USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR 482 Standup 2: Becoming a Pro Spring 2024—Wednesdays (63199)—6:00pm to 7:50pm Location: PED 208 Units: 2

Instructor: Judith Shelton (Jude) Office: TBD or Virtual: <u>https://usc.zoom.us/my/judes.office</u> Office Hours by appointment: Tuesday-Friday Contact Info: You may contact me Tues. – Fri., 9am-5pm Email preferred – <u>judiths@usc.edu</u> I return emails Tuesday – Friday, 9am-5pm On class days, in an emergency only, text 626.390.3678

Course Description

This course continues where THTR 474 left off, using additional writing tools and techniques, while performing in class over and over to create longer more effective sets. You will also engage in the non-performing, but just as important, work of the comic by actively pitching, producing, and promoting your own standup show. By the end of the course, you will leave with a greater understanding of what other work is available to comics, where to head next in your comedy career, and an additional 5 minutes of stage-worthy material. Succeeding as a comic requires self-motivation. I expect Standup 2 comics to be committed to their craft and development. I meet that intention with less handholding, a more discerning eye, and more specific notes.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will:

- Revisit and refine the skills learned in Intro to Standup
- Develop additional material via the "Writer's Room" and your "Head Writer"
- Write for other comics and perform material written by other comics
- Execute script "punch up" in collaboration with a USC SCA screenwriter or similar
- Participate in constant, constructive evaluation of one's comedic material and style
- "Try on" other points of view and styles
- Flesh out the characters in your act and bring them to life
- Practice hosting and headlining
- Explore other career opportunities for comics
- Identify a personal care plan, focusing on mental health and longevity in the business
- Self-produce a standup show in which to showcase your work
- Write and perform a brand new 5-minute set

Readings

Comedy Writing for Late-Night TV by Joe Toplyn – REQUIRED – we will use this book in class How to Succeed in Business Without Really Crying by Carol Leifer (Audiobook recommended) The History of Stand-Up by Wayne Federman (recommended)

Recommended Preparation

STAY HEALTHY: take care in high-risk situations and wash your hands.

Come to each class: on time and prepared to get on stage.

Come willing: to take risks, be honest yet playful, inquisitive, and supportive.

We do not officially take a break during class, but you may use the restroom when you need to.

Course Notes on Attendance

Like Intro to Standup, this is a performance class, all "the good stuff" happens in class. Missing class means missing points for the in-class exercises and discussions, which will impact your grade. Also, being late or leaving early will cost you a participation point. You may make up 15 points if the need to miss class <u>completely</u>/arrive late/leave early arises. Use those missed classes wisely, things might come up. Fifteen points is all I offer, so make the effort to stay healthy and be present in class. If you are not in class to perform, you will need to make up those points.

Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment:

Grades are not dictated by the success of comedy presentations or the instructor's subjective opinion of talent, intellect, or sense of humor.

Grades are dictated by:

Points. Each aspect of class has a point value: participation, in-class exercises and assignments, Midterm, Show, and Final. I provide options to make up 15 points total per semester. More details listed under "Make-Up Options".

Be advised: auditing students observe but do not participate.

Participation (15% of total grade):

- In-class active student analysis of presented materials such as text and video clips
- Constructive feedback on classmates' comedy presentations
- Willingness to experiment and apply the constructive feedback of instructor and other students to one's own work
- If a student is late or leaves early, they will lose their participation point for that day

Exercises and Assignments (32% of total grade):

- Due to the live performance aspect of standup comedy, exercises and homework assignments will be presented in class, no video submissions accepted
- If you cannot commit to being in this class, on time, please wait for another semester
- Student invests fully, striving to make a connection with the crowd and improve over time
- If a student misses an exercise or assignment, student accepts that they have missed their opportunity to perform (stage time) and will lose points which will impact their grade

Midterm (15% of total grade):

- The Midterm presentation is worth 15 points
- No video submission of presentation accepted, except example video requirement
- If you miss the Midterm, you lose 15 points, which will greatly impact your grade
- The policy for tardiness/leaving early (pg. 4) applies to the Midterm, as well

