

**CTPR 479 Straight to Series:
Development of Episodic TV Comedy (2 units)
Fall 2023 Monday 4:00-7:50 pm
(SCA 361 for EPs alone)
SCA 406 (when together with Writers' Room)**

Instructor: Tim Marx

Contact Info: Tmarx@usc.edu, 818 399-0272

Office Hours: By appointment

Overview of the Semester:

In this Spring's class, the Executive Producers will oversee the development of three 10-12 page episodic comedy scripts and participate in comprehensive pre-production work that will prepare the production team for a Fall 2024 shooting period that will replicate the first season of a straight-to-series comedy production.

You will have oversight for all creative aspects of the series, including casting, production design, costumes, locations, scheduling, budgeting, visual effects, editing, music, sound, etc. -- all under the auspices of overall parameters. It is a huge opportunity to experience the fun and madness of making television, but with that opportunity comes great responsibility for your hard work, diligence, inquisitiveness, collaboration, and ability to inspire others.

You will also hear from some guest experts who will discuss their roles in the series process and help you understand how to make television series in the professional world.

The Writers' Room:

You will be working with the writers - hearing their ideas pitched to you, giving notes on their outlines and drafts, assisting with research, and generally helping to make their work fit the show you will produce. You will learn to do so in the most helpful way to promote the best show possible. Writers will help creatively produce the episodes they write, and you will work with them in that capacity. Writers will share much of the creative oversight with you.

The Series:

The Writers' Room will create the show, and you will work with them to develop it and make it producible. You must do so within the confines of the budget and with the input

of the “studio and network.” Ultimately, your loyalty is to the best version of the show you are all setting out to make.

You will also work with the Production Designer this semester as the Art Department establishes a standing set(s) to be built on Stage 4 late this semester and finished early next semester.

Executive Producing Process:

Collaboration is the most important aspect of our EP team. Working together as a team is essential—but teams come with strengths and flaws—and you must determine what strengths and weaknesses each of you have, and divide up the work in a way that benefits all. I will help choose who is best suited for each role with the best interests of the series and class in mind. You cannot do every EP job (though you may want to experience it all). You will also need to lead and collaborate with your entire crew who will be helping you make the series.

Skills that we begin to hone this semester include:

- Series Development – How to analyze work, write and present notes
- Production Planning – working with all the departments to create a doable plan
- Scheduling – determining what is shot on stage, locations and the time allowed
- Budgeting – Utilizing MM Budgeting program to best allocate resources
- Communication – When, how to do it well, following up
- Deadlines – How to set them and keep them
- Crewing Up – How to recruit and hire
- Delegating – Working with your crew
- Leadership and Problem Solving
- Casting – Getting started

Guest Speakers:

During the first half of the semester, we will have guest speakers come to class when available — to discuss their roles in the pilot and series process:

1. Head writers and producers from shows
2. Comedy Television directors,
3. Current programming execs from studios.

Grading Criteria:

In Class Participation*	30%
Giving Notes and Ideas	20%
Casting, scheduling, budgeting	25%
<u>General Prep/Crewing Up</u>	<u>25%</u>
Total	100%

*In class participation includes discussing story ideas and arcs, giving and discussing notes to writers on outlines and drafts, working with production design and adapting to outside notes from “the studio.”

Heads Up on Time Commitment:

Both the Fall Prep course and especially the Spring Production course are quite demanding. Please be advised that you will be expected to deliver on all responsibilities you’ve been assigned. I advise you to limit your other school and work commitments so that producing this show in the Fall can be your priority.

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 your professor 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).

Production Division Attendance Policy:

Timely attendance is mandatory and failure to attend all class sections from beginning to end may affect grades. Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. One absence may result in a student's grade being lowered by one notch (IE: A becomes A-). Two absences may result in a student's grade being lowered by two notches (IE: A- becomes B). A third absence may result in a student's grade being lowered another full point (IE: B becomes C). Grades can be lowered by one full point for every additional absence.

Tardiness: A student is deemed late anytime after the class is scheduled to start. The very nature of television production “in real life” requires that everyone be on time, so as not to hold up the entire production. If you know you are going to be late, send a text to me. One late arrival may not affect your grade. Two late arrivals equate to one full unexcused absence. (IE: A becomes A-). Three late arrivals may result in your grade being dropped by two portions (IE: A- becomes B). Four late arrivals may result in your grade being dropped three portions (one full point: B becomes C). Lateness of more than 20 minutes will count as an absence.

- **Exemptions** will be allowed on a case-by-case basis, and must be supported by a written accommodation request from the USC Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS).
- **Students who become ill** and need to self-isolate will be supported in their efforts to stay current with classwork and assignments. Faculty are no longer required to provide an option for students to zoom into class. However, Faculty may choose to use zoom at

their discretion in an effort to help students stay current in their course work. Students must contact the professor or SA 24 hours prior to class start time if they need to miss class for any reason.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy:

In this course, you may be allowed to use artificial intelligence (AI)-powered programs to help you with assignments that indicate the permitted use of AI. You should also be aware that AI text generation tools may present incorrect information, biased responses, and incomplete analyses; thus, they are not yet prepared to produce text that meets the standards of this course. To adhere to our university values, you must cite any AI-generated material (e.g., text, images, etc.) included or referenced in your work and provide the prompts used to generate the content. Using an AI tool to generate content without proper attribution will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Please review the instructions in each assignment for more details on how and when to use AI Generators for your submissions.

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.

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 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.

[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.

