

THTR 501: Poetry and Prose into Drama
Spring 2023 Wednesday 5 – 7:50 PM 63219D
Location: THH 109

Instructor: Paula Cizmar

Office: JEF 201, 950 W. Jefferson, Los Angeles 90089

Office Hours: Available: Wed 2:30 - 4 pm; Tuesday Noon – 3 pm; please note that office hours are by appointment only and, due to potential covid infections and the size of my office, will most likely be online; contact me via email or phone, at least 24 hours in advance.

Contact Info: cizmar@usc.edu; 323.376.1216 mobile;
www.paulacizmar.com

IT Help: USC Information Technology Services
<http://itservices.usc.edu>; School of Dramatic Arts IT – Mr. Prakash Shirke, Contact Info: shirke@usc.edu; 213.740.1288.
MCC

***Catalogue description:** THTR 501 Plays for the stage shall be written using public-domain poetry and prose as inspiration and source material, complemented with exploring poetry, prose, and varied dramas as context for the student writer. Students should be well-versed in literature and have written in one or more genres.*

Poetry and Prose into Drama...

is a writing workshop that focuses on adapting sources in the public domain into dramatic works. Sources, which will vary from semester to semester, will be drawn from both published and unpublished works and may include poetry, fiction, nonfiction, memoir, or even other dramatic works. (**See Theme for This Semester**). This workshop explores both the art and craft of adaptation—the intuitive and the technical—utilizing various strategies including: the investigation of archetypal stories and/or storytelling that thrives across cultures, genres, and time; application of the elements of dramatic writing to an existing story frame or literary concept; analysis of written works across a broad spectrum of forms and styles; readings and/or screenings of literature/plays; writing exercises; dramaturgical input. With an emphasis on process, the workshop offers methods for adapting work and for developing a means to transform non-dramatic genres to dramatic genres.

Questions to be explored include:

How much is enough/How little is too little?

Is the goal faithful adaptation, inspired by, or springboard?

Should the work be in conversation with or serve as a refutation of the original material?

Assigned reading in this course is intended to be a source of inspiration and discovery. Outside reading and outside interests are vital.

Course Objectives

In this workshop, you will:

- write a full-length play adapted from a public-domain source as specified in the Spring 2023 theme;
- experiment with a flexible writing process, beginning with exploratory work and research, using vision boards, character voice exploration, and archival materials;
- develop work through concept/outline and raw draft;
- devise a personal strategy for analysis and revision.

You may also develop shorter works that grow out of writing exercises.

Emphasis is placed on discovering and cultivating your own unique voice as well as expanding your imagination.

An additional focus: *We seek to examine current culture, issues, and trends as part of an attempt to define and redefine American dramatic writing for the 21st century.*

Theme for Spring 2023:

Greek Tragedy as a Source for Transformation in the 21st Century

The tragedies of the Ancient Greeks are still viable today. On the one hand, we could look at this pessimistically and say, How sad that humans have learned so little in the last 2500 years! Or, we could marvel at the genius of the ancient writers, how skillful they were at delving into the human condition, how empathetic they were about our frailties; we could attempt to acknowledge that for us humans, such complicated and inherently wounded beings, even a tiny bit of change for the better is something to celebrate. At the very least, there is comfort in the fact that the tragedies offer a rich array of subjects to explore. In the plays from the Greeks, we've got love, war, betrayal, injustice, bad decisions, revenge, forced marriage, corruption, madness, power, families, and even trafficking all represented. With any luck, there is something for everybody.

For 501, none of you have to do a faithful adaptation—not at all. Your adaptations can (and should) be highly creative, reinventing/reimagining the stories from your own view of the world.