Shows (30% of total grade):

- You must perform in the Show, it is worth 13 points
- You must contribute to the producing of the show. I will award 1-7 points depending on your effort. I will check in with you if I feel you are slacking on your responsibilities.
- So, the show is worth 20 points, total
- You may choose to do less time, but let's talk about it before you decide

Final (8% of total grade):

- The Final is a paper worth 8 points, due at the end of the 2-hour Final period and must be at least 500 words
- The Final will be submitted electronically, via Blackboard discussion board
- Tech problems happen during Finals week, please plan ahead, no late papers accepted
- Not handing in a paper will result in a loss of 8 points, which will impact your grade

Make-up options:

- If you miss an exercise, assignment, or presentation, you may make up 15 points.
- You must post your make-up work via the specific discussion board on Blackboard, only, by Friday, April 26th at 11:59pm. Board closes at Midnight, no late posts accepted.
- You may make up 8 points by doing a NON-USC booked standup show.
- You may make up 6 points by doing a USC booked standup show.
- You may make up 4 points by doing an open mic anywhere.
- You must record your set and photograph the space; video will count as both.
- You must post both items AND a hearty paragraph (5 sentences) to the specific discussion board on Blackboard.
- Technical/posting issues will result in a loss of points, leave time to figure it out.
- You may make up 4 points by *observing the speakers* in Wayne's class, Mondays, 6-7:50pm, PED 208, and posting a screenshot and two full paragraphs (10 sentences) to the specific discussion board on Blackboard. Date and times of speakers, TBD.
- You may make up 2 points by *observing* Wayne's class and posting a picture and full paragraph (5 sentences) to the entire class, via the discussion board on Blackboard.
- You must email Wayne before you drop into his class. Waynefed@usc.edu
- You may make up 2 points by watching a standup show and posting a picture and full paragraph (5 sentences) to the discussion board on Blackboard.

Exercises and Assignments	Points
Week 1, in-class improvised exercise	1
Week 2, 1 st assignment: First Set	3
Week 3, in-class exercise: Characters	3
Week 4, 2 nd assignment: Late Night Monologue	4
Week 5, in-class exercise: Writer's Room-Pitching	3
Week 6, 3 rd assignment: Second Set	5
MIDTERM Presentation: Comedy in The Style Of	12
Week 8, in-class exercise: Writer's Room-Punch Up	5
Week 9, TBD (depending on what I think you need to work on)	2
Week 10, 4 th assignment: Joke Dump and Improvised Sets	3
Week 11, 5 th assignment: Writer's Room-Head Writer	8
Week 12, 6 th assignment: Third Set	7
Week 13, 7 th assignment: Rehearsal for Off-Campus Show	7
Week 14, 8 th assignment: SELF-PRODUCED OFF-CAMPUS SHOW	20
Week 15 (4/24), 9 th assignment: Rehearsal for On-Campus Show	10
Week 15 (4/25), 10 th assignment: USC ON-CAMPUS SHOW	10
FINAL: Paper Due: Critical Analysis, Self	7
TOTAL:	100

• Make-up points cannot take you over 100 points, 100 points is the maximum.

Grading Scale:

Excellent: A (4) = 100-96; A- (3.7) = 95-90 Good: B+ (3.3) = 89-86; B (3) = 85-84; B- (2.7) = 83-80 Average: C+ (2.3) = 79-76; C (2) = 75-74; C- (1.7) = 73-70 Poor: D (.7-1.3) = 60's Fail: F (0) = 59 and below

Further Grading Notes:

- Students joining the class late must make up all the missed week's points.
- If your work in class is unsatisfactory, you will be warned before the deadline for dropping the course with a "W", April 5th. I will discuss your work at any time.
- Auditing students attend class strictly as an observer and do not participate.

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the <u>USC Student</u> <u>Handbook</u>. All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), 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 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 <u>student handbook</u> or the <u>Office of</u> <u>Academic Integrity's website</u>, and university policies on <u>Research and Scholarship Misconduct</u>.

