



CTPR 557 Advanced Cinematography

Units: 2

Spring 2023—Monday—1:00-4:50PM

Location: Stage 3

Instructor: Chris Chomyn, ASC

SA: Elisabetta (Fox) Piantoni

Office Hours: Monday 10a – 12p
by appointment

It is recommended that students enrolling in 557 have completed 546 or 480 as cinematographer. However, 537 or 424 satisfy the prerequisite.

USC IT Help Information Technology Services <https://itservices.usc.edu/>
Computer Loaner Program - <https://itservices.usc.edu/spaces/laptoploaner>
Phone: 24/7 213-740-5555 Hours: 8-6 M-F
Email: consult@usc.edu

USC Computing Centers
<https://itservices.usc.edu/spaces/computingcenters/>

Equipment Help:

Camera Equipment Center (CEC) Cameras and Accessories
HOURS OF SERVICE: 8:30am to 6pm, M-Th, 8:30 to 5pm, Friday By Appointment
CONTACT INFO: 213-821-0951, Craig McNelley, mcnelley@usc.edu

Production Equipment Center (PEC) Lighting and Grip Equipment
HOURS OF SERVICE: 8:30am to 6pm, M-Th, 8:30 to 5pm, Friday By Appointment
CONTACT INFO: 213-740-2898, Hector Trujillo, htrujillo@cinema.usc.edu

Stage Help:

Stage Services
HOURS OF SERVICE: 8:30am to 5pm, M-F
CONTACT INFO: 213-821-0961, Carlos Jauregui, stages@cinema.usc.edu

Communication:

All class related email communications must use your usc.edu or your cinema.usc.edu addresses. It is your responsibility to check for email and to reply, when appropriate, or acknowledge receipt within 24 hours.

Course Description

CTPR 557 – Advanced Cinematography is designed to provide a unique cinematographer centric experience. Advanced students are expected to explore all aspects of cinematography in the challenge to create works that showcase their individual sensibilities. Clear communication, effective leadership and challenging one's creative boundaries are essential for a successful semester.

camera placement, lens selection, movement, composition, lighting and exposure are the fundamental building blocks of the cinematographic image. These in service of your story, as well as methods for working collaboratively with other creative talents involved in filmmaking will be the main emphasis of this course.

557 will provide many opportunities for conversations beyond lighting and photography. Topics may include, the ethical responsibilities of the cinematographer, professional responsibilities, building a professional career, the value of crewing, negotiation techniques, representation, union membership, reels, websites, bios, and more.

Assignments:

- Every week beginning week 3 each student will submit by email to the instructor a position paper of no more than one page, 12pt. font, single spaced, discussing a concept or idea that was inspired by their experience in the previous class meeting. The content should identify the inspiration, and the train of thought it inspired, as well as any questions raised, or conclusions drawn. Due each week, no later than 5pm on Sunday evening.
- Due two weeks prior to the “in-class” project on which you are the DP/Director – a pitch deck detailing your plan. Include your crew list, shot list, location information as well as, images that inspire you, text that makes clear your objectives, and diagrams as necessary to make clear your intentions (including set and lighting diagrams). Due no later than 5pm on the Sunday, two weeks before your project. (Except the first week, which is due, one week before.) *any changes to the plan must be updated no later than the Sunday, one week prior to your production.
- Due each week a different student will helm a project of their own design in consultation with and approval of the faculty. The other students in class will fulfill their assigned crew positions to facilitate the project. Participation is mandatory.
- Due May 3rd. Each student will present their “out-of-class project in a group screening during our scheduled Final Exam meeting. (Projects must be uploaded to the assigned google drive folder no later than 8pm on May 2nd and may have a total runtime between :30 seconds and 3 minutes.

Class Structure:

Each student will photograph two projects: one in-class and one out-of-class. All projects must be original content for which you have the rights. You may not use previously published works protected by copyright.

We will begin each class by screening and discussing the results from the previous week’s work.

Students will rotate crew positions.

In-class Exercise:

Each week one student will create and helm a project of their own design to be photographed on 35mm film on stage during class, the rest of the students will collaborate as crew and will rotate through the various positions. Your scene should create an opportunity for you to grow by exploring new creative challenges, while providing opportunities for your classmates to elevate their technical skills and increase their proficiency in supporting your production.

As director/cinematographer you are responsible to cast actors, and arrange for set dressing, props, practical lamps, etc. for your in-class exercise. Your classmates are not your actors. Extend yourself and be creative. Plan ahead and embrace the challenge. Remember, the prop room on Stage 1 has some interesting (and free) options.

If you want to reserve the stage in order to prep for your “in class shoot” prior to class (pending stage availability), you will need to contact stage services stages@cinema.usc.edu

Out of Class Projects:

This is your chance to create something extraordinary, to push yourself and demonstrate your un-tapped talents. It is expected that you make the most of every opportunity.

Your project, including crew assignments, must be approved by your instructor in advance. You may consider any “story” structure that works for your material. Possibilities include: a public service announcement, product photography, a short narrative, a visual poem or other experimental format. A running time between 30 seconds 3 minutes is recommended.

Your out of class project may be photographed on stage or location with the appropriate preparation and permissions. If you want to reserve the stage for your out of class shoot you will need to contact stage services stages@cinema.usc.edu .

Each cinematographer will have one day on a weekend (Fri., Sat. or Sun) to shoot his/her out of class assignment; and will be required to crew on 4 others across two weekends.

Whether you elect to shoot your project on campus or at an off-campus location, all regular USC policies and protocols applicable to Production III must be followed. In order to facilitate this, you will be encouraged to enlist the services of a currently enrolled USC Cinema Student as your producer. If you shoot on stage, working with a producer is also strongly advised.

Your out of class project is your project. You may not shoot a project for yourself or for another student in another class and submit it as your own for this course.

1. Anticipating a roster of 10 students, the class will form into two production groups for the purpose of sharing the digital cinema camera package for each group's production weekend.
2. On the days when you are not shooting your own final project, you are required to crew for your classmate who is shooting. Students enrolled in 557 must fulfill the key crew positions: director/cinematographer, camera operator, AC, Gaffer, Grip, you may bring in an outside production designer with the approval of your instructor.
3. Your classmates are not actors, nor extras. You must cast your actors and adhere to the guidelines in USC's agreement with the Screen Actor's Guild (SAG).
4. If you elect to shoot on stage, you must make your own stage reservation.
5. Each team will meet with the professor to consult regarding their plans for this project.
6. Each team is responsible to arrange actors, props, set design and any additional elements needed to mount your production.
7. The first class meeting following your shoot: you will submit a DPR and a self-critique of your experience, what went well, what could have gone better, what you learned from the experience. Please label your self-crit as follows: first initial last name_557crit.docx ie: cchomyn_557crit.docx
8. All work for this class, must be completed before we screen final projects. An assembly of both your in class project and out of class project must be uploaded to the Google Drive folder for which I will send you a link.
9. Final format for the screening QT.mov file.

Be safe, inventive, experiment, and create a visually arresting piece that challenges you.

Learning and Outcomes:

557 will address the technical and aesthetic aspects of cinematography with an emphasis on developing techniques and operating methods that will prepare each student to transition to a professional working environment.

In learning to make informed, accurate, and ethically appropriate decisions concerning the cinematography of a film, the students must apply a number of skills necessary for the working cinematographer consistently, effectively, and artistically.

Each student is expected to demonstrate a mastery of his/her ability to:

1. Behave in a safe and professional manner at all times
2. Break down a script visually in terms of mood, shooting style, and pace
3. Make practical and aesthetic choices regarding film stocks and/or digital imaging tools
4. Determine the significance of camera placement as it affects the look and feel of a shot
5. Control depth-of-field
6. Choose an appropriately sized shot and composition for the story
7. Stage actors for compelling shots that serve the story
8. Maintain screen direction and eye lines
9. Design effective camera movement
10. Use both an incident and reflected light exposure meter
11. Light for the mood and tone of a piece while maintaining continuity within each scene
12. Control the four elements of light
13. Use the tools of the cinematographer, lenses, cameras, filtration, etc
14. Use equipment that is available to achieve the desired effect

15. Follow all safety procedures and behave responsibly when making decisions
16. Lead a cast and crew effectively
17. Manage set resources efficiently
18. Communicate clearly
19. Listen carefully
20. Earn the respect of one's colleagues

Final Exam

The final exam will cover the content of the semester. It will test your understanding of the course material including all that is discussed, demonstrated and explored. The format will most likely be essays and short answers. (Subject to change.)

Grading:

The work you create in class will be its own reward. Your grade for this class will be based on your collaboration and support of your fellow classmates, as well as on your participation in the various support positions (ie. AC, electrician, grip, etc.). Additional consideration will be given for those students who push themselves to take creative risks. Finally, too much ambition that results in not completing your goals, will adversely affect your grade.

- 65% Class Engagement and Participation
- 20% Out of Class Project
- 15% Final Exam

You are expected to act professionally, respect people and property, arrive in class, and on set on time and with enthusiasm regarding your work, as well as the work of your classmates.

Standards:

- A Work that is excellent meets professional standards of safety and creativity. The working practices demonstrate a mastery of the leadership skills necessary to inspire a crew to deliver their very best. The images created demonstrate a thorough understanding of the technical craft and clearly serve the themes and subtext of the story, avoid cliché, and are not derivative.
- B Work that is very good meets professional standards of safety and creativity. The working practices demonstrate the ability to lead the crew, and an understanding of the leadership skills necessary to be a department head. The images demonstrate a solid grasp of the technical craft and serve the themes and subtext of the story, the avoid cliché, and are not derivative.
- C Work that is good meets professional standards of safety and creativity. The working practices demonstrate a one's ability to lead the crew. The images created demonstrate control in the execution of the technical craft and clearly serve the themes and subtext of the story, avoid cliché, and are not derivative.
- D Work that below average meets professional standards of safety and may demonstrate some creativity. The working practices demonstrate the cinematographer's shortcomings as a creative collaborator and department head. The images created demonstrate a lack of control over the technical craft of creating moving photographic images. They may fail to serve the subtext, they may include cliché and may be derivative.
- F Work that fails to meet acceptable standards or is not conducted safely. Does not demonstrate creativity in story telling or execution. One who is unable to lead their crew. The images created are inadequate and demonstrate a fundamental lack of understanding of the technical craft as well as the ways in which the craft is used to convey subtext and text.

