

<b>CTPR 294: Directing in TV/New Media, Fiction, and Documentary Fall '23</b>
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4 Units

Concurrent enrollment: CTPR 295 Cinematic Arts Laboratory

Wednesday 2-4:50 pm

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**Fictional Narrative SCE Stage 2**

Professor:

Email:

Phone number:

Office hours:

SA:

Email:

Phone number:

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**Documentary SCI 207**

Professor: Davy McCall

Email: dtmccall@usc.edu

Phone number: 707-291-2283

Office hours: By Appointment

SA: Shubra Dubey

Email: dubey@usc.edu

Phone number:

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**TV/New Media SCB 104**

Professor:

Email:

Phone number:

Office hours:

SA:

Email:

Phone number:

**Course Objectives:**

CTPR 294 has three components that overall introduce Production students in the School of Cinematic Arts to the major aspects of contemporary cinematic practice. Each component is explored for 5 weeks. Three different instructors will guide students through each aspect.

- 1) Fictional Narrative Practice.
- 2) Documentary Practice
- 3) TV/New Media Practice.

Students will participate in exercises, lectures, and discussions in each of the three components.

***Documentary Practice***

In this 5-week workshop students will learn the unique characteristics of documentary, how to find cinematic material in the world around the student, how to cover a scene while it is happening, and how to film an interview. The student will learn how to reveal character through action and the unique elements of cinema.

***Fictional Narrative Practice***

This 5-week workshop will introduce each student to fundamentals of directing a narrative film with special emphasis on script analysis and actor - director grammar. Classes will include practical on set directing procedures and techniques as well as collaborative project development. Each trio will create a 3 - 5 minute digital short produced, directed, performed and edited. Collaboration for each trio inside and outside of class is a key aspect of this creative journey.

***TV/New Media Practice***

This 5-week workshop will introduce students to creating New Media collaboratively with added emphasis placed on developing memorable characters and stories with open endings. Classes will include analysis of successful pieces of digitally delivered content and discussions surrounding the ever-shifting landscape of New Media practice. Students will engage in practical time-based exercises conducted in break-out sessions culminating in a trio-based collaboratively conceived piece to be screened in the final class.

**Projects:**

For each of the three components, students will complete exercises, making a total of six: one in narrative, three in documentaries, and two in TV/New Media. Students will screen cuts of the exercises for feedback. NOTE: All cuts will be screened from the Avid project. At the end of each rotation, the director will turn in a compressed file of the final cut.

Directing the Fictional Narrative:

- Each trio will create a 3-5minute narrative and handle all production aspects from inception through post.

Directing the Documentary:

- Street Corner and Interview exercises
- One 'mini-documentary'

Directing TV/New Media:

- 5 page pilot script
- 5 minute pilot episode

NOTE:

During the course, each student will assume a major role in directing one project from one of the three components. The directors for the various components are randomly chosen before the semester begins.

As a final summative experience, each group will submit to the instructor and SA of their first rotation a recut of the final project of that rotation. The recut will determine the grade for that final project. Failure to submit a recut will result in a one

**A word about budgets:** Trios are encouraged to spend nothing or as little as possible on these projects. However, situations may arise (e.g. minimal grip equipment rental) that require out-of-pocket expenditures. In such cases, the director of the project will decide on what is to be spent and will pay for any expenses themselves. In no case may these out-of-pocket expenses exceed \$200. **Spending more than \$200 will impact the director's grade one notch.**

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#### **Course Structure and Schedule:**

Students in CTPR 294 and CTPR 295 are divided into three groups (**Silver, Gold, and Platinum**) which rotate at five-week intervals through the three components of the CTPR 294. See the attached schedule for your group. It is important to be aware of the schedule for both CTPR 294 and CTPR 295, as they are interrelated.

The rotations for groups in CTPR 294 are:

<b>Silver Group:</b>	<b>TV/New Media to Documentary to Fictional Narrative</b>
<b>Gold Group:</b>	<b>Documentary to Fictional Narrative to TV/New Media</b>
<b>Platinum Group:</b>	<b>Fictional Narrative to TV/New Media to Documentary</b>

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It is the student's responsibility to know their schedule each week. See the attached master schedule for your group.

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## **Documentary Component**

**All Assignments will be viewed on Avid Timeline. Students bring outputs of each exercise to class to transfer to the Instructor's drive**

### **Week 1) Lecture/Discussion: Documentary defined. How does it differ from fiction?**

Introductions

Production numbers assigned and confirmed

Schedule, overview of CTPR 294 & 295, grading, grading, Covid stuff

#### **Styles of documentary.**

What is a documentary?

Screening of short sample films.

In Class: Trios present two or three documentary ideas for a 5-7 minute film.  
a person, a place, or a process.

