



USC

CPTR 523
Section 18623D

INTRODUCTION TO MULTI-CAMERA PRODUCTION

Units: 2
Spring 2024
Tuesdays: 1:00PM-4:50PM
Location: RZC Stage A

Professor: Robert Schiller
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Office Hours: By Appointment
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COURSE SUMMARY

This is a 15 week course focusing on the “How To” of multi-camera directing and production, more specifically the Situation Comedy or “Sitcom”, although all skills learned are applicable to all multi camera productions including daytime drama, sport events, game shows, variety shows, talk shows and news. These skills are applicable for multi camera set ups on “single camera” shoots as well. We will cover the process of producing/directing multi camera scenes from pre-production through the live shooting of the scenes. All aspects of production will be covered including emphasis on the roles of the stage manager and associate director. This is not a “technical course”. Although students are expected to operate cameras, work in the control booth, and be involved in other technical aspects of production, the primary emphasis in this course is on the work of directors, their collaboration with crew and actors, and what is expected of them from the producers, the writers, and the network. We cover how directors transition from single camera prep to multi camera prep. There are two projects to be shot. The first, a two person scene three pages long of your choosing, with a cast of your choosing. Each student will have an end of semester final project shooting a scene from a sitcom or drama. The

scene must be no more than 5 minutes long, and with 4-6 characters. A field trip to observe a current show “in action” will be planned.

LEARNING GOALS and OBJECTIVES

Though this course is modeled after a typical week of a sitcom production, using sitcom scheduling, sitcom scripts, sets, and shooting techniques, the over-arching purpose of this course is to prepare directors for the process of telling a story in multi camera, and how it differs from single camera. There will be an emphasis on considerations in staging actors for multi camera and actual shooting technique. You are required to cast actors for your project. Each student, in their role as director, learns to hone their communication and leadership skills in a collaborative way on set, leading a creative team consisting of actors, assistant directors, associate directors, script supervisors, cameramen, lighting directors, control booth personnel. We will learn how to mark a script and cut a live show from the control room. At the end of this course, each student should be able to watch a sitcom with a whole new appreciation of just how much effort and skill goes in to producing one episode of television.

Instructors Statement

The multi camera production/format is alive and well in MOST aspects of TV programming without us even realizing it. Though the emphasis and course work will focus primarily on the Situation Comedy, news, sports, gameshows, daytime dramas and more specifically scripted live action, are enjoying a resurgence due mainly in part to Netflix, Apple TV and Amazon entering the original scripted series marketplace. There also continues to be a robust job market providing young adult content by studios such as Disney and Nickelodeon.

It is the goal of this course to teach student directors the skills required in this genre of production, adapting your story telling skills to multi camera, and in this huge job market not only of the director, but the other positions directly responsible for turning the “page” to the “screen”. The principals learned in this course will assist you in multi camera setups/coverage in the single camera world, where it would be RARE if you did not use at least two cameras in set ups to save production time under tight budgets.

Class Philosophy

Hands on learning by doing, in a collaborative professional atmosphere. Learn how it takes a team and not an auteur, to make a production successful. High level of enthusiasm and participation is required.

Suggested Reading

“Directors Tell The Story” by Bethany Rooney and Mary Lou Belli at the USC bookstore. Or <https://a.co/5iew1hD>

Description of Assignments

There will be out of class preparation of marked scripts.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Project 1:Script prep: Actor Blocking (5) Camera Blocking (5) Shooting (5)	15	
Camera Blocking execution	10	
Shooting Execution	10	
Mid term	10	
Project 2: All Script Prep	15	
Camera Blocking execution	10	
Shooting execution	10	
Production Value/Creativity	10	
Collaboration	10	
TOTAL	100	

PARTICIPATION is the engine of Group Learning. It is a crucial element in your grade. It includes commitment to the class, involvement with other students' projects, helping them in its realization, exercising collaboration, engagement with the material and contribution to class discussion.

Grading Scale

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

School of Dramatic Arts Actors:

You are strongly advised to cast students from USC School of Dramatic Arts when possible and appropriate. Students who have done so have found them to be well-trained professionals and reliable collaborators. Students may also find other sources of casting their projects.