For your adaptation, pick one of the plays from the list below. Please note: To make your selection, you do not need to read all the plays. You can skim them, or read about them, to get a sense of which one you'd like to adapt. There is plenty of material about these plays available on the internet. Once you have selected the play you are going to adapt, read **multiple translations** of the play. This will give you some inspiration and ideas for how even a different translation can alter the mood, tone, or approach to a play. (BTW: There are collections of translations of the plays available on the internet; these tend to be older translations with slightly outmoded language, but this at least gives you access to free-of-charge translations to use.) In addition: Read **at least two other** plays from the list so that you will gain a sense of the storytelling style of these works and the beauty of the language—and also so that you will be familiar with multiple story lines. This will be useful when you are supporting the other writers in their adaptations

of plays, plus it's good to have some context for the stories, which somewhat link/overlap/interweave. So again: You will read at least three different plays (the one you select to adapt + two others), and you will read multiple translations of the play you choose. An added benefit: It would be a shame to leave graduate school without some knowledge of these classics that people from so many cultures and eras have used as foundations for their own theatre-making—ranging from people creating their own versions of THE TROJAN WOMEN in refugee camps to others creating hip hop versions of the ODYSSEY.

List of plays to choose from for your adaptation:

AGAMEMNON. Aeschylus

AJAX. Sophocles

HECUBA. Euripides

HERAKLES. Euripides

IPHIGENIA AT AULIS (and/or IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS). Euripides

PHILOCTETES. Sophocles

THE BACCHAE. Euripides

THE SUPPLIANT WOMEN. Aeschylus (Important: We'll use the Aeschylus play, not Euripides' play—which has an entirely different story.)

Re: translations. I tend to favor the translations of poets. I always start with Anne Carson to see if she has translated the Greek play I'm interested in—because her work is muscular, relevant, strong. But other contemporary poets—Seamus Heaney, Fionnuala McCarthy, etc.—also have created beautiful versions of the play.

Suggestion for efficiency's sake: The editions of the Greek tragedies from the University of Chicago Press have multiple plays in each volume, plus great introductory notes about the historical/cultural era and the playwright. Thus, you get the benefit of more than one play per volume.

Optional Reading

Books about re-interpreting myths, fairy tales with a contemporary view, i.e., the tales are **metaphors**....

Please remember, throughout the course of the workshop, to keep reading and viewing—current and classic work, comedic and dramatic, realistic and non-. Try, also, to make a habit of looking at visual art and visiting museums: LACMA, MOCA, the Japanese American National Museum, the Getty, the Norton Simon, Museum of Latin American Art, California African American Museum, the Huntington Library, the Autry, etc. Expand your senses. Allow music to inspire and awaken emotions and images. During a focused creative effort such as the adaptation process, it is important to be constantly refueled. The work of other artists from other media provides imaginative stimulation resulting in ideas, inspirations, and solutions to problems you might not have come to otherwise.

Grading

Grading Breakdown

Bearing in mind that a grade is earned, not given, your grade will be based on completion of a Final Project (a full-length play), the ongoing writing and revision of your script, completion of the reading assignments, participation in class exercises and discussion, and the creation of a creative portfolio (which is essentially a compilation of the work/research/exercises/ideas created for this class).

Grading Breakdown Percentages:

Creative Portfolio (research/exercises/ideas/vision boards, etc)	20 percent
Ongoing Research, Writing, Revision, Reading	30 percent
Professionalism (ability to collaborate, assess work, be supportive, etc.)	15 percent
Final Project	35 percent
TOTAL	100 percent

Your Final Project is a revised draft of your full-length adaptation. Note: It is recognized that there is not enough time in a single semester for the entire script to be revised. However, at least one section of the play should demonstrate some potential revision. The project will be graded on both artistic merit AND progress, i.e., the growth from early exploratory work to completed draft.

Assessment:

The Final Project itself is assessed according to the following elements:

Quality of Character Development	25 percent
Quality of Story & Structure	25 percent
Quality of Dialogue/Language	25 percent
Quality of Overall Creative Achievement, which will include development of theme, metaphor/imagery, professionalism	25 percent
TOTAL	100 percent

Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments

Grading criteria: The quality of work for all components (see list under “Grading Breakdown”) is determined by the thoroughness of the effort, the continuing process, and the imagination displayed.

Grading Scale for SDA: **A** indicates work of excellent quality; **B** of good quality; **C** of acceptable quality; **D** of below average quality; and **F** indicates inadequate work.