Assign Intersection Exercise and Idea Presentation

Outside Class: Trios shoot Intersection exercise and prepare Presentation **All trio members present at shoot and during editing.**

### **Week 2) Lecture/Discussion: How to conduct a good interview.**

Demonstration: Documentary Style Coverage, working as a documentary team.

The Interview

In Class: Screen Intersection exercise. Students give Presentations

Outside Class: Trios begin shooting. Shoot a key interview element of project.

**All trio members present at shoot and in preparing selects.**

### **Week 3) Lecture/discussion/demo: How to structure reality.**

Shooting a documentary scene

Filmmaker/subject relationships. Documentary Ethics.

In Class: Screen interview selects and other dailies

Outside Class: Trio shoots and edits film (NB No more than 1/3 talking heads)

**All trio members present at shoot and during editing.**

### **Week 4) Lecture/discussion: How to 'SHOW,' not 'TELL.'**

The weave. Integrating elements of a documentary

The Score

In Class: Students screen and critique first cuts

Outside Class: Trio finishes edit.

### **Week 5) Lecture/discussion: Wrap up**

In Class: Trio screens second cut

## **Fictional Narrative Component**

This 5-week seminar will expose each student to the fundamentals of directing a narrative film. Classes will include basic film theory and grammar, sample clips from films and practical directing techniques. Each student will contribute to the collaborative process of creating a 3 to 5 minute narrative short that will be shot, edited and screened in weeks 4 and 5.

TEXT:

Directing Actors by Judith Weston

### **WEEK 1**

#### **Intro to Directing Narrative Film**

Triangle of Vision

Vision rides on the rails of organization and communication.

Script analysis, research and imagination are the paths to vision.

Collaboration, organization and communication are how we bring vision to life.

Leadership/Management/Collaboration:

Key relationships - Producer and Director, 1st AD and Director,  
PD, Cinematographer and Director

**Human behavior: imperfection & struggle - uncertainty of achieving a goal (surfing, slalom skiing)**

#### **INTRO TO ACTOR DIRECTOR GRAMMAR**

Script analysis

The Graduate

Uta Hagen Questions

Harold Clurman's - 3 column breakdown

Antecedent Action

**Production Book and Directors preparation review: SPACED OUT**

#### **PRODUCTION BOOK:**

Your production book will contain your trio's names, roles and preparation:

Research - VISUAL INSPIRATION: **PD, COSTUMES, CAMERA, MOOD,**

## PALETTE, ETC. RULES

### Analysis:

**Theme - What are you making a film about?**

**3 column breakdown**

**Know the givens for each scene**

**Superobjective**

### Producers:

Shotlist/floorplan, storyboards if necessary

Call sheet

Schedule

Permits

Hazardous shooting forms etc.

Trio breakouts - schedules/ contacts

### ASSIGNMENTS:

- THE FIRST DRAFT OF YOUR SCREENPLAY IS DUE NEXT MONDAY by 6pm.

- Develop a 3-5 minute screenplay with your trio. Set it in a visually interesting location that you can access easily for your shoot.

***Focus on telling the story visually and through behavior.***

***Delegate production roles. Please delineate responsibilities.***

### Reading:

***The Intent to Live by Larry Moss***

***Chapter 1 - Given Circumstances***

***Chapter 2 - Superobjective and Objective***

Reading: Script Ideas pdf.

## WEEK 2

**Trios read scripts aloud**

**Casting seminar**

### ASSIGNMENT:

**Refine screenplay & Preproduction**

**Read Directing Actors - pgs. 1-48.**

### **WEEK 3**

Mise en scene and Montage - clips and discussion

Rehearsal techniques - setting the scene in context of the story and character arcs, spontaneous combustion, physical life of the scene, playing the actions not the words, keeping it real, the physical landscape of the scene..

#### **ASSIGNMENT:**

Continue to prep your project : Find visual references/inspirations for how you will render your scene.

### **WEEK 4 - PREP REVIEW ONLINE - Production Books Review**

**Trios present preparation. Production plan is discussed.**

**Impress us with how you communicate the organization of your vision.**

ASSIGNMENT: Shoot and edit your scene.

**Read Directing Actors: pgs. 91-139**

**WEEK 5** - Exercises are screened in class.

## TV/New Media Component

### Week 1

Introductions.

Production numbers assigned or confirmed.

Schedule & course overview, grading, office hours, HSF.

*New Media Practice? Definitions and what New Media is NOT.*

*In class: Observation exercise.*

*Setup and Payoff discussion.*

*Character as Contradiction: They are like this but also like that.*

*Purpose of Scene & Character Dimensions. Screen examples.*

Screen episodes -- Broad City & Awkward Black Girl - no setup, no back story.

