



CNTV-478 Horror Film Analysis and Production

Units: 4

Summer 2023 — Tues/Thurs — 9:00am-1:20pm

Location: SCA 204

Instructor: Rebekah McKendry, PhD

Office: Virtual

Office Hours: By appointment

Contact Info: rmkendr@usc.edu

Phone: (703) 531-9405

SA: Thomas Kristensen

thomask6@usc.edu

Course Description

This course is a historical exploration of horror films and their relation to society, with both a national and international perspective. The course will look at horror markets within the US, examining for historical and social contexts, as well as looking at the affects and effects of international markets such as Japan, Germany, France, and others. The class will trace how present-day horror movies have been a product of a vast and plentiful history of horror, as well as how social and global forces have changed the path of horror, such as wars, social movements, trends, and other factors.

To study a genre, especially one like horror, one must consider the marketing and business side, in addition to audience receptions. The course will be a forum for ample discussion on the meaning of horror films, as well as the business and social sides.

This class is a combination of lecture, film screenings, class discussions, and production. You are expected to attend each and be an active participant. You are also expected to complete all assignments prior to class.

The productions will be completed on your own time using the USC provided camera, USC sound equipment, and AVID editing software. You will be assigned camera groups, and you will be expected to support your group during their shoots.

Course Notes

- You are expected to be an active participant in class discussions. Ask questions. Comment. Relate and make connections.
- Due to the nature of this course, all projects MUST adhere to the university safety and hazard standards. If you believe you may have a hazard in your script, you must take all necessary steps to ensure you've had all the appropriate conversations about the project and how to shoot it safely.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

The university will provide each student with a copy of AVID editing software. All of your projects must be edited on AVID. Students will receive six hours of training on AVID.

AVID MEDIA COMPOSER HARDWARE SPECIFICATIONS:

http://avid.force.com/pkb/articles/en_US/Compatibility/Media-Composer-System-Requirements

Required Additional Sessions and Tutorials

Students must attend these sessions unless otherwise arranged with Dr. McKendry.

Camera and Cinematography Dates:

Location: SCX Stage 2

- **Session One:** Thursday 6/29- 2:30-5:50
- **Session Two:** Thursday 7/6- 2:30-5:50

Contact- Jeremy Royce- jroyce@usc.edu

Editing Dates:

Location: TBA

- **Session One:** Tues 6/27- 2:30-5:20
- **Session Two:** Tues 7/11 2:30-5:20

Contact- Rommel Barriga- rommelvi@usc.edu

Sound Date:

Location: TBA

- **Session:** 7/5- 2pm- 5:50pm

Contact- Izumi Morocco- izumiros@usc.edu

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Project Breakdown

Students will complete a total of three projects, both individually and collaboratively with anyone you wish to include. You will be doing a casting session/ auditions and using permits for Project 3. Each assignment will be submitted with a one-page self-evaluation worksheet which is available on the class google drive. The self-evaluation is due at the same time as your project. These self-evals should be emailed to me on the day the project is due.

Project 1: Non-Dialogue Self-Portrait aka My Nightmare - DUE 7/13

P1 is a one-minute piece made by each student. The student serves as writer, director, cinematographer, and editor, but you can have others help you in other areas (costuming, acting, lighting, etc).

Synchronous dialogue is NOT permitted for this project, though music, ambience, sound effects, or voice-over may be used. This project is a self-portrait film in which you are to investigate, explore, document, examine, sketch, or illuminate a certain aspect of your own life - perhaps a nightmare or something that scares you. The approach may be either fiction or nonfiction, narrative or impressionistic. Feel free to focus on your love of horror, spooky material, a nightmare, something that gives you anxiety, or fear that says something about you.

Project 2: Practicing Set-Up and Delivery of a Jump Scare- DUE 7/27

P2 is a two- to three-minute piece made within your trios. Each person will serve as writer, director, and producer but another student in the trio will edit your piece. This will rotate within the trios. Our SA will place you in trios during the first class and determine who is editing which project.

Synchronous dialogue is permitted for this project. This project should demonstrate a basic 1, 2, 3 punch tension/horror set-up and delivery, which we will discuss in class.

Project 3: Free Will- DUE 8/3

P3 is a three- to four-minute piece made by each individual student. All roles are done by the single individual, but your camera group should be on your set helping as needed.

Concepts/synopses will be pitched in class.

Synchronous dialogue is permitted for this project. Music, ambience, sound effects, or voice over may be used. This project is open to any style, subject, or theme. These projects should feel more like short films with a clearly defined beginning, middle, and end. Composition, lighting, camera movement, editing techniques, sound design, and story structure will be specifically evaluated.

You are allowed to cast SAG actors for this one and all locations (campus or off-campus) must be permitted.

Project Grading Criteria

- Did you demonstrate the lessons taught in class?
- Did you follow assignment rules and length requirements?
- Did you demonstrate an evolving understanding of the subject matter?
- Were both the film and self-evaluation turned in on time?
- Did the project show creativity?
- How well did you work with your group members and crew?
- Did you fill out appropriate permits and hazards forms?

An Open Dialogue

Unique to the USC School of Cinematic Arts experience is an intense, open dialogue among students and instructors surrounding each phase of production: script finalization; visualization; scope; exercises; dailies, rough cuts; fine cuts; sound design; and final work. We intend to create and foster an environment in which each student's work is given full support, while at the same time it is open to analysis, critique, and feedback. Our goal is to put film analysis at the service of developing a sharper eye and becoming stronger and clearer filmmakers.

