

# USC School of Cinematic Arts

*John C. Hench Division of Animation & Digital Arts*

## Studio Careers / Story to Screen

Dream of working at an animation studio like Disney, Pixar, or Dreamworks, but wonder if you have what it takes, how to get there, or how your skills and passions would translate into today's animation studio environment?

### Course Overview:

Each week (beginning the semester with story and concluding with final frames on screen), the professor will deep-dive into the various roles within a major animation studio pipeline to breakdown the skillsets, interpersonal collaborations, day-to-day responsibilities, and portfolios / demo reels required to gain employment, and then succeed in each discipline. We will view clips and breakdown successful examples of each pipeline step, and learn about the artists behind the work to find out what makes them great.

### Learning Objectives and Outcomes:

Students will attain an intimate understanding of the various disciplines / careers within a major animation studio, discover how their unique artistic gifts and passions can translate into a fulfilling career, and what skills they will need to further develop in order to achieve this goal.

### This is an In-Person Class:

In accordance with university recommendations, all meetings of this class will be held in person. Students who become ill and need to self-isolate will be supported in their efforts to stay current with classwork and assignments, to the extent possible. Please contact **Josh Staub** and SA **Ciara Borgards** at least one hour prior to class start time if you become ill and need to self-isolate. Do not come to class if you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 or other illnesses. Requests for longer term exemptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and must be supported by a written accommodation request from the USC Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS).

## About the Professor

Josh Staub is an award-winning filmmaker, production designer, and visual effects supervisor of Walt Disney Animation Studios and Netflix Animation, and currently serves as writer/creator and executive producer of an original animated series in development. Over the course of 14 years at Walt Disney Animation Studios, Josh contributed to more than 20 film projects including the Academy Award winning film *Frozen* and the animated short films *Paperman* and *Feast*.

In addition to helping create some of the most successful and popular animated

### USC School of Cinematic Arts

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Division of Animation  
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### CTAN 425

### Units

2

### Term/Day/Time

Spring 2024  
Mondays  
1:00pm - 2:50pm  
SCB 207

### Instructor

Josh Staub  
[jstaub@usc.edu](mailto:jstaub@usc.edu)

### Student Assistant

Ciara Borgards  
[borgards@usc.edu](mailto:borgards@usc.edu)

### Contact Info

[jstaub@usc.edu](mailto:jstaub@usc.edu)

### Prerequisites

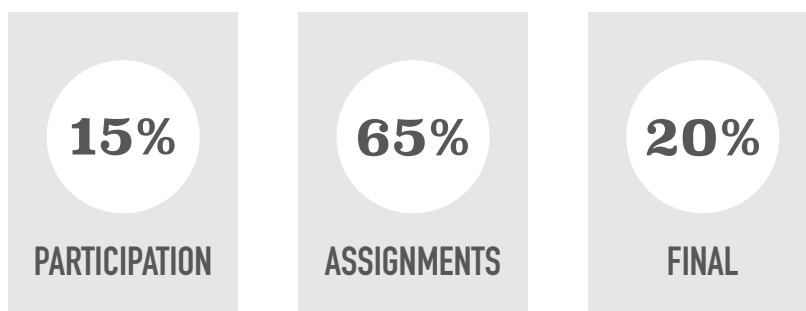
None

feature films ever made, Josh is also an accomplished independent filmmaker and sole-creator of the animated short film *The Mantis Parable*, which screened in over 100 film festivals around the world (Annecy, Tribeca), graced the screens of the nation's top art museums (National Gallery of Art, Smithsonian, LACMA, MoMA), and twice qualified for consideration of an Academy Award nomination.

In 2018, Josh was inducted into the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences (Oscars) for "exceptional accomplishments in the field of theatrical motion pictures."

Josh is also a founding member of *Rise Up Animation* (dedicated to increasing diversity in the animation industry), and has given countless lectures at studios, festivals, and schools around the world.

## Grading Allocation / Assessment:



### **Participation: (150 points)**

Grades for participation are based on the student's level of engagement with guest speakers and fellow students. There will be time allotted for Q&A during every class, as well as animated film critique/roundtable opportunities throughout the semester to share thoughts/ideas with fellow classmates. Students who wish to receive full credit for participation will engage enthusiastically during these moments.

### **Description of Assignments: (13 Assignments / 50 points each / 650 points total)**

Weekly assignments will be focused on personal application of the information and stories shared in the weekly lectures. Every week each student will be required to answer a series of questions based on that week's lecture:

***"Is this the proper discipline for you to pursue considering your passion and skills?"***

***"If so, what practical steps would you need to take in order to achieve this goal?"***

***"What inspires you about this speaker and the manner in which they've achieved excellence?"***

These responses must be submitted digitally to our class dropbox **prior to the beginning of the following class**, and will be graded and returned the following week.

### **Final Project: (1 Assignment / 200 points)**

At the end of the semester each student will produce an essay (1000 word min.), video recording (3-4 minutes), portfolio template w/examples, **or other professor approved format**, to convey their personal discoveries and findings from the class. These projects, regardless of medium, should represent each

student's step-by-step plan for their own career path moving forward, and will be shared via a round table discussion during the final period of the semester.

**Extra Credit: (Max. 5 Assignments / 10 points each)**

Each week the professor will recommend a film for viewing along with a series of questions to be answered and submitted digitally to our class dropbox *prior to the beginning of the following class* for up to 10 points applied as extra credit.

**Grading Scale:**

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

<b>A</b> [95-100+]	<b>A-</b> [90-94]	<b>B+</b> [87-89]	<b>B</b> [83-86]	<b>B-</b> [80-82]	<b>C+</b> [77-79]
<b>C</b> [73-76]	<b>C-</b> [70-72]	<b>D+</b> [67-69]	<b>D</b> [63-66]	<b>D-</b> [60-62]	<b>F</b> [59 and below]

# Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Lecture Topics	Assignment	Deliverable
<b>Class 1</b> Jan 8th	<b>Overview</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Overview</b>	N/A
<b>Martin Luther King Jr. Day: Jan 15th</b>			
<b>Class 2</b> Jan 22nd	<b>Screenwriting</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Editing</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Overview</b>
<b>Class 3</b> Jan 29th	<b>Editing</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Screenwriting</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Editing</b>
<b>Class 4</b> Feb 5th	<b>Story</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Story</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Screenwriting</b>
<b>Class 5</b> Feb 12th	<b>VisDev</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>VisDev</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Story</b>
<b>President's Day: Feb 19th</b>			
<b>Class 6</b> Feb 26th	<b>Assets</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Assets</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>VisDev</b>
<b>Class 7</b> Mar 4th	<b>Layout</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Layout</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Assets</b>
<b>Spring Recess: Mar 11th - Mar 15th</b>			
<b>Class 8</b> Mar 18th	<b>Animation</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Animation</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Layout</b>
<b>Class 9</b> Mar 25th	<b>Rig / Sim</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Rig / Sim</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Animation</b>
<b>Class 10</b> Apr 1st	<b>Effects</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Effects</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Rig / Sim</b>
<b>Class 11</b> Apr 8th	<b>Lighting</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Lighting</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Effects</b>
<b>Class 12</b> Apr 15th	<b>Directing / Production</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Directing / Production</b>	Worksheet Questions: <b>Lighting</b>
<b>Class 13</b> Apr 22nd	<b>Class Presentations / Roundtable Discussion</b>	N/A	Worksheet Questions: <b>Directing / Production</b>
<b>Study Days: Apr 27th - Apr 30th</b>			
<b>FINAL</b> May 1st 2pm	<b>Final Projects Due</b> Digital PDF Submission / 2pm	N/A	Essay/Video/Other: <b>Final Project PDF</b>

# Additional Resources:

## Books:

*Inspired 3D Short Film Production* [Jeremy Cantor, Pepe Valencia]

*I Moved to Los Angeles to Work in Animation* [Natalie Nourigat]

## Instagram Portfolios:

@joshstaub.art [Josh Staub]

### STORY

@tallychych [Natalie Nourigat]  
@whittlewoodshop [Jeremy Spears]  
@briankesinger [Brian Kesinger]  
@samstyle [Samantha Villfort]  
@ryangreenart [Ryan Green]  
@domeeshi [Domee Shi]  
@leomatsuda7 [Leo Matsuda]  
@stevehatguy [Stephen Anderson]  
@sumbleby [Steve Umbleby]

### ASSETS

@alenawooten [Alena Wooten]  
@chadstubblefield [Chad Stubblefield]  
@andrewtaylorjennings [Andrew Jennings]

### ANIMATION

@andrew\_chesworth [Andrew Chesworth]  
@michael.franceschi [Michael Franceschi]  
@trentanimation [Trent Correy]  
@agreenster [Adam Green]

## Websites:

[www.awn.com](http://www.awn.com)

[www.animationguild.org](http://www.animationguild.org)

[www.cgsociety.org](http://www.cgsociety.org)

## Periodicals:

*Animation Magazine*

*CGW*

*VFX Voice*

## Inspiration:

*CTN Gallery* [North Hollywood]

*Nucleus Art Gallery* [Alhambra]

### ART / DESIGN

@coryloftis [Cory Loftis]  
@grizandnorm [Griselda Sastrawanita]  
@dethancooper\_art [Dan Cooper]  
@bschwaby [Bill Schwab]  
@dicetsutsumi [Dice Tsutsumi]  
@woutertulp [Wouter Tulp]  
@peteremmerich [Peter Emmerich]  
@bobbypontillas [Bobby Pontillas]  
@rrr\_yaga [Daniel Arriaga]  
@ryanlangdraws [Ryan Lang]  
@aaronblaiseart [Aaron Blaise]  
@robertkondo [Robert Kondo]  
@ladyadorabeezle [Ami Thompson]  
@megprk [Meg Park]  
@britsketch [Brittney Lee]  
@myamada1979 [Mike Yamada]  
@theillustratus [Jeff Turley]  
@robhruppel [Robh Ruppel]  
@lorelay\_bove [Lorelay Bove]  
@tory\_polska [Tory Polska]  
@sdevart [Shreya Devarakonda]

# 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**. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at **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 of Equity and Diversity, 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 micro-aggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX 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.

### **Campus Support & Intervention:**

**(213) 821-4710**

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.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX**