



THE DIGITAL ACTOR

THTR 410

UNITS: 2

MONDAY | 4:00 PM- 5:50 PM | SHR 105

Instructor: Tessa Slovis

Contact Info: slovis@usc.edu | (973) 634-3533

Appointments for one on one discussion can be made via email or text.

Course Description

The actor is the entrepreneur- the CEO, CFO and leader of their own business. And let's get real...The digital sphere has evolved into an ever-changing touchstone of daily life. With everything at our fingertips it can be a challenge to figure out how to find our voice as creatives within it. This course is an amalgam of business, marketing and creative development, specifically focused on how to use social, digital and new media as a vital tool for the actor's career.

Learning Objectives

This course will fine-tune our students' already present digital media skills and channel their work as artists into the virtual sphere. We will work to discover the individual voice of each artist and use it to begin their journeys of:

- Self- marketing
- Creative and Professional Communication
- Content Creation and Ideation

We will watch, read and study the work of great digital media entrepreneurs and creators as well as develop our own original content. Students will gain a proficiency in web design, digital media analytics, writing short form content, and the use of necessary actor tools (Actors Access / Casting Networks) and more.

Course Notes

Students must have access to a laptop (preferred), tablet or smartphone. Students will also be asked to bring in movie clips and footage on their devices. **

***** this does not mean students will be allowed to keep devices open throughout class.**

Description and Assessment of Assignments

All assignments will be assessed based on effort, proficiency and communication of thought. Creativity is amorphous and assessments will be made based on this fact.

Assignments must be turned in on time, showing clear effort, self-challenge and an evident aim to do the best a student can do.

Students will be expected to bring and keep a separate notebook or tablet for lecture notes. Please keep all assignments and homework returned to you (they will be used for our midterm and final).

Students are requested to arrive early (which means on time) to class.

Participation

Everyone participates differently. We all have our own individual experiences and strengths that inform how we participate and communicate in and out of the classroom. Thus, participation can look like the following:

- Contributing insights and asking questions in class
- Engaging creatively and diligently with assignments
- Reaching out with questions and thoughts on the work
- Sharing relevant ancillary articles, films, work, to peers and professor
- Requesting office hour time to discuss grades and improvement

Grading Breakdown

Course shall contain at least three assignments, projects, exams, papers or exercises which shall be evaluated during the semester and which shall provide an analytical record of each student's progress in the course.

- Attendance shall be weighted at no more than 15% as per University Guidelines.
- There shall be no unexcused absences.
- No late assignments, projects, exams, papers, or exercises shall not be accepted unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the teacher or unless exceptional circumstances occur.

Table 1 Grading Breakdown

Assessment Tool (assignments)	Points	% of Grade
Participation	10	10%
Course Assignments	30	30%
In Class Exercises	20	20%
Mid Term	15	15%
Final	20	20%
Growth and Effort	5	5%
TOTAL	100	100%

Grades are dictated by:

- Focus and concentration in class
- Performance of exercises
- Communication of selected skills
- Active in-class student analysis
- Constructive feedback of classmate's presentations
- Meeting all assignment deadlines: reading, writing, acting
- Availability to fellow classmates for collaboration

Grading Scale

Letter grade	Corresponding numerical point range
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

Further Grading Notes: If the GPA falls between two grades, the final grade will be weighted toward the positive end of the scale for students with excellent/good attendance & class participation and toward the negative end of the scale for those with average/poor attendance & participation.

Assignment Submission Policy

Each assignment will have a different mode of submission. Please pay close attention to how an assignment must be submitted and when.

Attendance

No unexcused absences. Missing a class without proper excusal or communication will deduct 3 points per absence.

Classroom norms

This classroom is a space of deep respect and support for your fellow artists. Discussion, challenge and debate is welcome but always with a focus on mutual respect and reverence for the voices and opinions of your peers. Art is vulnerable, sharing your voice is vulnerable: Be Kind.

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the [USC Student Handbook](#). All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or “recycle” work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), 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 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](#).

AI Generators

Since 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.