All students are expected to fully participate in class discussions and group critiques to develop skills in non-confrontational criticism. The goal is to engage with the creative processes of your peers in a constructive manner. We do not expect students to feel they must defend their work or make excuses about what we see on the screen, but, instead, to develop listening skills.

Safety

The personal safety of yourself, your cast, and crewmembers is a vital consideration as you plan and shoot your projects. Please check with your instructors before shooting if you have any questions or concerns. Read the safety handout and understand the contents. Footage shot under unsafe conditions will be withheld from the project; student's privileges may be suspended, and grades lowered. Be sure to discuss all hazardous shooting conditions with your instructors.

*****Each USC project must observe the USC SCA Safety Guidelines as well as professional, ethical and safety standards that will protect everyone on the set. *****

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Participation	10	10
Project 1 & Self-Evaluation	30	30
Project 2 & Self-Evaluation	30	30
Project 3 & Self-Evaluation	30	30
TOTAL	100	100

Grading 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 Policies

All written assignments should be submitted via email.

All video/film assignments should be uploaded as QuickTime files to our classroom drive.

Grading Timeline

We will review all screenings in class with critiques.

Additional Policies

- Late assignments will receive a grade no higher than a C.
- Projects submitted more than two days after the due date will not be accepted.
- All projects must follow the filming rules and guidelines outlined in the Summer Program Filming Rules. Any project which violates any of the policies will be unacceptable and could require disciplinary action.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class in-person or on Zoom with their cameras on. Attendance will be taken each session. When assignments are late or not completed, the grade may be lowered up to one full grade. Two absences will result in a student's grade being lowered by one full letter (IE: A becomes B). Each subsequent absence will result in a student's grade being lowered by one, additional full letter (IE: B becomes C).

Two late class arrivals equate to one full absence.

In order for an absence to be waived, the student must have approval from the professor. If a student is absent from class due to an emergency, the student must contact the professor prior to class or contact the Summer Program Office at summer@cinema.usc.edu.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Deliverables/ Due Dates
Class 1 - Jun 27	<p>Introduction: Go over syllabus, projects, self-evaluations.</p> <p>Meet everyone.</p> <p>What is genre? What is a horror film? What makes something scary? Discussions of genre.</p>	<p>Project 1</p> <p>Due Dates: Pitch- 6/29 Project- 7/13</p>
EDIT- Jun 27	<p>Afternoon Editing session- 2:30-5:20 Location: TBA</p>	
Class 2 - June 29	<p>Discuss P1 concepts and elevator pitch ideas.</p> <p>A History of the Horror Genre with Sample Clips.</p>	Due: P1 Pitches
CINE- June 29	<p>Thursday 6/29- 2:30-5:50 Location: SCX Stage 2</p>	
SOUND- July 5	<p>July 5th- 2pm- 5:50pm- Sound Lecture Location: TBA</p>	
Class 3 - Jul 6	<p>Horror History Continued and discussion of “contemporary” horror and trends. Predicting future trends . What comes next? How do we know?</p>	
CINE- July 6	<p>Afternoon cinematography- 2:30-5:50 Location: SCX Stage 2</p>	
Class 4 - July 11	<p>Shots, scenes, the language of cinema and the language of horror. Image and Space in Horror.</p> <p>Beats, Conflicts, Crafting Tension, Horror Formulas and Breaking the Structure, and Moments in Horror. Basic Coverage, Using Geography, Director Process.</p> <p>Go over Project 2.</p>	<p>Begin writing Project 2 Script.</p> <p>P2 Due Dates- Pitches due- July 18 P2 project due- July 27</p>

EDIT- July 11	Afternoon editing session- 2:30-5:20 Location: TBA	
Class 5 - July 13	Screen all Project 1 Short Films. Creating Jump Scares Horror short films.	Due: Project 1 Short Film and Self Evaluation.
Class 6 - July 18	Pitch Project 2 Crafting a horror screenplay. Working with gore in horror films.	P2 Pitches Due
Class 7 - July 20	Monster Theory History of Monsters, Zombies, Vampires, and Ghosts. International Horror Markets and Trends.	
Class 8 - Jul 25	Go over P3s. Watch a Found Footage film TBD History and discussion on Found Footage.	P3 Due Dates: Pitch due- July 27 Project due- Aug 3
Class 9 - Jul 27	Watch all P2s. P3 Pitch in-class. Sub-genres lecture - Torture Porn and TBA topic (religious horrors, aquatic horror, etc.)	Due: Project 2 Short Films and Self Evaluation. Due: P3 Pitches
Class 10 – Aug 1	Screening of a feature film followed by a Q and A with the filmmakers. Film TBD	

Class 11 - Aug 3	Screen all P3 Short Films. Making Micro Budget Horror and Navigating Streaming platforms and distributors. Pitching and Treatments Lecture. How to pitch horror. Getting in the room and getting people to read your screenplay. Festivals and finding work in the industry. Convo with horror panel of producers, directors, and writers	Due: Project 3 Short Films Self Evaluation.
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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.

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.

PLEASE NOTE:

FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACE IN THE SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX