

USC School of Cinematic Arts  
CTPR 335 Motion Picture Editing, Section 18497

Class Meetings: Mondays, 7pm-10pm in SCA 356

Instructor: Yvette M. Amirian, ACE – [mangassa@usc.edu](mailto:mangassa@usc.edu)

SA: Bitu Arefnia – [arefnia@usc.edu](mailto:arefnia@usc.edu)

Zoom info – <https://usc.zoom.us/j/99624630922?pwd=ZFdXVUhTbUxkbm1LVkVOK0pTUVpZQQT09>

Meeting ID – 996 2463 0922

Passcode – 301383

\*\*\*Syllabus subject to change\*\*\*

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Picture Editors are story tellers. Unlike writers who use text, or lyricists who use words, we use visual images, dialogue, sound, special effects and music to tell our stories. How we use these elements and why we use them is important. *Why* should I cut at this frame as opposed to this one? *Why* is it more important to use off-camera dialog as opposed to playing dialogue on-camera? *Why* should a music cue start at this point in a scene as opposed to that point? *When* to cut, *when not* to cut, *when* to stylize, *when not* to and *why*. This class is about the “hows” (using the AVID, editing techniques, the grammar and language of editing), and the “whys” (editing aesthetics, basic theory and concepts behind film editing.)

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES**

The class will partly be a hands-on course where you will learn the basics of how to use Avid Media Composer, the leading software in the motion picture post-production industry. Even though picture editing is fundamentally about storytelling, it is also a technical medium needing great organizational skills. Therefore, you will also learn how to organize a project, set up bins, manage media (footage, sound effects, music), create custom settings, and make basic picture and sound edits.

Learning the basic concepts of editing is useful for all facets of filmmaking, especially if you want to be a writer, director, producer, or even a cinematographer — for after the shooting stops, it all comes down to the editor to put the pieces together to make a story. At the end of the semester, you should not only be able to analyze any piece of media from an editing perspective and understand *why* the editor made the choices they did, but you will also be able to cut your own stories using your own choices.

**\*\*\*PLEASE - do not hesitate to ask me for help, or to discuss conceptual ideas you have for your assignments.** Editing, in the beginning, can be confusing... So please, do not let concerns over the buttons keep you from a rewarding and fun experience.

As you prepare to start the semester, I need to remind you that we edit only on AVID Media Composer and that The School of Cinematic Arts Production Division has Mandatory Editing Requirements.

**All specifications are outlined on the next page, via a letter from Editing Track Head Nancy Forner, ACE. Please read this information CAREFULLY before making any major purchases.**

**\*\*\* In fact, I recommend waiting on any purchases until AFTER our first day of class \*\*\***

Dear SCA Spring 2023 Production Students,

Welcome to the Film & Television Production Division in the School of Cinematic Arts at USC. My name is Nancy Forner. I am a Film Editor, a Professor and Track Head of Editing at SCA. I wanted to introduce myself and also share with you some **important information**.

**Please note that The School of Cinematic Arts Production Division has Mandatory Editing Requirements:**

**We edit only on AVID Media Composer**, and you have a choice whether to edit in the AVID Labs at school or on your own personal computer at home (***\*NOTE: working from home is not possible in CTPR 335***)

**All students are required to have the following (*\*NOTE: THIS DOES NOT APPLY FOR CTPR 335*)**

- **An Apple or PC laptop** that meets the SCA computing requirements.  
<https://cinema.usc.edu/laptops/>

**Required to purchase for CTPR 507 and CTPR 295 to be used also in CTPR 310 and CTPR 508**

DRIVE	SIZE	TYPE	CTPR:
Edit Drive: Camera Originals + Transcodes	2TB (minimum)	SSD	507, 295, 310,508
Backup Drive	2TB (minimum)	HDD (spinning disk)	CTPR: 507, 295, 310,508

Details can be found at:

[SCA Supported Laptops, Software, and Hard Drives](#)  
[Formatting an External Hard Drive for use in the Labs](#)

- **Headphones** (a 1/4-inch phone jack adapter may be needed to work in the labs)
- **Avid Media Composer software** (you can use SCA's Media Composer license while registered during the semester. Avid also sells discounted students licenses on their site.)
- **Sapphire software** (free student license is available from [Boris here](#))
- **An SD card reader**

If you choose to purchase an Apple computer, an educational discount is available online through the [Apple Education Store](#) or at the USC Bookstore. AppleCare extended warranty is recommended.

