# SPRING 2023

## USC School of Cinematic Arts
## John C. Hench Division of Animation + Digital Arts

# 336 Ideation and Pre-Production Lecture Syllabus

**IT Help:** Creative Tech Help Desk | **Contact Info Email:** creativetech@cinema.usc.edu | **Contact Info Phone:** 213-821-4571

**THIS IS AN IN-PERSON CLASS:**

In accordance with university recommendations, all meetings of this class will be held in person. Students who become ill and need to self-isolate will be supported in their efforts to stay current with classwork and assignments, to the extent possible. Please contact Professor Staub, Professor West and and Shengluo Zhang at least one hour prior to class start time if you become ill and need to self-isolate. Do not come to class if you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 or other illnesses. Requests for longer term exemptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and must be supported by a written from the USC Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS).

# CTAN 336 DETAILS

**PROFESSORS:**

JOSH STAUB - JSTAUB@USC.EDU

NIC (NICOLE) WEST - NW_094@USC.EDU

**DAY:**

MONDAY

**TIME:**

6:00PM TO 8:50PM

**LOCATION:**

SCB 102

**COURSE UNITS:**

2 UNITS

**COURSE PREREQUISITES:**

CTAN 301L

**STUDENT ASSISTANT:**

SHENGLUO ZHANG - SHENGLUO@USC.EDU

# CTAN 336
# OVERVIEW AND GOALS

Creating a senior film can be an overwhelming undertaking, it is difficult to know where to start. This course will support you in creating a clear concept for your film and how to successfully approach the creation process. Along the way we will explore different animation techniques, planning tools, pitching skills, approaches to design and story and much more. Each assignment has been strategically created with the creative process, the faculty pitch and your senior film in mind.

**OVERVIEW**  This course is aimed at digging into the important questions and topics before you commit to your senior film. We will incorporate activities and discussions to think deeply about what makes a senior film successful and how best to approach your own senior film. We will explore story and art styles and mediums, we will discuss duration and content. Each week will build on the previous week, with the intention of setting you up for success in your senior film and beyond.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES**  At the completion of the course, you will have a clear idea for your senior film, will know what you will be creating and the process by which you will approach your film. Additionally, you will feel prepared and ready for your senior film pitch.

**PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS**  The format of the course each week will be similar. We will begin each week watching a professionally created and/or student created short film to deconstruct the film thematically, visually and technically. This will be followed by roughly two hours of lecture, assignment debriefs, discussions and other activities. During this time, the expectation is that you will be actively engaged in the discussion and activities. Following this period we will have a short break and transition into you working on your senior film prep. During that time Josh and Nic will be available for individual support and consultation.

# CTAN 336 SCHEDULE

| Class Number | Date | Class Topic(s) | Assignment(s) Due |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1/9 | Intros / Overview of Class / General Discussion of the Purpose of Senior Films<br>Review Three Ideas / Survey / Introduce 1/23 Assignment | Three Ideas for Senior Film Story (Unofficial/Not Graded) |
| 2 | 1/16 | **Martin Luther King Day** | |
| 3 | 1/23 | Production Planning / Scope and Complexity<br>Review Primary Log Line and General Details of Film / Introduce 1/30 Assignment (Logline, Mood Board(s), Expanded Details) | Primary Log Line with Initial Details (duration, 2D/CG, tone, genre, who is the audience, etc.), stretch goal have some visuals |
| 4 | 1/30 | Story Structure / Examples of Beat Boards<br>Review Mood Board and Expanded Details / Introduce 2/6 Assignment (Beat Boards/Story Moments) | Logline, Mood Board(s), Expanded Details (initial details plus approx number of characters, environments, props, etc.) |
| 5 | 2/6 | Story Pipeline, Beatboards, Thumbnails, Storyboards, Animatics<br>Review Beat Boards / Introduce 2/27 Assignment (Thumbnails) | 4-8 Beat Boards/Story Moments |
| 6 | 2/13 | Character Design Pipeline (sketches, expression sheets, turns, 2D vs. 3D assets, costumes, lighting, etc.)<br>Character Design Working Time / Introduce 3/6 Assignment (Character Design) | |
| 7 | 2/20 | **President's Day** | |
| 8 | 2/27 | Students Pitch Thumbnail Storyboards<br>Review Briefs<br>1:1s with Josh and Nic / Introduce 3/20 Assignment (Storyboards) | Thumbnail Storyboards |
| 9 | 3/6 | Environment/Background Design and Development<br>Review Character Design / Introduce 3/27 Assignment (Environment/Background Design)<br>Students to confirm Mentor Requests and Nic and Josh to confirm Faculty Pitch time slots | Character Design |
| | | **Spring Recess - 3/12 thru 3/19** | |
| 10 | 3/20 | Look of Picture and Proof of Concept / Pipeline / Schedule / Team / Budget / Faculty Presentation Contents<br>Pitch Storyboards / Introduce 4/3 Assignment (Look of Picture, Pipeline, Schedule, Team, Budget - Proof of Concept is a stretch goal) | Storyboards |
| 11 | 3/27 | Animatics, Editorial, Sound (VO, Sound Design, Music)<br>Review Environment/Background Design / Introduce 4/10 Assignment (Rough Animatic) | Environment/Background Design |
| 12 | 4/3 | Pitching 101 / Creating a Presentation<br>Review Look of Picture, Pipeline, Schedule, Team, Budget (Proof of Concept is a stretch goal) | Look of Picture, Pipeline, Schedule, Team, Budget (Proof of Concept is a stretch goal) |
| 13 | 4/10 | Rough Animatic Review<br>Pitch Deck Prep | Rough Animatic |
| 14 | 4/17 | 5 Minute Pitches<br>Pitch Prep and 1:1s with Josh and Nic | Polished Animatic |
| 15 | 4/24 | 8 Minute Pitches<br>Pitch Prep and 1:1s with Josh and Nic | Completed Pitch Deck Including a Polished Animatic |
| | | **Classes End - 4/28** | |
| | | **Study Days - 4/29 thru 5/2** | |
| | | **CTAN 336 - Faculty Pitch Day - 5/3*** | |
| | | **Exams - 5/3 thru 5/11** | |