Assignment Submission Policy

This is a live performance class, no video submissions of presentations or exercises.

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 me as the instructor to offer any feedback on the course.

ATTENDANCE

Absences:

Developing standup material and style depends on consistent writing (usually as homework) and "getting up" (performing in class). Each class helps you build and refine material over time. <u>Be</u> <u>advised: if you miss a class, points awarded that day for performing your stand up material in</u> <u>class and being an active, supportive audience member will be lost</u>. I provide make-up options should you need to miss a class, or two. But things happen, save missing class for emergencies.

Tardiness/leaving early:

Everyone gets up each class. Names are picked "lottery" style. When you are late or leave early it is unprofessional, disruptive, and unsupportive. Committing to this class means being here from 6pm to 7:50pm. If you arrive after 6:05pm you will lose your participation point for the day. Comics arriving late are put at the end of the lottery and might not get up, depending on time. I take the late people last, in the order they arrived. Comics choosing to leave early lose their participation point and risk not getting picked before they wish to leave, losing all the points for the day. I do, however, try my best to get you all up. I realize things happen and will try to make time for you, but this class is full, only 2 hours now, and we have a lot to cover. Be mindful of days that have more points, like the Midterm. I end class at 7:40pm to give homework. Everyone who comes to class on time and stays the duration will get up. Anyone who is late/leaving early may or may not get up, depending on time and running order. If you are not in class for the homework, please refer to this syllabus or contact another comic. Please do not email me asking what the homework is. It is all here in this syllabus. Make the choice to be in class on time, to stay the whole class, and remain aware of what is required of you.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Text in **bold** indicates **assignment requiring preparation**.

(This timeline is subject to change depending on the dynamics, pace and unpredictability of the creative process of any given class. Being in class ensures you are aware of any changes.)

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and	Deliverable/
		Homework	Due Dates
Week 1	Warm-up,	Begin reading	Due week 2
Jan. 10	introductions,	Toplyn book	
	discussion of syllabus (our contract)	Homework: 3-	
	In-class improvised exercise and stage time	minute set, max.	
Week 2	First assignment* - First Set	Homework:	Discussion and
Jan. 17	Students perform first 3-minute set	Study character	exercise
	Plus, brainstorming show and creating tasks	comics for	week 3
		discussion	
		Read ch. 5 Toplyn	
Week 3	Characters in Comedy	Homework:	Due week 4
Jan. 24	Fleshing out the people in your act	Bring in 3-	
	In-class discussion, exercise, and stage time	minute topical	
	Discussion of monologue joke writing	monologue	
Week 4	Second assignment* - Late Night	Homework:	Due week 5
Jan. 31	Monologue	Bring in 3-5 ideas	
	Please bring in a 3-minute monologue	that could use	
	inspired by news headlines, cultural events,	some help or	
	and pop culture within the last 7 days.	need fleshing out	

Week 5	Writer's Room: Pitching	Homework:	Due week 6
Feb. 7	Students break into smaller groups and pitch	Bring in	
	on each other's jokes	2nd set, 4	
	Writing session followed by stage time	minutes, max.	
Week 6	Third assignment* - Second Set	Homework:	MIDTERM
Feb. 14	Students bring in 4 minutes of best "bits"	Receive comic	week 7
	from weeks 1-5, creating new "set"	and prepare	
	Midterm discussion and assignments	Midterm presentation	
Week 7	Midterm* - Comedy in the Style of	Homework:	Discussion and
MIDTERM	In class 6, you isolated an area in your own	Bring in material	writing session
Feb. 21	work that needs improvement. In class 7,	of any kind that	Week 8
100.21	students present a 3-minute comedy set	needs better	Weeko
	inspired by the point of view and persona of	jokes-	
	a comic that embodies that strength.	, Screenwriting or	
	You are not writing for them but using their	sitcom writing in	
	style to lead you into new territory,	SCA is a great	
	previously uncharted as an artist, creating	place to look!	
	new and fearless, deeper material.	Read	
	Use of wardrobe, props, anything that helps	ch. 6 Toplyn	
	you embody the style of this comic is		
	mandatory. This is a fun one!		D 10
Week 8	Writer's Room: Punch Up	Homework:	Due week 9
Feb. 28	In-class exercise, break into smaller groups Writing session followed by reading of	TBD, depending on what skills I	
	punched up scripts, 7pm-ish. Please invite	think you need to	
	the writers!	work on.	
Week 9	TBD	Homework:	Discussion and
March 6		Read Toplyn	exercise
		Ch. 7 and 8	week 10
Week 10	Forth assignment* -	Homework:	Due week 11
March 20	"Joke Dump" and Improvised Sets	Receive your	
		comic and get	
		them 3-minutes	
		of new material, by Sunday, 12pm	
Week 11	Fifth assignment* -	by Sunday, 12pm Homework:	Due week 12
March 27	Writer's Room: Head Writer	Work on third	DUC WEEK IZ
	Students "tailor" and perform the material	set,	
	written for them, 3 minutes max.	5 minutes max.	
Week 12	Sixth assignment* - Third Set	Homework:	Due week 13
April 3	Students present third set, 5 minutes of best	Bring in 1 st show	
	jokes from weeks 1-11.	set for rehearsal	
		5 mins. max.	