Ending Open?

Non-narrative New Media: Steve McQueen, Sam Taylor-Johnson, Pipilotti Rist.

*Confessional Video.*

Direct camera address and acting in your own media.

ASSIGNMENT: write a *one-page character study or WAKE* of your protagonist, and a *one paragraph synopsis* of your idea for a character-driven series or stand-alone piece of new media.

### Week 2

Discuss pre-production: virtual casting, available locations, permits, HSF.

Read Character Studies – *what stands out?*

*First Image – Final Image.*

Screen past 294 student New Media projects.

Screen episodes from YouTube's Cleaner Daze, from Snapchat's vertical Co-Ed, and from TikTok's NPC.

Gallery-based new media.

Screen piece by Christian Marclay.

Auditions – Casting Online (now and forever).

ASSIGNMENT: write 1st draft of pilot.

\*Scripts DUE no later than 2pm on the Tuesday before class. *Three - Five pages*, scene #'s must be included. Title page filled out with all 3 trio names & positions. Scripts must be PDFs.

Every student must read each script in TRIO, take notes in order to give notes in class.



### **Week 3**

Rehearsal techniques: *objectives, moment before, stakes, feels*.  
Workshop scripts. Scripts from TRIO must be read prior to class.  
Directors cast in-class for reading and do not read.

Production update - casting, location, permits & HSF.  
Emotional Actions Wheel Scan.

ASSIGNMENT: do re-writes, create “visual look-book,” lock down locations and cast, complete all HSF and permits. Look-book contents: *comps, casting, locations, shot list and mood board*.

### **Week 4**

Meet individually in class with each trio to discuss re-writes, location, visual look-book, HSF/permits.

ASSIGNMENT: shoot pilot or stand-alone media piece.

### **Week 5**

Screen pilots; productive critique & discussion.

## **Grading:**

Each of the three components contributes 1/3 of the final grade. The grades for the individual components are determined as follows:

### **Fictional Narrative Component:**

Class Participation	15%
Story and Screenplay (narrative)	20%
Project: execution and collaboration	35%
Project production book - <i>including</i> look book, shot list, floor plan, permits, given circumstances, and three column beat to beat breakdown, theme, actor resumes, call sheet, schedule	30%

### **Documentary Component**

Class Participation	15%
Collaboration	30%
Documentary Projects:	
Street corner	10%
Interview	10%
Final Project	35%

### **TV/New Media Component**

Class Participation	10%
Character Study & Synopsis	20%
Pilot Script	20%
Collaboration	20%
Pilot	30%

“Participation” is defined as constructive in-class activity, including, but not limited to, asking questions, giving constructive opinions on lessons and other students’ work.

“Collaboration” is defined as working well with your trio mates, both in spirit and as an equal contributing partner.

## **Grading Scale**

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

Failure to turn in recut of final project from first session (Gold = Documentary, Silver = TV/New media, Platinum = Fictional Narrative) reduces overall grade one increment.

#### **Production Division Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Two absences over the entirety of the course will result in a student's grade being lowered by one full letter (IE: A becomes B). A third absence will result in a student's grade being lowered by one, additional full letter (IE: B becomes C). A student's grade will be lowered by one full letter for each additional absence. Two late class arrivals equate to one full absence.

If a student misses class due to an emergency, the student must contact the professor prior to class or contact the Production Office at 213-740-3317.

#### **SAFETY**

##### **SAFETY SEMINAR – MANDATORY ATTENDANCE**

All students are required to attend the safety seminar in order to obtain a Production Number. The production number covers, actors, equipment, stages, insurance, additional equipment, locations, on and off campus permits, audition rooms and access to SCA facilities for filming (Courtyard, class rooms, bathrooms, stairwells).

Three seminars are offered at the start of every semester.

##### **Fall 2023 Safety Seminars:**

- Friday (8/18), 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM, Norris Cinema Theatre
- Monday (8/21), 5:00 - 7:00 PM, SCA 108
- Tuesday (8/22), 12:00 - 2:00 PM, SCI 106

**All students MUST attend the SCA Safety Seminar and present proof of attendance to their instructor before any equipment may be issued.**

Students must adhere to the USC School of Cinematic Arts Safety Guidelines as well as professional, ethical and safety standards that will protect everyone on the set. They can be found at <https://scacommunity.usc.edu/resources/physical-production/pdf/SafetyRulesHandout.pdf>. All filming must adhere to the SCA COVID Protocols and LA County Guidelines, no matter where it takes place

The following policies are applicable to CTPR 294/295.