* communicate any other finals you may have on 5/3 to Josh and Nic ASAP

Updated 1/5/2023

# CTAN 336 GRADING

**15%**

PARTICIPATION

**55%**

ASSIGNMENTS

**30%**

FINAL PITCH

## PARTICIPATION - 15% - 150 POINTS

Grades for participation are based on the level and quality of your engagement with Josh, Nic, Shengluo and fellow Students. There will be time allotted to feedback for other Student's assignments throughout the semester to share thoughts, ideas, inspiration, etc. with classmates. Students who wish to receive full credit for participation will engage during these moments. While distractions abound, focus on the topics at hand and respectful attention to Professors, Student Assistance and fellow Students will also will also contribute to your overall participation grade.

## ASSIGNMENTS - 55% - 550 POINTS

Primary Log Line with Initial Details - 25 Points
Logline, Mood Board(s), Expanded Details - 25 Points
4-8 Beat Boards/Story Moments - 55 Points
Thumbnail Storyboards - 55 Points
Character Design(s) - 55 Points
Storyboards - 55 Points
Environment/Background Design - 55 Points
Look of Picture, Pipeline, Schedule, Team, Budget - 75 Points
Rough Animatic - 75 Points
Polished Animatic - 75 Points

## FINAL PITCH - 30% - 300 POINTS

## 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

# JOSH STAUB

jstaub@usc.edu

# NIC WEST

nw_094@usc.edu

Josh Staub is a veteran Filmmaker, Production Designer, and Visual Effects Supervisor of Walt Disney Animation Studios and Netflix Animation, and contributor to more than 20 film projects including the Academy Award winning Frozen, Paperman, and Feast.

He is also an accomplished independent filmmaker, currently in development of an animated series with Apple TV +, and is sole-creator of the animated short film The Mantis Parable, which screened in over 100 film festivals around the world (Annecy, Tribeca), graced the screens of the nation's top art museums (National Gallery of Art, Smithsonian, MoMA), and twice qualified for consideration of an Academy Award nomination.

In 2018, Josh was inducted into the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences (Oscars) for "exceptional accomplishments in the field of theatrical motion pictures."

In addition to being a full-time filmmaker and Professor of Cinematic Arts at USC, Josh is a founding mentor of Rise Up Animation, dedicated to increasing diversity in the animation industry.

Nic West is USC alumnus and an experienced entertainment professional passionate about curating and developing inspired teams to create quality content.

She is the Co-Founder and Head of Operations at West Studio. West Studio is a preeminent visual development and production house that combines passion and process to produce some of the best concept art in the world. For more information and to gaze at beautiful entertainment art go to www.weststudio.com.

Nic's professional path has led her to a career in creative production and studio management in a myriad of entertainment industries, including: Television Animation, Feature Animation and Video Games. She has been fortunate to have the opportunity to work alongside some of the most talented, passionate and creative individuals at DreamWorks Television Animation and Feature Animation, Electronic Arts, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences, Keywords Studios (formerly Babel Media) and Brash Entertainment.

# STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

**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.

**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 - 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:** (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 and 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.

# STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS CONTINUED

**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.

**Campus Support & 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) 442-1200 - 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.

**PLEASE NOTE: FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX**