



**CTPR 423 INTRO TO SPECIAL EFFECTS IN  
CINEMA**

Units: 2

**Spring 2023 — Mondays — 7:00pm – 10:00pm**

**This class may not be audited.**

**Location:** SCC Stage 3

**Instructor:** Gene Warren III, Christopher Lee Warren

**Office:** SCA stage 3

**Office Hours:** (By Appointment)

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# SCA Spring 2023 Production Protocols

01/08/2023

## **Vaccination**

- Only fully vaccinated individuals or approved exempt USC students are allowed to participate on SCA productions. This applies to all members of the cast and crew — including but not limited to extras, production assistants, stunt coordinators, make-up artists, studio teachers, etc.
- An individual is considered fully vaccinated two weeks after receiving a single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine or two weeks after receiving the second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or a vaccine authorized for emergency use by the World Health Organization.
- At least 7 days before the start of production, the Student Producer must obtain proof of vaccination from every member of the production team — crew, cast, and anyone else present on set.
- The Student Producer must submit proof of vaccination to the Lead SA and Lead Faculty of the class before the start of production.
- USC students who are unable to receive a Covid-19 vaccine because of approved medical contraindication, disability, or sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance, may seek an accommodation by which they are tested a minimum of 3 times per week in lieu of vaccination. This applies only to USC students who have received an approved exemption from the University

## **Testing**

- All cast and crew must provide the Student Producer a copy of a negative Covid-19 PCR lab-based test taken within 72 hours of the start of shooting.
- Any unvaccinated USC student who has received an approved exemption from the University must show proof to the Student Producer of three (3) negative PCR lab-based Covid-19 tests taken within the week prior to the start of shooting.
- The Lead SA and Lead Faculty must be given proof of all negative Covid test results prior to the start of shooting.
- If any individual tests positive for Covid-19, that person will not participate in the production and will immediately inform the Student Producer and the University by contacting the USC COVID-19 hotline at 213-740-6291 or covid19@usc.edu. 2
- NOTE: If the individual who tested positive for Covid-19 used the USC Student Health's Pop Testing program, you do not need to notify the University, as positive results are automatically followed-up with contact-tracing interviews.

- The Student Producer must immediately inform the Lead SA and the Lead Faculty of the class of any positive test results and will make certain that the individual who tested positive immediately contacts the USC COVID-19 Hotline.

## **Symptoms**

- If during production, any individual has any symptoms related to Covid-19, they must report the symptoms immediately to the Student Producer, who will inform the Lead SA and Lead Faculty of the class.
- The individual will immediately get tested, self-isolate, wear a mask, and practice social distancing. This individual will not return to the production unless they have a negative Covid-19 test 72 hours prior to returning to the set and then another negative test 36-48 hours prior to returning to the set.

## **Masking**

- During shoot days, all personnel must always wear a mask while on set. Performers in the film will only remove masks on set during takes and rehearsals.

## **Meals**

- All meals will be eaten outdoors, away from the shooting area. Individuals may remove their masks for eating or drinking, and they will maintain a social distance of at least six feet from other cast and crew members.
- All meals must be in individually packaged servings, and beverages will come in individual bottles. No shared or buffet-style food or drinks will be allowed. Cast and crew have the option of bringing their own meals, as long as they are not shared with other cast and crew members.

## **Cast and Crew Limitations**

- The number of cast and crew members on CTPR 294, 310, 507, and 508 productions must not exceed a total of 10 people on set on any production day. The number of cast and crew members on CTPR 290 productions must not exceed a total of 7 people on set on any production day.
- All SCA productions are encouraged to limit on-set intimacy and stunt work.

## **Casting, Rehearsals, and Production Meetings**

- All SCA productions are encouraged to cast performers who are above 12 years old. If you have a minor on your set, the minor, the guardian on the set, and the studio teacher all need to follow testing protocols.
- All casting must be done remotely by video conference. Production meetings and rehearsals should be done remotely whenever possible.
- If you have an in-person production meeting, individuals must wear face masks at all times. If you have an in-person rehearsal with an unmasked actor, they must produce a current negative Covid test. Everyone must follow proper health and hygiene protocols and attempt to maintain social distancing.

