School of Cinematic Arts
The John Wells Division of
Writing for Screen and Television

CTWR 572 (19424):PRACTICUM FOR DIRECTING ACTORS FOR FILM
2 UNITS
FALL 2023

Instructor: Wendy Phillips
Class Schedule: Monday 9am – 12:50pm
Class Location: Zemekis Studio A
Office Hours: TBD
Contact Information: wphillip@usc.edu

Course Objective:
To increase writer/director's comfort in communicating with actors.
To be able to give clear, effective direction to one's actors.
Hopefully, to deepen the writer/director's work process.
For all of us to have some fun!

Course Description:
3 sets of scene work:
In the first set students act in 1-2 page 2 person scenes from a produced film or TV episode and are directed by the instructor. In the second set students direct each other in 1-2 page 2 person scenes from a produced film or TV episode. In the final project students direct each other in 2-3 page scenes written by the students.
Explanation of well-known approaches to script analysis.
Basic physical acting exercises to free the imagination and give a sense of play.
The use of film clips to demonstrate acting techniques.

Suggested Course Reading:
Directing Actors: Creating Memorable Performances for Film and Television by Judith Weston.

Grading Criteria:
Written assignments can be emailed to Wendy Phillips at wphillip@usc.edu on or before the due date. Students should also bring a hard copy of homework assignments to use in class.
5% Memorization
10% Scene One
20% Scene Two
15% Pop Up Scenes
15% Final Project Performance
25% Final Project Screenplay & Direction
10% Participation

As per Writing Division policy the following is a breakdown of numeric grade to letter grade:

A	100% to 94%	C	76% to 73%
A-	93% to 90%	C-	72% to 70%
B+	89% to 87%	D+	69% to 67%
B	86% to 83%	D	66% to 63%
B-	82% to 80%	D-	62% to 60%
C+	79% to 77%	F	59% to 0%

Expectation of Professionalism:
All material is expected to be turned in on time and in the proper format. Assignments will be penalized for grammatical mistakes, spelling errors, format mistakes, and typos. Please proof your assignment prior to submission.

Internet Policy:
Material discussed in the room is considered private and should not be blogged, tweeted, posted, snapchatted, or be posted anywhere else on the internet.

Recording Devices:
You may not record lectures or workshops without the consent of the instructor.

Laptop and Cell Phone Policy:
Cell phone use will not be permitted during classroom hours. No texting. Laptop computers may be used for note taking during specified periods only.

Writing Division Attendance Policy:
"This class is a workshop and your participation in the discussion is important. Participation includes full involvement in, and contribution to, class discussion, as well as reading (in advance at times; see schedule) the assignments of your colleagues and offering thoughtful, constructive comments.

Class attendance is mandatory, and students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Tardiness is unprofessional and disrespectful to the class. Two late arrivals equal one full absence. Two unexcused absences will result in your final grade being lowered by a half grade point (Ex. A to A-) Any further unexcused absences will result in your final grade being lowered another two thirds of a point (ex: B to a C+) for each absence .

Excused absences can include, but are not limited to: illness, both physical and mental; death of a loved one; personal emergency; sporting events (for Student-Athletes) or other university-sponsored activities; religious holidays, and so on.

If you find you must miss class due to personal emergency or personal crisis, please contact your professor as soon as possible so they can assist you in finding the appropriate University care and guidance. Your health and well-being are of utmost importance to the Wells Writing Division and to your Faculty.

In addition, due to current Covid protocols, if you are feeling ill, without time to test before class, please notify your instructor, do not attend class and get a test. If you test positive, inform your instructor and quarantine for the Health Department's designated period of time."

Writing Division: Curriculum: Syllabus: Syllabus Template.doc

<u>Class Schedule</u>:
Please note that all dates are subject to change at the discretion of the professor.

Week 1: August 21
    Introduction to course, syllabus, myself.
    Brief introduction of students.
    Warm-up exercises
    Cold reading: emphasis on "talking and iistening".
    Break (at the appropriate time).
    Assignment: Scenes 1A & 1B.
       Various 1-2 page scenes from Film or TV for 2 students, workshopped by me:
                    "What are you really saying?"
                    "What are you really hearing?"
                    "What is really going on?"