**If you experience technical difficulties or have questions about laptop requirements, please email our Creative Technology & Support team at [creativetech@cinema.usc.edu](mailto:creativetech@cinema.usc.edu).**

**Throughout the semester we also have an AVID Genius Bar to help with any technical editing questions.**

**The AVID Genius Bar is by appointment on Zoom or in-person.**

Please e-mail the instructor for the time you would like to attend.

**AVID Genius Bar, open all semester:**

M	10am-5pm
T	5:30pm-9pm
W	12:pm-2:pm
TH	o
F	12pm-4:30pm

**Instructor: Toi Juan Shannon: [tshannon@usc.edu](mailto:tshannon@usc.edu)**

**The Office of Financial Aid is available to discuss additional funding regarding these mandatory purchases.**

Please feel free to contact me regarding any questions concerning Editing Instruction at USC SCA.  
[nforner@cinema.usc.edu](mailto:nforner@cinema.usc.edu)

## **AVID MEDIA COMPOSER GUIDE**

<http://knowledgebase.sca.usc.edu/SCA%20Knowledgebase/Avid%20Media%20Composer.aspx>

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### **CLASS FORMAT / BLACKBOARD**

Each week will be a mixture of lecture, screenings, class discussion/presentations or hands-on training with Avid Media Composer software.

Once you begin your editing assignments (later in the semester), a portion of class time will be devoted to sharing individual editing assignments. An editor's work is scrutinized every day in the real world, so in this class you will be expected to show your work to everyone and get their notes. We will plan to break into smaller groups for editing instruction/check-ins, and I will also have office hours, by appointment. Remember, the Avid Genius Bar and Avid Media Composer Guide are available and a vital resources for quick help!

We will also have guest speakers and, dependent on their availability, our schedule in the syllabus may shift. All handouts for any relevant lessons or techniques, assignments, Zoom links, grading, etc. will be done exclusively through Blackboard in this. Therefore, you must make sure you know how to log in and access our class. Any questions or technical issues regarding Blackboard use may be directed to their support department, contact information and help can be found here:

<https://studentblackboardhelp.usc.edu>

### **SUGGESTED BOOKS/READING**

*Don't Miss Out on Any Avocado Milkshakes: The Art and Joy of Being a Film Editor*  
by Troy Takaki

*Cutting It in Hollywood*  
by Mitchell Danton

*In the Blink of an Eye*  
by Walter Murch

*"The Lean Forward Moment: Create Compelling Stories for Film, TV, and The Web"*  
by Norman Hollyn; New Riders Press  
(mainly chapters: 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)

*Foundations of Video: The Art of Editing with Norman Hollyn* on [www.lynda.com](http://www.lynda.com)

### **CLASS ASSIGNMENTS**

You will have various written scene or film analysis assignments. I will ask you to watch films or series as part of your assignments. And these may coincide with films and series edited by our guest speakers. There will be two editing projects that deal with different editing theories and techniques. You will be cutting raw footage (called "*Dailies*"). You will be asked to cut scenes together, show your first cuts to the class and get their feedback, then hand in revisions based on your notes. Part of this process will also be learning the technical skills necessary to work with Avid Media Composer more creatively and efficiently.

### **ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSIONS/GRADING TIMELINE**

Editing assignments will be assigned and explained during live class time. All editing work will be presented from your hard drive. QuickTimes will not be accepted, unless I request them.

Written assignments like scene analyses, questions, etc. will be assigned and explained during live in class, and subsequently posted in Blackboard for reference. All assignments that are capable of being submitted on Blackboard (i.e. written assignments) will NOT be accepted via email—ONLY on Blackboard.

Grades for each project or assignment will be posted to Blackboard, shortly after their due dates. Failure to present assignments by the due date will impact your grade. Due dates will be given in class.

**\*\*\*On edit project due dates, make sure your hard drive is present  
so you can show work during class time\*\*\***  
**\*\*\*Absolutely NO QuickTime files will be accepted\*\*\***

Project organization is 50 points of your total grade!!! Once we start cutting, I will inspect your drives and projects upon viewing your assignments. I expect all projects to be organized in the same format I teach you in class. Failure to do so WILL affect your grade.

Participation is 50 points of your total grade!!! I expect everyone to be an active participant every week. Filmmaking and editing requires teamwork, collaboration, and the sharing of opinions on a daily basis, so your contributions to the work of others are crucial to the learning process. This means critiquing each other's work during screenings, analyzing scenes and examples we view in class, and asking questions when we have guest speakers.

**GRADING BREAKDOWN**

Grading will be done on a standard scale with no curve:

- A 600 pts.
- A- 550 pts.
- B 500 pts.
- B- 450 pts
- C 400 pts.
- C- 350 pts

Scene Analysis assignment	50 points
Questions for guest speakers	50 points (split between 1-2 guest speakers, depending on availability/schedules)
Editing Assignment # 1	175 points
Editing Assignment # 2	175 points
Project Organization	25 points
Class participation	25 points
Final exam/project	100 points
<b>Total of</b>	<b>600 points</b>

## **Production Division Attendance Policy** (based on Spring 2022 requirements, subject to change)

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. A becomes B). A third unexcused absence will result in a student's grade being lowered by one, additional full letter (IE: B becomes C). 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.

In order for an absence to be excused, the student **MUST** have approval from the professor and provide documentation at the next attended class session.

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.

*\*\*\*If you are going to be absent for ANY reason – please, just e-mail me prior to the class so I know\*\*\**

## **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](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).

### **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.

### **Stressful Times:**

These are stressful times in our country, and Graduate School in and of itself is stressful. I encourage you to take care of yourself and your fellow students. USC provides opportunities for Mindful Meditation <http://mindful.usc.edu> and Mental health counseling is available at the Engemann Student Health Center, 1031 W. 34<sup>th</sup> Street, 213-740-9355.

### **Support Systems:**

*Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://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 - 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 and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](http://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](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://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.

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

[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report](http://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](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 Campus Support & Intervention - (213) 821-4710*

[campussupport.usc.edu](http://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](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)

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](http://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

[ombuds.usc.edu](http://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.

### **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](mailto: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.

## **RULES FOR USING SCA COMPUTER LABS**

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

- 1) No food, drinks (including bottled water), gum, or skateboards in the labs, Edit or Sound Edit Suites. Violation of this rule will result in suspension of Lab or Edit Room privileges. Locker area is available for food and drink storage.
- 2) You must sign in at Front Desk with your Student ID and use station assigned. Any change must be done through Front Desk.
- 3) If you are having technical problems with your workstation, contact a Tech through the Front Desk or Help Desk.
- 4) Closing time is strictly enforced. Techs will give warnings when to begin saving. Please do not argue with them.
- 5) Lab Hours and Supported Hard Drive documents can be found at the Front Desk, Help Desk, and SCA Community.
- 6) Headphones with 1/4 inch adapters are required at each workstation. SCA does not supply headphones or adapters.
- 7) Users may be bumped after their station has been vacant for a period of 30 minutes.
- 8) For locker checkout, fill out locker form in B144. Lock must be approved before locker is assigned.
- 9) SCA Help Documents are located on each workstation desktop.
- 10) Please handle all equipment and computers professionally.

## WEEKLY COURSE PLAN:

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The following is a rough outline of how the semester will progress. All material below is subject to change, dependent upon guest speaker availability, and any changes that the university may choose to implement. All classes will be held in-person, in SCA 356, unless otherwise noted, and details will always be given ahead of time. Please check your emails each week for any changes in location. And also check Blackboard REGULARLY for updates and links.

### Week 1 (January 9)

#### **LECTURE:**

- Take care of registration
- Review the syllabus
- Discussion about the course/format/what to expect
- Answer questions
- Class introductions
- Watch "The Cutting Edge" doc – a brief introduction, overview and history of film editing

#### **ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class 01/23):**

Research hard drives, Avid, etc. Complete and send back questionnaire (assignment on Blackboard, worth zero points but MUST be completed).

### **Week 2 (January 16) – No Class**

### Week 3 (January 23)

#### **LECTURE:**

- Compare a scene in script form vs. completed form

#### **ASSIGNMENT:**

- Complete a scene analysis (I will provide script of scene)
- Write a log line for movie of your choice
- Purchase hard drive

### Week 4 (January 30)

#### **LECTURE:**

- Review scene analysis assignment
- The 180 degree rule
- The Kuleshov effect
- The Lined Script – how to read it/why we use it
- How to format hard drive

#### **ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):**

- Format hard drive and **BRING FORMATTED DRIVE TO CLASS!!!**

### Week 5 (February 6)

#### **LECTURE:**

- How to organize formatted hard drive
- How to launch Avid and create your project
- Overview of Avid interface
- Create Folders and Bins together
- Create Dailies and Cuts bins/sequence together
- Bring in 500 Days Footage

#### **ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):**

- Finish organizing your project

### Week 6 (February 13)

#### **LECTURE:**

- Prepare for cutting/frame view setup
- How to use markers and notes tabs for reference
- Approaching dailies: how to watch and organize raw footage, and understand the thought process of the editor, using the scene analysis

#### **ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):**

- Watch all dailies and make notes (for after President's Day)



## Week 7 (February 20) – No Class

### Week 8 (February 27)

#### **LECTURE:**

- Cutting a basic scene – why am I doing what I'm doing, what is my process, how do I make my early decisions – walk through cutting a scene start to finish in Avid, to give a very broad introductory overview
- Source/Record – Cutting in the timeline. Working with splice, lift vs. extract, and basic trimming.

#### **ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):**

- Start editing scene 18

### Week 9 (March 6)

#### **LECTURE:**

- Review Avid basic editing in source/record, basic trim
- Time to practice in class, work together one on one

#### **ASSIGNMENT (to complete for after break):**

- Scene 18 basic assembly due after break

## Week 10 (March 13) – No Class

### Week 11 (March 20)

#### **Lecture:**

- More editing techniques: trim mode, scrolling, match cut
- Introduction to sound and music editing
- L-cuts, checker boarding, dialogue editing

#### **ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):**

- Refine cuts for pacing/start checkerboarding

### Week 12 (March 27)

#### **LECTURE:**

- Working with Sound and Music/Creating a sound design
- Audio levels and audio FX
- VFX use in Avid – basic use of effects palette, effects mode, title tool, motion control functions, Sapphire, audio effects

#### **ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):**

- Continue checkerboarding and cleaning up audio for scene 18, add sound and music design, add VFX

### Week 13 (April 3)

#### **LECTURE:**

- Time to work in class

#### **ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):**

- Finish cutting scene 18 (final version due second to last week of class)

### Week 14 (April 10)

#### **Lecture:**

- Documentary class (possible guest speaker TBD)

#### **ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):**

- Watch guest speaker work/assignment

### Week 15 (April 17)

#### **LECTURE:**

- Guest Speaker TBD

#### **ASSIGNMENT (to complete for next week's class):**

- Complete final assignment for next week

### Week 16 (April 20)

#### **LECTURE:**

- Watch all final cuts in class

### Week 17 (April 27)

#### **Lecture:**

- Q+A on working in industry
- Final exam (will be explained in class)
- Send any outstanding assignments by final exam week

**Week 17 (May 1):**

**\*\*\*STUDY WEEK – NO CLASS\*\*\***

**Week 18 (May 8)**

**FINAL EXAM – this is the exam date, PERIOD.**

**Per the university, you MUST be present on this date to take your exam – NO exceptions**

**Please do not ask to reschedule – the answer will be NO**

**\*\*\*Please make your travel plans accordingly!!!\*\*\***

For questions about the date and time of the final for this class, consult the USC *Schedule of Classes* at [www.usc.edu/soc](http://www.usc.edu/soc).