Week 13 April 10	Seventh assignment* - Rehearsal w/hosts For Off-Campus Show The act returns in an advanced form, receiving feedback and notes Emphasis on beginning and ending, handling "mistakes", nerves, boredom, etc. Finish last-minute production tasks and tidbits	Homework: Continue adjusting and improving set for 1 st show off-campus Complete all tasks and promote show	Due week 14
Week 14 April 17	Eighth assignment* - Off-Campus Show!	Homework: Assess and make final adjustments for 2 nd show on-campus Complete all tasks and promote show	Due week 15
Week 15 April 24 April 25	Ninth assignment* Discussion off-campus show Rehearsal for On-Campus Show with Hosts EVALUATIONS need to be at 80% before I can start this class Tenth assignment* On-Campus Show!	Homework: Prep for show on 4/25/23 Write self- assessment Final paper	REMINDER: Makeup work is due April 26, by 11:59 pm Due by the end of your Final Period Wednesday May 1, 2024 by 9pm
FINAL May 1 Due by 9pm	Final* Critical Analysis, Self – Paper Due Written paper due: How was Standup 2? self-assessing the student's overall progress through the class; including personal challenges, strengths, weaknesses, victories, and future plans (no class meeting) 500 words minimum via Blackboard		Hooray, you did it! Thank you for giving your all to this process!!

Off-Campus Class Show on April 17th:

Together, you will secure the location, produce, promote, and perform a class show during your regular class period. Where? How? Comics devote a good portion of their time finding ways to perform. Being a good "hustler" will get you far in comedy, get creative!

On-Campus Class Show on April 25th:

USC Standup Comedy Showcase is on campus, the final week of classes Location decided by SDA

KEY DATES https://classes.usc.edu/term-20241/calendar/ (be sure to double check these dates)

Jan 8: Spring semester classes begin Jan. 26: Last day to drop this class without a "W", or to select "P/NP" Feb. 23: Last day to drop without a mark of "W" on official transcript only Feb. 23: Last day to change P/NP to a letter grade March 11-15: Spring recess April 5: Last day to drop this class with a mark of "W" April 26: Spring semester classes end April 27-30: Study days May 1-8: Final examinations May 9: Spring semester ends May 10: Commencement

Additional Notes

- No eating or drinking is allowed during class <u>at any time</u>, per USC SDA guidelines.
- You may drink water when you need to.
- No social media, texting, computer work. Phones are for sets and recording only.
- We do not take a break, but you may use the restroom as needed.

Welcome back, dear students, and thank you for working with me once again! Together you'll take the next step in your journey, get better as comics, try new things, and feel more confident about your career and where to go next. I know you will rise to the occasion!

Judith Shelton (Jude)

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" <u>policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b</u>. 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 <u>studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling</u>

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 <u>equity.usc.edu</u>, <u>titleix.usc.edu</u>

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.