Attendance:

Due to the hands-on “workshop” structure to this class, and the interdependence of the students, attendance is mandatory. Engaging in every crew position and learning the unique assignments and duties of each is an integral part of a cinematographer’s formal training. By learning the details of each crew position, a cinematographer can better understand the inner workings of the set and the crew at large.

Arriving early to class is on time, arriving on time is late. Late arrivals are disruptive to the class. Should circumstance necessitate your absence, then you are expected to call your instructor before the beginning of class.

All assignments are due on time. Absences, Late arrivals and late submission of assignments are considered when evaluating your class participation.

Dress Code:

The sound stage is an industrial work environment. All students must come to class prepared for physical work. You must wear long pants and close toed shoes. Shorts, skirts, dresses, sandals and flip-flops will not be allowed. If you come inappropriately attired, you will be asked to leave and will be marked absent. I also strongly suggest you bring leather palmed work gloves and appropriate tools.

Recommended Reading Materials:

- o American Society of Cinematographers Manual, 11th Edition
- o Digital Cinematography: Fundamentals, Tools, Techniques, and Workflows by David Stump

Recommended Websites:

- o www.cinematographersportal.com
- o <https://www.oscars.org/science-technology/projects>
- o www.theasc.com
- o <https://rondexter.com/>
- o <https://www.dga.org/Craft/VisualHistory.aspx>
- o <https://www.cambridgeincolour.com/>
- o <https://www.linkedin.com/learning> (formerly Lynda.com)

Additional Policies

Production Numbers will be given to any class who normally receives numbers. Students will be instructed when it is possible for them to go onto SCA community and create numbers where authorized for their class. Class SAs will aid students in making, or correcting, production numbers if needed. Note many classes work in teams where they share a production number. Ask your SA about the needs for your particular class.

Students will be required to use approved "Fast Track" Insurance companies only for rentals and equipment. No other insurance requests will be honored. USC does not insure Sharegrid or companies not on the "Fast Track List."

Students may make requests for location insurance verifications (or COIs) when requested by locations. Students are reminded that these requests can take 3-10 days from request to final approval.

All necessary forms and online request forms are available on SCACommunity under the "Student Productions" heading. Contact your SA with any questions that you may have.

In terms of shooting plans, student are required to vet their plans with their faculty including discussing any Hazardous Shooting Conditions as defined by the SCA's Safety Book as posted on SCACommunity. This semester students will also be required to vet their plans for remaining Covid-safe with our Covid Safety Monitor. Ask your SA if you are unclear about these protocols.

Couse Evaluation:

Student feedback is essential to making this course the best it can be. In addition to the standard USC course evaluation survey at the end of the semester, your feedback throughout the semester is always welcomed and appreciated.

Wait List

Any student interested in taking 557 must attend the first class to be eligible for the roster. Missing a class in the first three weeks removes you from eligibility.

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

Disruptive Student Behavior:

Behavior that 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.

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.

Schedule

(This schedule is subject to change as necessary and at the discretion of the instructor)

Class	Topic
Week 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Syllabus
Week 1 1/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quiz• Introduction to Class• Filling Out Camera Reports• Loading 35mm Magazines• Assign Position Papers
Week 2 1/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MLK Day Holiday
Week 3 1/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review Loading Film• Review of principles• Building the Panavision G2• Assign Pitch Decks• Assign Out-of-class project Pitch Deck – Due Week 8•
1/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make Up Class (Friday) Time & Location TBD
Week 4 1/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shoot 35mm Scene
Week 5 2/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Screen Dailies• Shoot 35mm Scene
Week 6 2/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Screen Dailies• Shoot 35mm Scene
Week 7 2/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• President's Day Holiday
Week 8 2/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Screen Dailies• Shoot 35mm Scene• Pitch Deck Due
Week 9 3/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Screen Dailies• Shoot 35mm Scene
	SPRING BREAK
Week 10 3/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Screen Dailies• Digital Camera Workshop

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>Week 11
3/27
Sat & Sun
4/2 & 4/3</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen Dailies • Shoot 35mm Scene
 • Shoot out of class projects |
| <p>Week 12
4/3
Fri, Sat & Sun
4/8, 4/9, &
4/10</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen Dailies • Shoot 35mm Scene
 • Shoot out of class projects |
| <p>Week 13
4/10</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen Dailies • Shoot 35mm Scene |
| <p>Week 14
4/17</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen Dailies • Shoot 35mm Scene |
| <p>Week 15
4/24</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen Dailies • Shoot 35mm Scene |
| <p>Final Exam
5/3
(2-4pm)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location TBD • Screen Dailies • Screen Out of Class Projects |