Excellent: A (4) = 100-94; A- (3.7) = 93-90

Good: B+ (3.3) = 89-86; B (3) = 85-84; B- (2.7) = 83-80

Acceptable: C+ (2.3) = 79-76; C (2) = 75-74; C- (1.7) = 73-70

Poor: D+ (1.3) = 69 – 66; D = 65-64 (1); D = 63 - 60 (0.7) = 60s; F (0) = 59 and below

Note: A minimum passing grade for graduate students is C.

- “Excellent” indicates that the student couples clear understanding of the class material with original and creative insight, as demonstrated by their work; “Good” means that the student demonstrates a clear understanding of the material and has done the work well; “Acceptable” indicates that the student demonstrates a general understanding of the

material but with some gaps; “Poor” indicates that there are identifiable gaps in the student’s understanding of the class material; “Failure” is the result of the student not having completed his or her assignments coupled with poor understanding of the material.

- When the average falls between two grades, the final grade will be weighted toward the positive end of the scale for students whose attendance and participation in class have been good, and will be weighted toward the negative end of the scale for those with poor attendance and participation.

Note: The SDA GUIDELINES on GRADING state that:

- *There shall be no unexcused absences.*
- *No late assignments, projects, exams, papers, or exercises shall be accepted unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the teacher or unless exceptional circumstances occur. Under such exceptional circumstances, no late penalties will accrue.*

Participation is essential and figures into your grade. This course is modeled along the lines of a professional, artistic workshop; thus, as a member of such a workshop, your participation is necessary not only for the development of your own work, but for the development of your colleagues’ work as well. Theatre is a highly collaborative, ensemble-oriented medium and play development is a key part of the life of a playwright. Please honor your obligation to your colleagues’ work. One unexcused absence is allowed. All other absences must be for reasons of illness or emergency and must be accompanied by a written explanation; in your absence, please prepare whatever assigned work is due and hand it in immediately upon your return to the workshop. [[Note for Spring 2023: We are aware that it is entirely possible that covid protocols may require quarantine if you have a positive virus test. Please COMMUNICATE if/when these issues arise.]]

Please note: If you miss class, it is YOUR responsibility to obtain information about missed class discussions, missed presentations of pages, etc. from your classmates, not from me. Please keep in contact with your fellow writers and arrange to read their pages on your own if you miss class.

Deadlines: You earn your grade based on the timely completion of your work, plus the quality of your work. Missed assignments count as a zero. Late assignments are marked down due to missed deadline.

Important Sustainability Message: This class lives in the world of the Green New Deal. No printing. All work, including the Final Project, will be turned in electronically.

Special Note

All students enrolled in MFADW are required to attend program events. This includes all of the New Works Festival events (NWF I, II, and III), all Western Edge Playwrights’ Salon events, and the student orientation held in late August. While some of these dates are not yet solidified, please put the times/dates in your calendar as soon as you can. Because we are monitoring professional development in every course that you take, and in the MFADW overall, your participation in these program events will have a direct

impact on your annual review. Please make any and all travel plans for after the New Works Festival III.

Zoom Etiquette

If it becomes necessary for us to use Zoom: "Netiquette" or "internet etiquette," is important for collaborative work. Please respect the following guidelines:

- Whenever possible, please use your computer to log-in to the class rather than your phone. This will help us with the quality of visuals and audio, plus it will present fewer problems when sharing screens.
- If you have technical issues during class, please contact: USC Information Technology Services <http://itservices.usc.edu>; School of Dramatic Arts – Mr. Prakash Shirke. Contact Info: shirke@usc.edu; 213.740.1288.
- Your camera must be on at all times, unless you are requested to hide video.
- Please attempt to log-in from an environment that does not have distracting background noise, such as pets, family members, machinery, music. If you find yourself in a situation with distracting noise, please use ear buds or headphones.
- When not speaking (for example, during a reading of a scene, when you are not playing a role), please mute your microphone. During discussions feel free to leave your mic on.
- Remember that you are in class, therefore behavior appropriate to class should be followed. Please do not walk around, leave the room, read, play games, etc. during class.
- You may use your devices for research that enhances the discussion during class, but please stay attuned to what is going on while engaged in research.
- Try to take turns speaking. Remember that Zoom creates problems when voices overlap.
- The chat box will be available to you to use during class, however please don't abuse it. For example, remember that everyone can see what you type in the chat. Therefore your comments should not contain private messages to another class member—which can be read in the saved chat. Also, try to use chat to enhance the discussion, rather than interrupt it.
- Remember: The class session is being recorded. (This includes the chat.)
- Be respectful of others at all times.
- Remember: We're all in this together. Now more than ever.

