

CTPR 425 PRODUCTION PLANNING SYLLABUS  
SECTION: 18538  
UNITS: 2  
FALL 2023, WEDNESDAYS, 7 PM TO 8:50 PM PACIFIC TIME  
SCA 356

## USC Cinematic Arts

**Instructor:** *Robert L. Brown*  
**Office:** *SCA 410*  
**Office Hours:** *By Appointment*

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

How long will it take to shoot your movie? How much will it cost? What's the most efficient way to schedule the scenes? Who and what need to be there? This course will give you the tools to answer those questions by examining the process of production planning. By the end of the semester, each student should not only have a conceptual grasp of how to line, breakdown, schedule, and budget a screenplay, but also have the practical skill to actually do it. The goal of the course is not to make you into professional production managers, but rather to introduce you to the basic principles of production planning with an emphasis on scheduling and budgeting.

Although, there are differences in scale and detail, the processes involved are essentially the same whether one is making a major studio feature, a low-budget feature, a streaming feature, an episodic television show, an educational film, or a student film.

Using a script from a one-hour episodic television show, each class member will line a script, develop a shooting schedule and create a day-out-of-days. We will use this foundation to construct a film budget for a low budget independent feature in order to reach an understanding of the various elements that go into the making of a film.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- ◆ Identify the shooting sequences in a script and mark them appropriately.
- ◆ Create a shooting schedule in a way that is efficient yet preserves a director's freedom as much as possible and fosters a comfortable and creative atmosphere to help the actors reach their best performances.
- ◆ Construct a film budget.
- ◆ Demonstrate a knowledge of best practices for film production in crew management, working with minors, and maintaining a supportive and creative on-set atmosphere.

As the course is open to students who are not Cinema majors, there are no prerequisite or co-requisite courses. There is no concurrent enrollment in any other course required.

## COURSE NOTES

The course meets once a week on campus. I will use Blackboard to deliver course materials, give assignments, and post grades. Each week will be presented as a learning module on Blackboard and will require preparatory work.

## TECHNOLOGICAL PROFICIENCY AND HARDWARE/SOFTWARE REQUIRED

You will be issued a PDF of script we will be using. You may line the digital script using *Adobe Acrobat Reader*. This software will allow you to mark up the script PDF. It's a free download [here](#). If you prefer to mark up a physical copy of the script you may print it out.

*Movie Magic Scheduling 6* published by [Entertainment Partners](#) will be used for all scheduling and breakdown work. Students are eligible to purchase the full program at the **academic rate of \$149**. This software is the industry standard and is used by all the major studios and production companies. It normally sells for \$489. You will need to create an account before downloading the software.

The new cloud-based *Movie Magic Budgeting* will be used for the budgeting assignment. This will be done in class and you will be able to use the software installed on the class computers. If you wish, you may also purchase an academic subscription for \$119 for 12 months. There is a free month's trial period available.

## REQUIRED READING

The required reading is a necessary reference for the course work. It will be closely tied to the course content and will cover in great detail the subjects we address in class. The book is available at the USC Bookstore and online at Amazon.

- ♦ [Planning the Low-Budget Film, 2nd edition](#) by Robert Latham Brown. Please be sure that you get the 2nd Edition.

## OPTIONAL READING

The first is a credible business model for the independent producer and the second is a compendium of physical production office forms and procedures.

- ♦ [The Producer's Business Handbook, 4th edition](#) by John J. Lee, Jr. and Anne Marie Gillen
- ♦ [The Complete Film Production Handbook, 4th edition](#) by Eve Light Honthner

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

Grades will be awarded based on six assignments and a final exam. The due dates of the projects are specified in the Course Outline. I will grade them based on rubrics with which you will be provided. Grades will be returned within one week of the due date.

ASSIGNMENT	% OF GRADE
<b>LINED SCRIPT</b>	
Each student will line a one-hour episodic television script indicating shooting sequences, their length, and essential elements.	15%
<b>BREAKDOWN SHEETS</b>	
Each student will create a set of breakdown sheets from the lined script using Movie Magic Scheduling.	15%
<b>SCHEDULED PRODUCTION BOARD</b>	
Each student will create a production schedule for the script showing the order in which the sequences will be shot, using Movie Magic Scheduling and good scheduling practices.	20%

ASSIGNMENT	% OF GRADE
<b>SHORT ESSAY</b>	
After reviewing video clips and background material, each student will write a 1-page essay analyzing two specific production accidents.	10%
<b>DAY-OUT-OF-DAYS</b>	
Using the DOOD generated by Movie Magic Scheduling and an Excel spreadsheet which will be provided, each student will devise a plan to meet SAG's Diversity in Casting requirements.	10%
<b>BUDGET</b>	
The class will taken through the process of setting up and building a film budget. Each student will submit their budget file done in class.	15%
<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	
The exam will be drawn from the assigned reading, lectures, and in-class work.	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

## GRADING SCALE

Assignment grades and course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-69
A-	90-94	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62
B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	59 and below

All assignments will be submitted through Blackboard.

## COURSE POLICIES

### ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to attend each class. If you must miss a session, please let me know so that we can work out an accommodation for you.

Most assignments will be done asynchronously outside of class. Setting up the Movie Magic Scheduling and Budgeting files will be done in the classroom. The final exam is currently planned to be administered in the classroom as well.

### ZOOM SYNCHRONOUS SESSIONS

Although each class session will be available on Zoom, students should attend in person unless unable to do so.

