project.
4. MC AVID Editing System in the AVID Labs

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.

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/ssu

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.

PERSONAL CRITIQUE

Movie-maker: _____

Date: _____

Title: _____

Project No: _____

NOTE: **TWO PRINTED** copies to be turned in with project.

INTENT: (How you want to affect us)

SYNOPSIS: (What we see)

STRENGTHS: (List by priority, one line per item)

WEAKNESSES: (List by priority, one line per item)

WHAT I WANT TO LEARN TO DO BETTER IS:

CRIT ON CRIT

Movie-maker: _____

Date: _____

Title: _____

Project No: _____

(Due ONE WEEK after screening)

THE MAJOR SUGGESTIONS IN THE CRITS WERE:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

I AGREE/DISAGREE WITH THE SUGGESTIONS AS FOLLOWS:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

BASED ON THE SCREENING AND CRITIQUES, IF I COULD CONTINUE TO SHOOT OR EDIT, I WOULD MAKE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Statement of Understanding

I have read and understand the policies and procedures outlined in the CTPR 290 Syllabus, and the Student Production Office Handbook, and have attended the SCA Safety Seminar.

I agree to conference with my instructors before creating any situation that might put my actors, crew, bystanders, or myself in jeopardy.

I am equally committed to protecting and enhancing the reputation of the USC School of Cinematic Arts through my actions.

Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

