

THTR 250: Camera And Improvisation

Units: 2.0

FALL 2023 MON. 12:00PM-1:50PM

INSTRUCTOR: Julián Juaquín Conde

EMAIL: JCONDE@USC.EDU

LOCATION: SHRINE 105

OFFICE HOURS: MON. 2-4PM by appointment.

Course Description

This on-camera, workshop-style class investigates screen acting to the next level. Because film is best described as a story told in pictures, the medium of places in which we identify as “silent screen” acting, and improv situations where the emotional implications of a specific circumstance is communicated principally through body language, gesture, facial expression and creating new ideas. We will develop Controlled exposure situations that prompts students to hone their awareness of these essentials and to incorporate them into the fundamental process of actualizing an effective on-camera performance.

Learning Objective

Among the numerous technical challenges of screen acting---many of which are a result of the “close up” proximity of the audience---are the camera’s ability to perceive a character’s thoughts; the emphasis on circumstance rather than dialogue to inform the essence of a given scene; and, very importantly, how the emotional implications of a specific circumstance is communicated by the character through body language, gesture and facial expression. The objective of this class is to incorporate the fundamentals of acting by way of situational silent screen improvisations...putting a high emphasis on body language and gesture. In addition the impact of movement, camera angle, proximity to the perceived listener, to name a few will be explored.

Classes consist of discussions, video examples; on-camera exercises; situational improvisations; and scene work with video playback.

Course Notes

We will cover Basic editing techniques for your videos.

We will cover short format story telling.

We will cover the concepts of storytelling with pictures.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

You will need to know the basics of editing on a software like iMovie. You will also need your phone or any other recording device to film your scene.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Assignment 1: Being in the room

Acting in front of the camera is forgetting that there is an audience and being in the moment. In this assignment we will focus on being present in “doing”. You will occupy yourself with an activity when suddenly you are interrupted by a memory or an event that happens in front of you, which brings you to an emotional experience.

Assignment 2: Horror scene

We have seen a million times the horror moment of when you shouldn't walk through a door but you do anyways. And when you do, the killer is there to chase you. You will create your own horror scene where you will be the victim or the killer in a horror scene. You film your story using Close up, Medium and Wide shots to tell your story. You will edit them and bring them into class.

Assignment 3. Unrecognizable

You will create a character. You will dress up as the character. You will incorporate physical gestures and habits. Know where your character is from, all the details: Where they were born, What school if any did they go to, Know their past. Know as an actor the wants and needs in life in order to survive. We will be interviewing the character you are playing and asking questions.

Assignment 4: Partner Scenes

You will select a partner from class and find a scene to work on together. You will bring the scene to class and work on the wants and needs of your character and the beats of what your characters are doing in the scene. We will improvise the scenario without using the script.

Final: Action sequence

You will create an action sequence by filming your shots and editing them together. Using the tools we learn in class as far as story format and visual story telling, you will create An action scene with your classmate and it will be presented on the day of your final.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	% of grade
Participation	15 percent
Assignment 1	10 percent
Assignment 2	15 percent
Assignment 3	20 percent
Assignment 4	15 percent
Final	25 percent
Total	100 percent

Grading Scale (Example)

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

Assignment Submission Policy

Assignments must be presented the day they are due. If it is delivery of a video, it must be in the appropriate google drive folder the day it is due.

Grading Timeline

Grades will be presented a week after submitting your projects.

Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment

USC policy prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

SCampus Section 11.12(B)

Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. 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. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).

Course evaluation

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students' experience in the class. You should expect to receive an email update once the system has launched to provide your feedback on this course. In addition, you are always welcome to connect with with me as the instructor to offer any feedback on the course.

Additional Policies

Class starts on time.

Three lateness will acquire you an absence

Three absences is a grade drop.

If you are not in class you cannot participate and it will effect your participation grade.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1 AUG 21st	Class Introduction		
Week 2 AUG 28th	Exercise of being in the room.		
Week 3 Sept 4th	NO CLASS		
Week 4 Sept 11th	Exercise of being in the room. Continued.		
Week 5 Sept. 18th	Lecture: The Close up Medium and wide shot		<i>Record your horror scenes for Sept 25th.</i>
Week 6 Sept 25th	Watch Horror Scenes Cont.		DUE: Horror scenes
Week 7 Oct. 2nd	Watch Horror Scenes Cont.		
Week 8 Oct. 9th	Midterm Evaluation.		Prepare your character for unrecognizable
Week 9 Oct. 16th	Unrecognizable interview.		
Week 10 Oct. 23rd	Unrecognizable interview Cont.		

Week 11 Oct. 30th	Unrecognizable interview Cont.		Choose a partner in class and find a scene to bring into class for Nov. 6th
Week 12 Nov. 6th	Action scene lecture Story Telling		
Week 13 Nov. 13th	Partner scenes improv.		
Week 14 Nov. 20th	Partner scenes improv.		
Week 15 Nov. 27th	Action scene lecture. Using pictures		
FINAL FRIDAY DEC. 8th 11am-1pm	Action scenes presentation.		FRIDAY DEC. 8th 11am-1pm

SDA PRODUCTIONS, ISPS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

SDA productions, ISPs and Extracurricular Activities* will not excuse you from any class work. There will be no exceptions made for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, homework or lack of class participation resulting from your involvement in any of the above. Your grade will reflect your work in this class, independent from work in any other class or activity.

*Activities that have been officially sanctioned by the larger university (such as marching band, song girls, or varsity sports) are exempt. You must submit official documentation to your professor regarding your participation in an event prior to your absence.

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, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from OSAS. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. OSAS is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for OSAS and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 814-4618 (Vidoe Phone), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of

Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university's site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

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
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

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

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) 740-9355(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.

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 Student Accessibility Services - (213) 740-0776

<https://osas.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 and 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) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.