#### 1. Motor Vehicles

In addition to POV shots from inside a closed automobile, moving motor vehicles may be used in CTPR 294/295 productions only on University of Southern California Property. Such motor vehicle use, either moving or non-moving will require the necessary permits and oversight of the University, as well as an approved Production Safety Plan, all of which must be presented to the section instructor and SCA Head of Production prior to shooting.

The Rule of six does not apply in these situations.

Moving motor vehicles may not be used as a dolly to record staged action.

No grip or electrical equipment may be used in a shoot involving a moving motor vehicle.

The driver may not be interviewed or deliver dialogue while the vehicle is in motion.

2. Minors (actors under 18 years of age) require the presence of a studio teacher and legal guardian, along with valid work permits.
3. Stunt coordinators are mandatory for any action that could in any way injure your actor.
4. USC Insurance never covers any vehicle of any kind.
5. Jib arms, cranes, scissor lifts, camera cars are not allowed on student projects.
6. No creature may be harmed during the filming of any USC Student Project. The American Humane Society must approve use of all animals.
7. The use of motor boats/speed boats is prohibited, as are helicopters, drones, and fixed-wing aircraft.
9. Students are authorized to use 290 light kits and practical lights (300 watts and under) only.
10. Fire is limited to the use of LED candles and cigarette lighters. Candy Glass (a special stunt glass) must be used when glass, plates, mirrors, etc. are broken as part of a stunt or when these objects present a possible danger to an actor.
11. The maximum shooting day for USC projects is 12 hours. The minimum turn around time before the next shooting day is 12 hours.
12. No open-toed shoes on sets, stages, or around any heavy equipment.
13. Students may not go beyond the 50 Mile Studio Zone.

Failure to follow these policies may result in:

1. Confiscation of the student's film.
2. Lowering of the student's grade. Serious violations will result in a grade of F for the project.
3. Suspension of the student's production number.
4. Class failure.
5. Appearance before the SCA Academic Violation Committee of both peers and

faculty members.

6. Appearance before the University Judicial Affairs Committee.

All students must consult with the instructor on any shot that might raise a safety issue. The Production Safety Plan form can be found online at:

[https://scacommunity.usc.edu/resources/physical\\_production/hazardous\\_form.cfm](https://scacommunity.usc.edu/resources/physical_production/hazardous_form.cfm)

You must have Production Safety Plans, signed by your instructor and the Head of Physical Production, prior to shooting in any situation or location that might be considered dangerous or when using weapons, projectiles, or stunts. This process must be completed by the Thursday before shooting. If you cannot complete the process before shooting, you must cancel whatever would require the form. Students are expected to work with others in the class whenever on location. Everyone (crew and cast) is responsible for safety on the set.

Do not store equipment in your car, even in a locked trunk. It is not insured for loss if stolen from a vehicle.

#### **Equipment and Facilities:**

Students in CTPR 294 and CTPR 295 will be divided into pods of three and share a camera package. Each student must pay an insurance premium of \$250 for CTPR 294.

#### **Equipment and Facilities:**

Students in CTPR 294 and CTPR 295 will be divided into pods of three and share a camera package. Each student must pay an insurance premium of \$300 for CTPR 294/295.

#### **The School will provide:**

1. **Sony ILME-FX30 Cameras and tripods.**
2. **AVID Media Composer editing stations in the Labs**

#### **Students will provide their own:**

1. **Headphones (required) for Avid lab.** We recommend Sony MDR 7506, which are available at the USC *Bookstore*.
2. **Camera Memory Cards**



Should you need to re-set your camera using the card that contains the USC settings, you should first initialize the camera (be sure all cards are out of the camera when you initialize), then insert the setup card and Load the settings.

Each student must purchase two memory cards. One that will contain the camera settings, and one that will record media (project footage). The [Sony 64GB v30](#) (\$25) [Sandisk 64GB v30](#) (\$15) [PNY 64GB v30](#) (\$10) are recommended for storing the camera settings.

Both the [Sony 128GB v90](#) (\$190) and [ProGrade 128GB v90](#) (\$145) SDXC cards are recommended for project footage. These are the only cards tested and recommended.

### 3. One of the following SCA approved and supported External Hard Drives:

#### G-DRIVE SSD

Small and compact SSD with a Thunderbolt 40GB connection. Thunderbolt Cable included.

Available in 500 GB, 1, 2, 4 TB

Speed: 1000 MB/s

#### LACIE RUGGED PRO SSD

A rugged Thunderbolt 3 Drive.

Available in 1, 2, 4 TB

Speed: 2800 MB/s

#### SAMSUNG T5 OR T7 SSD

USB-C to USB-A Cable included.

Available in 500 GB, 1, 2, 4 TB.

Speed: 1000 MB/s

**Check SCA Approved Drives on Supported Hard Drive document at <https://cinema.usc.edu/Laptops/> before purchasing a drive.**