Production Division Attendance Policy

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 7 minutes (number can be adjusted as desired) after the class is scheduled to start. 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 30 minutes will count as an absence.

Timely attendance is mandatory and failure to attend all class sections from beginning to end may affect grades.

- 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.

Cell phones, tablets, lap tops:

I do not permit the use of cell phones on my professional sets, except in emergencies or usage directly related to the production or permissible promotion of the product.

I hold that same standard in my classroom. Cell phone usage during class is disrespectful to me, your fellow classmates, and the professional standards you are all striving for. If you use any of your devices for note taking or taking video of scenes, please inform me ahead of time. Violation of this policy is subject to a discretionary 5 point grade deduction.

Deadlines:

Missing deadlines is generally regarded as unacceptable in the Industry, and so it will be in this class. If you know ahead of time that unavoidable circumstances will the timely delivery of your work you must notify me immediately, and the circumstances must be documented. Only genuine “emergencies” beyond your control will be accepted.

Unexcused missed due dates will result in reduction of 2.5 point grade deduction.

Unforeseen Circumstances:

If you have life problems or circumstances that might affect your work, please let me know in advance. I want to be understanding and helpful if I can. See me to make arrangements for deadline extensions.

Grading Feedback:

You may ask me for feedback about how you are doing at any time. If I notice that a student is at risk of falling below a B, I will reach out and bring this to the student’s attention.

Be aware, however, that the majority of grade value is earned after mid-semester. This can make it difficult for me to give precise warnings early on. I urge you to take responsibility for your work and your grade and stay on top of things.

Safety:

All students are expected to abide by USC School of Cinematic Arts Safety Guidelines. Violations of any of the safety guidelines may result in disciplinary action ranging from confiscation of footage to expulsion from the University.

Students with Disabilities:

Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be

sure the letter is delivered to the Instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday-Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. The office is in Student Union 301, and their phone number is (213)740-0776.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
1/9	Intro to Multi Camera- Review Syllabus. Lecture: The Stage/The Cameras The Control Room Show /crew Personnel Anatomy of a Sitcom schedule Production Mtg/Table Read Single Cam V Multi cam-prep	<i>Glossary of Terms</i> <i>Handout- OVER</i> FOUR WEEKS	2 person scene approval due 1/15 @5pm
1/16	The Action Line The A B C and X's of multi camera The Quad Split Staging for Multi camera Marking a script for: Actor Blocking Camera Blocking View/Dissect Sitcom Review Glossary of terms	Block/mark 2 person script	Prep script: Actor Blocking Lined camera blocking due 1/22 @ 5pm Provide 3 copies of script.
1/23	Directors Group A Rehearse/Camera Block (AD in control room) Record quad split		
1/30	Directors Group B Rehearse/Camera Block (AD in control room) Record Quad split		Look for 5 person 3 page scene for final project
2/6	Directors Group C Rehearse/Camera Block (AD in control room) Record quad split		
2/13	Mid Term quiz Lecture: Prepare the shooting script Control room-Line cut Stage Manager/Slating	Casting for 5 person scenes	Final Project Directors Group A submit scene for approval 2/19
2/20	Directors Group A Shoot	Casting	Final Project Directors Group B submit scene for approval 2/26
2/27	Directors Group B Shoot	Casting	Final Project Directors Group C submit scene for approval 3/7
3/5	Directors Group C Shoot		Prep script: Actor Blocking Lined camera blocking due 3/18

3/12	SPRING BREAK No Class		
3/19	STUDENT PROJECTS Directors Group A Rehearse/Camera Block		
3/26	STUDENT PROJECTS Directors Group B Rehearse/Camera Block		
4/2	STUDENT PROJECTS Directors Group C Rehearse/Camera Block		
4/9	SHOOT STUDENT PROJECTS Directors Group A		
4/16	SHOOT STUDENT PROJECTS Directors Group B		
4/23	SHOOT STUDENT PROJECTS Directors Group C		

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.

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

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.

PLEASE NOTE:

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