

**THTR484 Acting In Commercials**

**SPRING 2023 Mondays 9am-10:50**

**Location:** Shrine 105

**Instructor:** Kevin McCorkle

**Contact:** [kmccorkle@usc.edu](mailto:kmccorkle@usc.edu) 310-569-0460 call/text

**Office:** Online

**Office Hours:** email, call or text to schedule an appointment.

**Course Description:**

This class will incorporate simulated audition exercises as well a discussion of the approach, technique and preparation for the audition process in order to book the job. In class and at home self-taping exercises will simulate the actual process of auditioning during these Covid times and beyond. Through this series of exercises students will strive to achieve a superior level of capability, confidence and comfort in their audition process.

Lecture covering key aspects of a commercial career including; agent representation, union affiliation, the casting process, set etiquette, financial payment formulas, actor interaction, communication with the director and other topics will be covered. Set protocols and set behavior during the actual work experience will also be discussed.

Guest speakers (seasoned professionals) offering insight regarding specific aspects of commercial acting, production, auditioning, casting media platforms and agency representation will be invited to class. These speakers will give students first-hand exposure to their experience.

**Learning Objectives:**

Upon completing the course, students will have the tools, knowledge and experience to effectively begin the commercial auditioning and working process in the field.

**Recommended Preparation:** on camera practice or experience

**Required Readings and Supplementary Materials:**

BREAKING INTO COMMERCIALS Terry Berland and Deborah Ouellette

Available online

ACTING IN MOTION STORYTELLING IN SECONDS Kevin McCorkle

Available Handouts in Class

**Description and Assessment of Assignments:**

**WEEKLY: SIMULATED AUDITIONS** On camera, analyzed and critiqued.

**QUIZZES** Quizzes focusing on previous material and covering any required reading and or research may be given to ensure a thorough understanding of prior topics and proper preparation for the current weekly class.

**MID TERM AND FINAL EXAM:** Written and practical. To be administered mid-term as well as during the university final exam schedule.

**JOURNAL:** Students will maintain an audition journal making entries after each on camera class audition/work. Each entry will include specific analysis regarding preparation for the audition, experiences during the audition and analysis after, based on class critique. The purpose of these journals is to provide each student with a comprehensive guide for self- analysis and appraisal with regard to future auditions. Journal will be reviewed by instructor graded as one of the required term projects.

**ASSIGNMENTS:** Assignments will be given throughout the semester pertaining to current studies and applications.

**EXTRA CREDIT:** Occasional opportunities for extra credit may be given during the semester.

**PARTICIPATION:** Strong emphasis placed on student participation as a part of this on camera class. Attendance is **required** and will be taken.

**ATTENDANCE:** No unexcused absence will be allowed with no attendance penalty. Since this course is crafted around actors working with each other attendance courtesy is expected. Grading will be based on in class work requiring attendance and work during class meeting time.

**GRADING GUIDELINES** Excellent, good, average, below average and inadequate represented by A, B, C, D, F will be assessed and applied. Work turned in late will receive a grade reduction. All work must be hard copy written no email assignments.

**The SDA GUIDELINES on GRADING as published elsewhere in this handbook are:**

- Each course shall contain at least three assignments, projects, exams, papers or exercises which shall be evaluated during the semester and which shall provide an analytical record of each student's progress in the course.
- Attendance shall be weighted at no more than 15% as per University Guidelines. Studio Courses must delineate how participation will be graded (in class exercises, scene study, etc.)
- There shall be no unexcused absences.
- No late assignments, projects, exams, papers, or exercised shall be accepted unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the teacher or unless exceptional circumstances occur.

### **Grading Breakdown:**

<b>WEEKLY AUDITIONS</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>QUIZZES</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>MID-TERM</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>PERSONAL JOURNAL/L.E.A.P.</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>ASSIGNMENTS</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>ATTENDANCE/IN CLASS WORK</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	<b>25%</b>

## Grading Scale (Example)

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 Submission Policy:

Assignments will be given a due date and should be turned in on the due date to avoid penalty.

## Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment:

USC policy prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

### *SCampus Section 11.12(B)*

*Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).*

## Course Evaluation:

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students' experience in the class. You should expect to receive an email update once the system has launched to provide your feedback on this course. In addition, you are always welcome to connect with with me as the instructor to offer any feedback on the course.

### IMPORTANT:

In addition to in-class contact hours, all courses must also meet a minimum standard for out-of-class time, which accounts for time students spend on homework, readings, writing, and other academic activities. **For each unit of in-class contact time, the university expects two hours of out of class student work per week over a semester.**

(Please refer to the [Contact Hours Reference guide](#).)

## Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
<b>Week 1</b>	1/9 Lecture: Overview of the journey, General Info, Goals, Guest Speaker <b>Audition: What is your story?</b>	Read: The Art of Commerical Acting	Due 1/23
<b>Week 2</b>	1/23 Review Auditions Lecture: Commercials: the role they play, Guest Speaker <b>Audition: Specific Storytelling,</b>	Read: The Importance of Creating Specific Circumstances Assigned: L.E.A.P Sheet Exercise	Audition & L.E.A.P. Sheet due 1/30
<b>Week 3</b>	1/30 Review Auditions, Lecture: Cue Card Instruction, Guest Speaker, <b>Audition: One Liners Three Ways</b>	Read: You Incorporated: Creating Your Own Career Path Assigned: Dollar Bill #1 exercise	Dollar Bill #1 Exercise due 2/06
<b>Week 4</b>	2/06 Review Auditions, Lecture: Script Analysis: How to handle copy, <b>Audition: Cue Cards- Lots of Copy Real &amp; Folksy,</b> Guest Speaker	Read: Technique the Foundation for Success Assigned: The Actors Tool Kit	The Actors Took Kit due 2/13
<b>Week 5</b>	2/13 Review Auditions, Lecture: Defining your character and type, Guest Speaker, <b>Audition: The Spokesperson,</b>	Read: Art & Technique a Symbiotic Relationship Assigned: Internet Scavenger Hunt	Scavenger Hunt Due 2/27
<b>Week 6</b>	2/27 Review Auditions, Lecture: The Standards & Code for Auditions & work, Guest Speaker, Your Casting Profiles <b>Audition: Working with Props</b>	Read: Sustained and focused practice: how it sustains your technique	Your Casting Profiles Due 2/27
<b>Week 7</b>	3/6 Review Auditions, Lecture: Casting Directors- Defining and De-mystifying <b>Audition: Tongue Twister</b> Discuss Dollar Bill #2, Guest Speaker	Read: Making it Happen: Self Empowerment Assigned: Dollar Bill #2	Dollar Bill #2 due 3/20

<b>Week 8</b>	3/20 Review Auditions, Lecture: Anatomy of a Commerical breaking down the Creative Process, Guest Speaker <b>Audition: Comedy Timing</b>	Read: Rules of Comedy and how to apply them, the extra mile, going beyond Assigned: Write your own spot	Write Your Own Spot Due 3/27
<b>Week 9</b>	3/27 Review Auditions, Lecture: Working with the Director, Record Your Own Spot, Guest Speaker, <b>Audition: Combining Copy with Story</b>	Read: You booked it... now what?	Record Your Own Spot Due 4/3
<b>Week 10</b>	4/3 Review Auditions, Lecture: Production Savvy, Using your Production Knowledge to get your best performance, Your Dream Home Studio, Guest Speaker, <b>Audition: The Professional- Medical &amp;</b>	Read: Consistency – One Key to Success	Your Dream Home Studio Due 4/10
<b>Week 11</b>	4/10 Review Auditions, Lecture: Building Relationships: Creating Your Own Team to Ensure your Success, Your Team List, Guest Speaker <b>Audition: Pot luck strength &amp; weakness,</b>	Read: No Actor is on an Island	Your Team List due 04/17
<b>Week 12</b>	4/17 Review Auditions, Lecture: Putting your package together, Preparing Yourself for Success, Your Master Plan, Guest Speaker <b>Audition: Product Collaboration</b>	Read: Living as an Artist	Your Master Plan due 4/24
<b>Week 13</b>	04/24 Review Auditions, Lecture: Using the Internet to Promote & Brand Yourself, Rough DrFT of Blue Print, Guest Speaker, <b>Audition: Ensemble Work</b>	Read: Your Blue Print for Success  Read: Self taping for practice and Auditions	Draft Blue Print due 04/25

<b>FINAL</b>	Friday, 05/05 8:00-10:00am Final Draft of Blueprint Due		Date: For the date and time of the final for this class, consult the USC <i>Schedule of Classes</i> at <a href="http://classes.usc.edu">classes.usc.edu</a> .
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## SDA PRODUCTIONS, ISPS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

SDA productions, ISPs and Extracurricular Activities\* will not excuse you from any class work. There will be no exceptions made for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, homework or lack of class participation resulting from your involvement in any of the above. Your grade will reflect your work in this class, independent from work in any other class or activity.

\*Activities that have been officially sanctioned by the larger university (such as marching band, song girls, or varsity sports) are exempt. You must submit official documentation to your professor regarding your participation in an event prior to your absence.

## 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, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

### Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for DSP and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 814-4618 (Video Phone), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu).

### Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university’s site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

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## Health and Participation in Class

You are expected to complete your Trojan Check screener daily and, as your instructor, I may ask you to show your daily screening in class. Your health and safety, and the health and safety of your peers, are my top priorities. If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, or if you discover that you have been in close contact with others who have symptoms or who have tested positive, you must follow the instructions on Trojan Check. My hope is that if you are feeling ill or if you have been exposed to someone with the virus, you will stay home to protect others. I will ensure that you can continue to participate in class remotely so that your education is not disrupted.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, USC requires that face coverings (masks) be worn indoors including in classrooms. Face coverings must cover your nose and mouth and be worn throughout the class session. A mask with a valve is not considered an adequate face covering and should not be used, as it can expel exhaled air, increasing the risk to others. Eating or drinking during class is prohibited because of the risk posed by removing your mask for these activities. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in your being asked to leave the classroom immediately. Requests for accommodations related to the face covering and eating/drinking policies should be directed to the Office for Student Accessibility Services (<https://osas.usc.edu/>).

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### **SDA Student Support & Reporting Form:**

To facilitate a supportive environment of accountability, SDA has created an internal system of reporting for students to address issues/concerns and to offer feedback or suggestions for improvement. This mechanism provides a pathway for reporting and offering feedback without fear of retaliation or judgment. Any submission filed through this form will be reviewed and processed accordingly through SDA Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

To file a report, please visit: <https://bit.ly/SDAstudentreporting>

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### **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.

*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) 740-9355(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.

*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 Student Accessibility Services - (213) 740-0776*

<https://osas.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 and 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) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*

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

Non-emergency assistance or information.