## **Student Producers**

- Although Student Producers are responsible for ensuring that SCA Safety Protocols are strictly followed by all cast and crew members, it is incumbent on all key crew to make sure these rules and regulations are followed.
- Student Producers are responsible for submitting all the necessary Covid-related documentation — including proof of vaccination for all cast and crew members and proof of negative test results for all cast and crew members — to the Lead SA and Lead Faculty prior to the start of production.
- If all the necessary Covid-related documents are not submitted to the Lead SA and Lead Faculty prior to the start of production, the project will not receive a greenlight and will not be allowed to begin production.

## **Violations of Covid Protocols**

- If any of the Covid-19 safety protocols are violated, the SCA production may be suspended or shut down immediately and students could potentially receive a failing grade for the project.

## **USC Covid-19 Resource Center**

- For the latest Covid-19 information, updates, and support for the USC community, visit the USC COVID-19 Resource Center at <https://coronavirus.usc.edu/>

## **SCA COVID Advisor**

- David Maquiling will be on staff to answer any questions regarding COVID compliance. There will be a COVID Production Protocols Seminar recording for students and faculty to view on SCA Community. David can be reached at [maquilin@usc.edu](mailto:maquilin@usc.edu).

## Course Description

Welcome to CTPR 423. Our aspiration is to generate an appreciation for the art of special/visual effects and foster an understanding of how special/visual effects are conceived, generated and produced. This course will primarily cover the practical elements of visual and special effects using various film clips, lectures and in class hands on filming. Discussion of digital effects will only focus on how the various in-camera techniques integrate with the newer digital tools.

## Learning Objectives and Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to :

Apply and combine scales through the use of forced perspective techniques to produce and submit a photographic still or moving picture.

Demonstrate the basic mechanics of stop motion animation and produce a 10 to 20 second stop motion animation clip.

Analyse a provided screenplay to identify and submit possible special and visual effects solutions. (commonly referred to as a 'Script Breakout')

Every student will participate within a group to develop and produce a short *FX FILM* using special and visual effects techniques previously used/taught throughout the session.

## Prerequisite(s): Safety Seminar

## Course Notes:

Athletic shoes and long pants **MUST** be worn to all Cinematography classes and when picking up and returning equipment. No open toed or dress shoes will be permitted. If you come to class dressed inappropriately, you will be asked to leave and marked absent.

Please note our final class is Monday, December 12th. All students are required to attend, take the final exam and present their final projects.

## Required course equipment

Either a digital or analogue still camera (the quality does not matter; you can use the camera in your smart phone), but we highly encourage a manual still camera for reasons that will pertain to the forced perspective project and the stop motion clip.

## Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

A study sheet of commonly used words and phrases will be handed out week 1. It is meant for students to be more familiar with the jargon used in the special and visual effects discipline.

## Grading Breakdown

	of Grade
Participation	10%
Mid term exam	20%
Forced perspective assignment	10%
Script excerpt f/x breakout assignment	10%
Stop Motion Animation clip	10%
Group f/x production film	10%
Effects film reviews	10%
Final exam	20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 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

## Assignment Rubrics

For participation, forced perspective and script breakout assignments there are extra points to be had for inspired work beyond the basic examples of an understanding of the conceptual work.

The midterm and final will be graded by dividing the number of questions into 100. Each incorrect answer will be that number taken away from 100 resulting in the grading scale outlined above.

In class hands on projects will consist of Chris and Gene along with an SA filming on Stage 3 various elements relating to the particular technique discussed each week.

## Grading Timeline

The Midterm will be reviewed the following week.

The forced perspective assignment will be graded within two weeks after the due date.

## Additional Policies

### ATTENDANCE:

Attendance is not optional!

- 1) You must discuss all absences from and arriving late to class with your instructors.
- 2) Absence or lateness will be categorized as excused or unexcused. An absence or lateness is considered excused: if you discuss it with us and have a note from an authority. All medical absences require a visit and note from a doctor.

(Examples, assume you earn an A+ i.e. 100%)

One absence will result in your final grade dropping one portion of a grade, i.e., from A+ to A. Two absences will result in your final grade dropping two portions of a grade, i.e. from A to A-. Three absences will result in your final grade dropping three portions of a grade, i.e. from A- to B+ and so on.

Unexcused lateness will affect final grade in the following way: (assume you earn an A). One late arrival will not count against you because it is LA.

Two will result in your final grade dropping one letter portion of a grade, i.e. from A to A- and so on... just like absences.

If you arrive late, you MUST come to us during a break and let us know you are present. Please don't assume we saw you arrive. If you fail to do so, you may be marked absent.

## Final short film project

Four production groups will be formed from the class. Each group will produce a final *short film* containing in-camera practical and special effects shots.

## **-NOTEWORTHY DATES TO REMEMBER-**

- ☐ **01/16/2023 – MLK BIRTHDAY – NO CLASS**
- ☐ **02/20/2023 – PRESIDENTS DAY – NO CLASS**
- ☐ **03/13/2023 – SPRING RECESS – NO CLASS**
- ☐ **02/27/2023 – TURN IN FORCED PERSPECTIVE PHOTOGRAPH PROJECT**
- ☐ **02/27/2023 – MID-TERM EXAM**
- ☐ **05/08/2023 – REVIEW GROUP PROJECTS – FINAL EXAM**

## Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

### MEETING #1 01/09/2023 - COURSE OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL/VISUAL EFFECTS HISTORY AND TECHNIQUES. SPECIAL AND (VISUAL) EFFECTS CATEGORIES: PHYSICAL, PRACTICAL AND SPECIAL PROPS, IN CAMERA EFFECTS, SPECIAL MAKE-UP EFFECTS, PYRO-TECHNICS, MINIATURES, CHARACTER ANIMATION, POST COMPOSITING.

**(MLK BIRTHDAY - 01/16/2023 - NO CLASS)**

**MEETING #2 01/23/2023 - PHYSICAL/PRACTICAL, MAKE-UP FX**  
BREAKING AND COLLAPSING SCENERY. BREAKAWAY PROPS, BREAKING  
WINDOWS, STUNTS, FIGHTS. ARROWS, KNIVES, SWORDS AND DAGGERS.  
BLOOD, SCRATCHES, AND BLOOD EFFECTS. CASTING BODY PARTS.

INSTRUCTION OF BASIC SAFE USE OF STANDARD MOVIE EQUIPMENT.

(ON STAGE HANDS ON PROJECT)

**MEETING #3 01/30/2023 - IN CAMERA EFFECTS – pt. 1**  
FORCED PERSPECTIVE  
UNDER/OVER CRANK PHOTOGRAPHY.  
MIRROR EFFECTS: FIFTY-FIFTY MIRRORS, GLASS SHOTS AND SPLIT SCREEN  
OVERLAYS, DOUBLE EXPOSURES. GHOST EFFECTS USING 50/50 MIRROR

(ON STAGE HANDS ON PROJECT)

**MEETING #4 02/06/2023 - IN CAMERA EFFECTS – pt. 2**  
SCENIC PROJECTION FRONT AND REAR SCREEN.  
PROCESS PHOTOGRAPHY (POOR MAN’S PROCESS)

(ON STAGE HANDS ON PROJECT)

**MEETING #5 02/13/2023 - MINIATURES**  
MINIATURE EFFECTS: FOREGROUND HANGING MINIATURES, FULL FRAME  
MINIATURES AND CHOICE OF SCALE.  
MINIATURE CONSTRUCTION (CHOICE OF MATERIALS).  
MINIATURE LIGHTING PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES.  
MINIATURES AND MOTION CONTROL (MODELS AND CAMERA).  
THE NODAL POINT AS USED IN VISUAL EFFECTS.

(ON STAGE HANDS ON PROJECT)

**(PRESIDENTS DAY - 02/20/2023 - NO CLASS)**

**MEETING #6 02/27/2023 – SCRIPT BREAKOUT - MIDTERM**  
READ AND IDENTIFY IN SCRIPTS THE VARIOUS EFFECTS TECHNIQUES  
REQUIRED.

**TURN IN FORCED PERSPECTIVE ASSIGNMENT**

**MID-TERM EXAM**

**GROUPS WILL BE ASSIGNED DURING THIS CLASS MEETING.**

**MEETING #7 03/06/2023 - CHARACTER ANIMATION**

STOP MOTION PUPPETS (ARMATURED, CLAYMATION AND REPLACEMENT).  
HAND PUPPETS, ROD PUPPETS/ANIMITRONICS (SAG ACTORS).  
WHY MOTION CAPTURE?

(ON STAGE HANDS ON PROJECT)

**(SPRING RECESS - 03/13/2023 - NO CLASS)**

**MEETING #8 03/20/2023 - ELEMENTS**

WORKING WITH WATER AND PYROTECHNICS, CREATING ATMOSPHERIC  
ELEMENTS FOR POST COMPOSITING.

(ON STAGE HANDS ON PROJECT)

**MEETING #9 03/27/2023 - POST COMPOSITING**

HISTORY OF POST COMPOSITING (IN-CAMERA, OPTICAL AND DIGITAL).  
INTRO TO COMPOSITE TECHNIQUES AND PROGRAMS.  
RED/GREEN/BLUE SCREEN CAPTURE TECHNIQUES.  
MATTE MAKING, ROTOSCOPING AND INTEGRATING SUBJECTS INTO THE  
ENVIRONMENT.

**MEETING #10 04/03/2023 – GROUP # 1**

**MEETING #11 04/10/2023 – GROUP # 2**

**MEETING #12 04/17/2023 – GROUP # 3**

**MEETING #13 04/24/2022 - GROUP # 4**

Each team will collectively write a script and have it ready one week before respective dates to be shot on stage. (Note: we will need to approve each script one week prior to each teams shoot date so that we can be sure that it can be shot in one night.) You will have two weeks to edit and submit.

The other teams will cycle through a rotation; i.e., While GROUP 1 is on stage shooting said short film, GROUP 2 will be assisting. (GROUP 2 will need to turn in their script for approval)

TEAM 3 will have this night to read an excerpt from a script provided by us and do an FX breakout and will not have to be on stage.

TEAM 4 will have this night to do an animation project, a minimum 5 second clip. 120 frames. Your choice of character or style and will not have to be on stage.  
The cycles will be as follows.

**April 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Team 1 will have the stage for shooting.  
Team 2 will assist and turn in script.  
Team 3 will be doing the *FX breakout*.  
Team 4 will be doing the *animation project*.

**April 10<sup>th</sup>**

Team 2 will have the stage for shooting.  
Team 3 will assist and turn in script.  
Team 4 will be doing the *FX breakout*.  
Team 1 will be doing the *animation project*.

**April 17<sup>th</sup>**

Team 3 will have the stage for shooting.  
Team 4 will assist and turn in script.  
Team 1 will be doing the *FX breakout*.  
Team 2 will be doing the *animation project*.

**April 24<sup>th</sup>**

Team 4 will have the stage for shooting.  
Team 1 will assist.  
Team 2 will be doing the *FX breakout*.  
Team 3 will be doing the *animation project*.

THESE TWO PROJECTS ARE DO ONE WEEK AFTER ASSIGNED DATES

**MEETING #14 05/08/2023 – FINAL CLASS**

RECAP OF COURSE MATERIALS

REVIEW FOR THE FINAL EXAM

VIEW ANIMATION PROJECTS

**REVIEW FINAL FILM PROJECTS**

**FINAL EXAM**

## 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).

### 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)

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](http://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](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.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

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