

CTPR:533 Directing Techniques

Section: 18632D

Units: 2

Spring 2024 – Monday – 7:00 - 10:30pm

Location: SCE STG 2

Instructor: James Savoca

Office Hours: By appointment only

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Course Description

A second semester of Intermediate Directing, the core of the course will focus on the “workshop concept” of learning. The technique of creating “moments” will be the main area of study, in addition to “blocking” and “coverage.”

Through in-class and outside exercises, each student will work on how best to block moments, as well as how to cover them and why and how to move the camera.

Each student will direct 3 exercises; one in-class(S1) and two outside-of-class(E1, E2).

Each exercise will be screened in class with Instructor highlighting what works and doesn't, incorporating the entire class; adding suggestions for improvements.

In-Class Exercise:

S1 - students will pick their own scenes(a two-character scene no longer than 3 pages) and actors(off-book), can evolve into E1.

The process: run the scene, work out blocking, finalize coverage. Use fellow students as: AD, camera operator, sound and script sup.

The scene needs to be uploaded to the Drive one week before workshop date(identifying the moment).

Five groups of 3 students will be created, who will each workshop their scene on the same night – the emphasis being on blocking, coverage and creating moments.

Exercises:

E1 - contain one impactful moment where blocking and camera bring to life.

E2 - contain two beats and one impactful moment where the blocking helps drive the beat and moment.

Learning Objectives

To develop specific skills of filmmaking - from the POV of the Director; the emphasis being on blocking and camera – how they relate to creating moments.

- How to create a moment within a scene*
- How to create beats within a scene*
- How to properly block and cover a scene*

Course Notes

All mobile devices, laptops, and tablets are not permitted for reasons to be discussed on the first day.

This is a directing class where the crucial technique of how to create moments will be explored. It is not a class suited to explore projects that entail hazardous conditions, stunt coordinators, high budget productions, etc. It is a 2 credit class with one Professor, so budgets and exercises will reflect this.

Students will receive a letter grade at the end of the class as an evaluation of their overall work in the course, in accordance with the policies and practices of USC and the School of Cinematic Arts. (Please see the “Grading” section in the Syllabus for further details.)

Description and Assessment of Assignments

S1 - Each student will direct & shoot a scene where they provide both scene and actors, 3 page maximum. Can evolve/be a part of E1.

E1 - contain at least one impactful moment, TRT: 3 minutes.

E2 - contain two beats and one impactful moment where the blocking helps drive the beat and moment, TRT: 4 minutes.

*All projects are fiction(docs are not allowed). All projects will be filmed within the accepted SCA “zone” and adhere to all SCA safety guidelines, no exceptions. There will be no actions in the exercises which require a stunt coordinator, as the directing techniques practiced here will be movement of character and camera, not physical action or violence. No working with minors, no exceptions.

Covid-19 Production Protocols

Will be provided on first day of class and uploaded to class Drove.

Grading Breakdown

Assessment Tool (assignments)	Points	% of Grade
Class Participation	20	20
S1	30	30
E1	25	25
E2	25	25
TOTAL	100	100

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

Assignment Submission Policy

All projects are to be uploaded to the class' SCA Google Drive.
See specific due dates on Course Schedule.

Additional Policies

Scheduled topics, assignments and due dates are subject to change.

No projects will be accepted later than the final class date. All late projects will receive a grade deduction(full letter grade) for each class day they are late.

Non-attendance policy:

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. When assignments are late or not completed the grade may be lowered up to one full grade. Two absences will result in a student's grade being lowered by one full letter (IE: A becomes B). Each subsequent absence will result in a student's grade being lowered by one, additional full letter (IE: B becomes C).

Two late class arrivals equate to one full absence.

In order for an absence to be waived, the student must have approval from the professor.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics/Daily Activities	Deliverables/MISC
Class 1 1/8	Introductions, Course overview, create Scene Groups(5) <i>Purpose of Scene/Beats & Moments</i>	
1/15	****NO CLASS****	MLK
Class 2 1/22	<i>Workshop example with actors</i>	
Class 3 1/29	S1 Workshop Group A	<i>*50 minutes per student</i>
Class 4 2/5	S1 Workshop Group B	<i>*50 minutes per student</i>
Class 5 2/12	S1 Workshop Group C	<i>*50 minutes per student</i>
2/19	****NO CLASS****	Prez Day
Class 6 2/26	S1 Workshop Group D	<i>*50 minutes per student</i>
Class 7 3/4	S1 Workshop Group E	<i>*50 minutes per student</i>
3/11	****NO CLASS****	Spring Recess
Class 8 3/18	Screen S1	<i>All students screen</i>
Class 9 3/25	Screen E1	Groups A, B & half of C
Class 10 4/1	Screen E1	Groups D, E & half of C
Class 11 4/8	Open Forum Discussion	
Class 12 4/15	Screen E2	Groups A, B & half of C
Class 13 4/22	Screen E2	Groups D, E & half of C

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.

CAMERA, G&E EQUIPMENT AND CINEMATOGRAPHER POLICY FOR CTPR 533 - Directing Techniques

Students may shoot with their own cameras and edit with their own software. If SCA camera equipment is needed, see below:

RESERVATION PROCEDURE: Students must contact the SCA Camera Dept. to confirm a camera's availability and verify that the student cinematographer has taken the required classes.

Reservation Priority Ranking:

1st Priority: CTPR 581 - Thesis Project

2nd Priority: CTPR 552 - Advanced Directing

3rd Priority: CTPR: 533 - Directing Techniques

4th Priority: CTPR 532 - Intermediate Directing

5th Priority: CTPR 565 - Making Media for Social Change

Priority & Bumping: A higher priority class can bump a lower priority class up to 7 days before a shoot (Example: 2nd priority Advanced Directing can bump 3rd priority Directing Techniques).

NOTE: A 581 can bump any reservation up to 7 days before a shoot.

CTPR 552, 533, & 532 Classes:

1. Students enrolled in 552, 533 and 532 have access to Sony EX3 cameras (if available) or Canon XC15 cameras. These are the standard, officially supported cameras for these classes.
2. If a student in 552, 533 or 532 wants to use the Sony F3 camera (with or without USC lenses) or the Black Magic Ursa Mini-Pro (with or without USC lenses), the cinematographer must be currently enrolled in SCA, have completed CTPR 424 or 537 and have completed a training session with Jeremy Royce at the Camera Genius Bar.
3. If a student in 552, 533 or 532 wants to use a USC Red Dragon (with or without USC lenses), the cinematographer must be currently enrolled in SCA and have completed CTPR 557 Advanced Cinematography. Accessories must be rented from vendors on the Fast Track Insurance List https://scacommunity.usc.edu/resources/student_resources/insurance.cfm and paid for by the student enrolled in the class. USC insurance never covers unapproved vendors or student owned equipment.
4. The F-65 camera is only available to thesis projects.

5. Directing class students are the only person listed on the production number and are responsible for covering the deductible if equipment is lost or damaged. The deductible is \$2,500 per item per occurrence (Example: if a single event damages a camera and a lens, the deductible payment due is \$5,000). This applies to equipment from USC and rented from USC approved vendors. USC insurance never covers unapproved vendors. Student owned equipment is not covered by the USC insurance policy.

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:

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.

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 and 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. 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. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

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 micro aggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, 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.

Campus Support & 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) 442-1200 - 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

ombuds.usc.edu

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.

PLEASE NOTE:

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