As class dynamics are substantially compromised without the ability for us all to see each other, it is expected that students will have their cameras on when attending via Zoom. If there are privacy concerns, the Zoom software can substitute a virtual background behind your image. If it is not possible to have your camera on during the sessions due to bandwidth issues, please contact me so that I can accommodate you.

### ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING

Zoom class sessions (if any) will be recorded and made available for asynchronous viewing until end of the grading period in December.

### OFFICE HOURS

Office Hours will be by appointment on Zoom so that I can be more flexible to make the best use of time for all of us. Please don't hesitate to request a session if you feel it would be helpful. These sessions can be recorded at the student's request. When requesting an appointment, please indicate the desired possible times in U.S. Pacific time. I am also available anytime by email. My email address is listed on the front of this syllabus. I will always endeavor to answer your email as soon as I possibly can. I prefer that you use my USC email for any class related correspondence.

### GRADING TIME LINE

Graded work will typically be returned 1 week after it is submitted.

### LATE WORK

Each of the steps in planning a production is based on the previous steps. Therefore is important to keep up with the assignments. If you are having difficulty in completing the work, please contact me. Late assignments will be subject to a 5% grade reduction.

### COURSE SCHEDULE: A WEEKLY BREAKDOWN

	TOPICS	READINGS/PREPARATIONS	ASSIGNMENT DUE
<b>Week 1</b> Aug 23	Intro to Production Planning. The <i>shooting sequence</i> . The Script. Lesson Objective: Students will be able to divide a script into shooting sequences.	♦ View <b>1917</b> video (link is in Blackboard, Week 1 Module)	
<b>Week 2</b> Aug 30	Production Problems. Lining the script. Adobe Reader. Lesson Obj: Students will be able to line a script.	♦ Read and visualize the script. ♦ Read Brown, chapters 3 & 5.	
<b>Week 3</b> Sep 6	What's not in the script. <i>Movie Magic Scheduling</i> . Lesson Obj: Students will set up their scheduling files.	♦ Read Brown, chapter 4. ♦ View <i>Life Of A 1st AD On A Movie Set</i> by Joe Bohn. ♦ Download and install <i>MM Scheduling</i> .	Week 2 assignment due: Lined script.
<b>Week 4</b> Sep 13	MM Scheduling (continued). The breakdown sheet. Lesson Obj: Students will be able to create breakdown sheets for all shooting sequences.	♦ Brown, chapter 6. ♦ View the Movie Magic Training video if you wish.	
<b>Week 5</b> Sep 20	Scheduling the board. Lesson Obj: Students will be able to create an efficient shooting schedule..	♦ Brown, chapter 7.	Week 4 assignment due: MMS file with completed breakdown sheets.

	TOPICS	READINGS/PREPARATIONS	ASSIGNMENT DUE
<b>Week 6</b> <i>Sep 27</i>	Location vs. Stage work. Lesson Obj: Students will know the advantages and drawbacks of each.	♦ Brown, chapter 8. ♦ Think about which sets you would shoot on location and which on stage.	
<b>Week 7</b> <i>Oct 4</i>	Management & ethics. Review scheduling. Shooting schedules. Day out of days. Lesson Obj: Students will know the best methods of film set management.	♦ Brown, chapter 9, 10, 11.	Scheduled production boards.
<b>Week 8</b> <i>Oct 11</i>	SAG-AFTRA diversity in casting DOOD. Introduce <i>Movie Magic Budgeting</i> . Lesson Obj: Students will be able to use the DOOD to determine if they can meet the diversity in casting requirements.	♦ Brown, chapters 12, 13, 14. .	Week 7 Assignment: 1-page essay.
<b>Week 9</b> <i>Oct 18</i>	<i>Movie Magic Budgeting</i> . Above-the-line accounts. Lesson Obj: Students will set up their budgeting files and begin the ATL accounts.	♦ Brown, chapter 15	Completed DOOD.
<b>Week 10</b> <i>Oct 25</i>	<i>Movie Magic Budgeting</i> . Shooting Period part I. Lesson Obj: Students will be able to fill in shooting period accounts.	♦ Brown, chapter 16, pp 181-230	
<b>Week 11</b> <i>Nov 1</i>	<i>Movie Magic Budgeting</i> . Shooting Period part 2.	♦ Brown, chapter 16, pp. 231-270	
<b>Week 12</b> <i>Nov 8</i>	<i>Movie Magic Budgeting</i> . Post Production Lesson Obj: Students will be able to fill in post production accounts.	♦ Brown, chapter 17.	
<b>Week 13</b> <i>Nov 15</i>	<i>Movie Magic Budgeting</i> . General Expense (Other). Lesson Obj: Students will be able to fill in general expense accounts.	♦ Brown, chapter 18.	Week 9 Budget Assignment.
<i>Nov 22</i>	Thanksgiving Holiday—No Class		

	TOPICS	READINGS/PREPARATIONS	ASSIGNMENT DUE
<i>Week 14</i> <i>Nov 29</i>	Methods of Control Course Review Lesson Obj: Students will know the tools to use to keep a production on schedule and on budget.	Brown, chapter 19	
<i>Final</i> <i>Dec 6</i>	Final Exam		The final exam will be given in the classroom via Blackboard.

## STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, comprises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

### STUDENTS AND DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [osas.usc.edu](https://osas.usc.edu). You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](mailto:osasfrontdesk@usc.edu).

## SUPPORT SYSTEMS:

### [Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

### [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

### [Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

### [Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

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

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

### [The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

### [USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

### [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

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

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

Non-emergency assistance or information.

### [Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

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.

### [Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or [otfp@med.usc.edu](mailto:otfp@med.usc.edu)

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