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies

USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Course Evaluations

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students’ experience in the class. The process and intent of the end-of-semester evaluation should be provided. In addition, a [mid-semester evaluation](#) is recommended practice for early course correction.

Course Schedule

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings/Preparation	Deliverables
Week 1	You “like” it, I “love” it: Why social media can be a powerful tool for the artist. A discussion of who we are and why we create.		Assignment: What is my story? Digital assignment due Friday 8/25
Week 2	Your “self” vs. “Selfie”: Maximizing your voice . Learning the basics of your actor toolkit.	Artist Study: Morgan Cooper	Assignment: Sample resume, cover letter draft. Due Friday 9/8
Week 3	Web Resources for the actor Pitching your content: applying our stories to content creation and ideation.		Assignment: Create a digital platform for your resume via a web page, actors access, casting networks, linkedin. Assignment: Write a short pitch for your “content creation plan” to present in week 4 class
Week 4	In class feedback on pitches Necessary actor materials	Artist Study: Quinta Brunson	Assignment: Expanding the pitch, redrafting and/or beginning adding digital content comps. Due Week 6.
Week 5	In class feedback on pitches cont’d. Key Distinctions between social apps, analytics and tools for digital marketing		
Week 6	Pitch presentation 1 and Feedback Session		You will receive written feedback and will begin to make changes and additions to your project.
Week 7	From pitch to social Page: Learning how to translate your voice to moving image and visual representation		

Week 8	IN CLASS MIDTERM WORK		Mid Term Assignment: Expanding on your pitch project, you will now develop an entire social media campaign pitch deck complete with schedule, assets and written descriptions based on your pitch.
Week 9	Productivity and Approach		Assignment: Create your own business plan with identifiable goals and deliverables. Due by Class Week 10.
Week 10	Have Your People Call My People: Email and contact tools.	Artist Study: Bo Burnham	Students will begin to share the work we have been developing in the pitch decks on public social media pages and track their analytics for 2 weeks
Week 11	Presentation of business plans	Artist Study: Issa Rae	
Week 12	Artist Visit Q/A		2-4 page profile analysis and reflection. Reflect on the process of pitching and creating content, analyze reach and growth and Include strategies to improve views and content quality. hard copy due at the beginning of class, week 13.
Week 13	Class Discussion: building an actor's network. The big share: Getting your content into the public domain.		
Week 14	Review for final, Final essay topics announced.		
Week 15	Self Analyzing: Growth and review In class work on Digital portfolio		

FINAL	<p>Your Digital Portfolio.</p> <p>Present a digital portfolio which will include your actor materials: headshot, resume, photos and bio.</p> <p>2 paragraph self “pitch” (AKA a cover letter) detailing who you are as an actor and your goals in the industry.</p> <p>Present your social media self created content pages including analytics and strategies for future growth.</p> <p>3-5 page reflection essay (topics to be announced)</p>		TBD
-------	---	--	-----

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, compromises 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. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion + Intimacy in Theater Consent Culture Statement:

Through our pluralistic approach of diverse pedagogies, methodologies, ideologies, and modalities of artistic expression, we invite(engage) and challenge students to expand their breadth and depth of knowledge, complexity, and range of the human experience. Even though we nurture, guide, and challenge our students to embrace the unknown or unfamiliar and step outside of their comfort zones through storytelling/art, we aim to practice effective strategies and offer tools to students mindful of their physical, psychological, social, and emotional wellbeing. In alignment with professional and industry standards, we will integrate core principles and techniques of Intimacy in Theater and Building Cultures of Affirmative Consent. This will provide agency, offer resources and support to the teachers, students, directors, and staff to establish healthy boundaries of consent when working on material that is physically, intimately, or emotionally charged content in both the classroom and production.

SDA Student Support & Reporting Form:

To facilitate a supportive environment of accountability, SDA has created an internal system of reporting for students to address issues/concerns and to offer feedback or suggestions for improvement. This mechanism provides a pathway for reporting and offering feedback without fear of retaliation or judgment. Any submission filed through this form will be reviewed and processed accordingly through SDA Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

To file a report, please visit: <https://bit.ly/SDAstudentreporting>

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

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