Week 2: August 28
    Discuss concept of "personalization" with its different approaches and exercises.
    Warm up exercises.
    Discuss Scenes 1A
    Break (at the appropriate time).

Week 3: September 4

                    Labor Day – No Class

Week 4: September 11
    Discuss "Scenic Structure and Script Analysis (objectives, beats, given
circumstances, actions, peronalization)".
    Warm up exercises.
    Discuss Scenes 1B.
    Break (at the appropriate time).

Week 5: September 18
     Discuss "Final Project": 2-3 page 2 person scenes written and directed by students –
acted by students. Emphasis on relationship.
    Warm up exercises.
    Scenes 1A – "On Feet".
    Discuss "Pop Up Scenes": Various 1-2 page scenes from Film or TV to be directed in
upcoming classes by assigned student/directors using students as actors. Emphasis on
utilizing previously discussed acting techniques.
    Break (at the appropriate time.)

Week 6: September 25
    Warm up exercises.
    Discuss "Organic Approach to Blocking" using scenes 1A & 1B as examples.
    Perform 2 Pop-ups.
Scenes 1B – "On Feet".
    Break (at the appropriate time).
    Assignment: Scenes 2A & 2B.
       Various 2-3 page scenes from TV or Film for 2 students workshopped by me.
Emphasis on using previously discussed acting techniques.

Writing Division: Curriculum: Syllabus: Syllabus Template.doc

Week 7: October 2
    Warm up exercises.
    Discuss Scenes 2A.
    Perform 2 "Pop Up Scenes."
    Break (at the appropriate time).

Week 8: October 9
    Warm up exercises.
    Discuss Scenes 2B.
    Perform 2 "Pop Up Scenes"
    Break (at the appropriate time).

Week 9: October 16
    Warm-up exercises.
    Scenes 2A – "On Feet".
    Perform 2 "Pop Up Scenes".
    Assignment: Final Projects: Groups A, B & C.
    Break (at the appropriate time).

Week 10: October 23
    Warm-up exercises.
    Scenes 2B – "On Feet".
    Perform 2 "Pop Up Scenes".
    Break (at the appropriate time).

Week 11: October 30
    Warm-up exercises.
    Perform 3 "Pop Up Scenes".
    Review Previously Discussed Concepts.
    Break (at the appropriate time).

Week 12: November 6
    Warm-up exercises.
    Perform 3 "Pop Up Scenes".
    Rehearse Final Projects: Group A.
    Break (at the appropriate time).

Week 13: November 13
    Perform Final Projects: Group A.
    Rehearse Final Projects: Group B.
    Break (at the appropriate time).

Week 14: Novembre 20
    Perform Final Projects: Group B.
    Rehearse Final Projects: Group C.
    Break (at the appropriate time).

Week 15: November 27
    Perform Final Projects: Group C.
    Break (at the appropriate time).

FINALS WEEK

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.

A.I. Policy
The uses of generative Artificial Intelligence to create narrative continue to evolve throughout the media workplace. However, it is vital that before relying on AI to assist in aspects of storytelling that we learn to source and execute our work via our own unique imagination.

Creating, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course. All assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups. Students may not have another person or entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI-generated tools is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Support Systems:

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
engemannshc.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 Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call
engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Writing Division: Curriculum: Syllabus: Syllabus Template.doc

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of 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.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421
studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation 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 Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710
studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa
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.

Diversity and Inclusion
Diversity and Inclusion are foundational to the SCA community. We are committed to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment where students of all identities and backgrounds can flourish. The classroom should be a space for open discussion of ideas and self- expression; however, SCA will not tolerate verbal or written abuse, threats, harassment, intimidation or violence against person or property. If students are concerned about these matters in the classroom setting they are encouraged to contact their SCA Diversity and Inclusion Liaison, http://cinema.usc.edu/about/diversity.cfm; e-mail diversity@cinema.usc.edu. You can also report discrimination based on a protected class here https://equity.usc.edu/harassment-or-discrimination/

Disruptive Student Behavior:
Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.

Writing Division: Curriculum: Syllabus: Syllabus Template.doc