

USC School of Cinematic Arts
CTPR 335 Motion Picture Editing

Class Meetings: Wednesday, 7pm-10pm in SCA 316

Instructor: **Brian Wessel** bwessel@usc.edu

SA: **Chueh-Hui Huang** chuehhu@usc.edu

Syllabus subject to change

COURSE DESCRIPTION

My name is Brian Wessel and I have been an editor for over 20 years on an array of projects from scripted feature films, documentaries, television shows, promotional material, and music videos. Over the past decade, I have focused my work primarily in scripted television. I feel very fortunate to have found a creative and technical career that still manages to both challenge and inspires me.

Editors are storytellers. 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.)

My goal is to teach the language of editing and discuss the aesthetics of editing. Some of the topics we will cover include: performance, story, pacing, sound design, music, camera angles and sizes, continuity and the lined script, eyelines, L-cuts, checker boarding, working with the director and producer and much more.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Each student will prepare a 10 minute oral presentation on editing and present it during class. Select a very short (pre-approved by me) sequence from a film or tv show and discuss in depth the creative and technical attributes. Your personal point of view is welcomed, as well as knowledge of the editor and director, and year of release. Also, be prepared to answer questions regarding your sequence. Date of presentation is random and you will have one week in which to prepare for your turn. 200 points

We will have two scenes to edit this semester and each counts as 100 points. You edit from raw footage (called “*Dailies*”). You will present your cuts to the class and get their feedback. Part of this process will also be learning

the technical skills necessary to work with Avid Media Composer more creatively and efficiently. The first scene will be due mid-semester and the second scene will be due at the end of the semester.

Participation is 200 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 especially 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

Editing Assignment # 1	100 points
Editing Assignment # 2	100 points
Class participation	200 points
Oral Presentation	200 points
Total of	600 points

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

Students are required to provide their own headphones and hard drives. (see final page of syllabus)

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 cinematographer. At the end of the semester, you should not only be able to discuss editing and understand *why* the editor made the choices they did, but you will also be able to edit your own projects.

*****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.

"We have instructions at the top of the homepage on the SCA Knowledgebase for how to install Avid Media Composer and license it via USC VPN. <https://knowledgebase.sca.usc.edu/> You need to use your USC NetID (USC email without the @usc.edu) to log in to the knowledge base. Please do this ASAP to get your software and log into the Knowledge Base!"

Production Division Attendance Policy

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. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, 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. 34th Street, 213-740-9355.

Support Systems:

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 - 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 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.

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.

USC 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.

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.

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.

Dear SCA Fall 2022 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 Head of the Editing Track at USC 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.

All students are required to have the following.

- **An Apple or PC laptop that meets the SCA computing requirements. (Details on <https://cinema.usc.edu/laptops/>)**
- **A hard drive that meets SCA hard drive recommendations**
- **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**

Creative Technology & Support will update the [SCA Laptops webpage](#) mid-July.

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.

Throughout the semester we also have an AVID Genius Bar to help with any technical editing questions. The AVID Genius Bar is on-line and **by appointment only**.

Please e-mail the instructor for the hours you would like to attend. As the instructor receives emails, he will respond with either an email answer or Zoom invite. **AVID Genius Bar, open all semester:**

Monday 10am - 9pm

Tuesday 12pm-2 pm

Thursday 12pm-5pm

Friday 12 -4:30pm

Instructor: Toi Juan Shannon: tshannon@usc.edu