Sharing of Course Materials Outside of the Learning Environment

USC has a policy that 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

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Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
<p>Weeks</p> <p>1 – 3</p> <p>Jan 11 to Jan 25</p>	<p>Preparation & Gathering</p> <p>Introduction: Why adaptation? How can you renew, expand, reimagine the original material to create an even more insightful and emotional experience for an audience? How do you make older work relevant?</p> <p>For 2023: What were the Greeks writing about in their era—and what does it have to do with us today? Has humanity evolved? If so, in what areas? And how much? What issues of the human condition are still relevant today? What are the great metaphors in these works? What was/is the intentions of the original authors?</p> <p>Consider: What text speaks to you—and why?</p>	<p>Discussion:</p> <p>Laying the Groundwork. How to read deeply into material; how to let the inner life of preexisting work speak to you in an original way. How to explore theatricality.</p>	<p>Week 1: Begin to collect your resources, e.g., research, burning ideas, poetic impulses, images, emotional foundation, monologues, character banks, music/soundtrack. Read the materials on Blackboard; read plays provided as PDFs; read stories/novels.</p> <p>Week 2: Select the material you will adapt. Bring in ideas, vision boards, resources. Begin character work. Explore voice (through monologues), intentions, missions, relationships.</p> <p>Note: We will be doing many things at once. We will be discussing the source material, exploring and developing characters, analyzing already existing characters/story lines, etc. Some people will be working on different types of material—and I will be offering different kinds of guidance to different people depending on what phase their work is in. Sometimes you will not be able to present your work—but don't wait! Keep working. Sometimes you will be the only one working in a particular mode. No worries. Be prepared to be flexible. Remember that there is no one way of writing a play, no one way of getting there. Please stay on top of things and continue to develop your work in your way—but on time and diligently.</p>

<p>Weeks 4 - 12</p> <p>Feb 1 to Apr 5</p> <p>PLEASE NOTE: We do not meet on March 15 due to Spring Break.</p>	<p>The Process: From the Intuitive to the Technical</p> <p>Staying Open: Alternating Various Strategies and Skills When Needed.</p> <p>Using Meditation and Analysis.</p>	<p>Discussion</p> <p>Consider: Empathy, metaphor, dynamic characters, possible alternatives to the source material, possible alternatives to the storytelling.</p> <p>The Hidden Life of Language.</p>	<p>Weeks 4 - 6: Write exploratory/ experimental scenes based on an integration of the source material and your spin on it.</p> <p>Read alternative versions of the source material and/or commentary on the source material.</p> <p>Check out the source material others are adapting.</p> <p>Week 6: Story meeting. Brainstorm further ideas for your Final Project</p> <p>Weeks 7 – onward: Keep writing. Workshop new scenes for your FPP. Present discussion/new ideas/plans for FPP.</p> <p>Midterm, due week 8: Discuss the progress of your project. Communicate about what you are working on, i.e., what this is and what you intend. Remember, at this point, anything you do is a RAW draft, not a first draft, and changes/alterations of direction, new ideas are all possible. Let’s see how far you can get with your work.</p> <p><i>Hint: Look at your writing exercises and monologues for possible raw material for your Final Project and for other plays you are writing.</i></p>
<p>Weeks 13 - 15</p> <p>Apr 12 to Apr 26</p>	<p>Works in Progress</p> <p>Continue Work.</p>	<p>Workshop</p> <p>In-class presentations of large segments of scripts from each writer. Schedule TBA.</p>	<p>Weeks 13, 14, 15: Present your script segment according to the schedule as created in class. PROVIDE FEEDBACK to the other writers as their work is presented. Continue to refine, revise, rework your script.</p> <p>TURN IN: Your Final Project. Due May 3, 2023.</p>

FINAL	FINAL EXAM		Date: For confirmation of the date and time of the final for this class, consult the USC <i>Schedule of Classes</i> at www.usc.edu/soc .
Wednesday May 3	Turn in your work no later than 6:30 pm.		

REMINDER: Use Blackboard as a resource. Class materials, information, handouts, additional essays, source materials, etc., are posted on the class site on Blackboard.

We are not helpless. Even after Orpheus was torn to pieces, his severed head, floating down the river Hebrus, went on singing, reminding us that song is stronger than death. We can sing the truth and name the liars. We can stand in solidarity with our fellows on the front lines and magnify their voices by adding our own.

Above all we must understand that stories are at the heart of what's happening, and the dishonest narratives of oppressors have attracted many. So we must work to overturn the false narratives of tyrants, populists, and fools by telling better stories than they do, stories in which people want to live.

The battle is not only on the battlefield. The stories we live in are also contested territories. Perhaps we can seek to emulate Joyce's Dedalus, who sought to forge in the smithy of his soul the uncreated conscience of his race. We can emulate Orpheus and sing on in the face of horror, and not stop singing until the tide turns, and a better day begins.

—Salman Rushdie, PEN America

Tonight, I walk. I am watching the sky. I think of the people who came before me and how they knew the placement of the stars in the sky, watching the moving sun long and hard enough to witness how a certain angle of light touched a stone only once a year. Without written records, they knew the gods of every night, the small, fine details of the world around them and the immensity above them.

Walking, I can almost hear the redwoods beating....On the dry red road, I pass the place of the sunflower, that dark and secret location where creation took place. I wonder if it will return this summer, if it will multiply and move up to the other stand of flowers in a territorial struggle....It is a world of elemental attention, of all things working together, listening to what speaks in the blood. Whichever road I follow, I walk in the land of many gods, and they love and eat one another. Walking, I am listening to a deeper way. Suddenly all my ancestors are behind me. Be still, they say. Watch and listen. You are the result of the love of thousands. —Excerpt from "Walking" in *Dwellings: A Spiritual History of the Living World* by Linda Hogan (New York: Touchstone/Simon & Schuster, 2007)

Who are you, reader, reading my poems an hundred years hence?

I cannot send you one single flower from this wealth of the spring, one single streak of gold from yonder clouds.

Open your doors and look abroad.

From your blossoming garden gather fragrant memories of the vanished flowers of an hundred years before.

In the joy of your heart may you feel the living joy that sang one spring morning, sending its glad voice across a hundred years.

—Rabindranath Tagore, *The Gardener*. 1915.

Some words are open
 Like a diamond on glass windows
 Singing out within the crash of passing sun
 Then there are words like stapled wagers
 In a perforated book—buy and sign and tear apart—
 And come whatever wills all chances
 The stub remains
 An ill-pulled tooth with a ragged edge.
 Some words live in my throat
 Breeding like adders. Others know sun
 Seeking like gypsies over my tongue
 To explode through my lips
 Like young sparrows bursting from shell.
 Some words
 Bedevil me.
 —Audre Lorde, excerpt from “Coal,” *The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde*, 1997.

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. 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 Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from OSAS. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. OSAS is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for OSAS and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 814-4618 (Video Phone), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) 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.

Health and Participation in Class

You are expected to stay up to date with University policies on coronavirus, including screenings and testing, etc. The University sends out guidelines on a regular basis, and we must all expect things to change as the number and type of infections change. Your health and safety, and the health and safety of your peers, are my top priorities. If you are experiencing any symptoms of covid, 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 University health and safety instructions. If you test positive, if you are feeling ill, or if you have been exposed to someone with the virus, please stay home to protect others. SDA will work to assist you and help you continue to participate in class in some alternative way so that your education is not disrupted.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, USC recommends that face coverings (masks) be worn indoors including in classrooms. I will be wearing a mask. As the semester proceeds, the recommendation may become a requirement. If it does, face coverings should cover your nose and mouth. Eating or drinking during class is prohibited because of the risk posed by airborne particles. 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/>).

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.

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 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.

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 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

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) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.