



CTAN 586: Animation Storyboarding Practicum
Units: FALL 2024, 2 UNITS
MONDAYS 7-9:50 PM (PST)

Location: SCB 102

Instructor: Brandon Jeffords

Office: Available upon request

Office Hours: Available upon request

Contact Info: jeffords@usc.edu

Student Assistant: Hannah Miller

Contact Info: hrmiller@usc.edu

IT Help: Creative Tech Help Desk

Contact Info: creativetech@sca.usc.edu or
213-821-4571

Land Acknowledgement

USC acknowledges that we are on the traditional land of the Tongva People. For thousands of years, the Tongva people lived on this land we occupy today and were considered the most powerful indigenous peoples to inhabit the Los Angeles basin. Along with the Tongva, we also recognize the Chumash, Tataviam, Serrano, Cahuilla, Juaneño, and Luiseño People, for the land that USC also occupies around Southern California. To learn about the Indigenous land on which your learning location resides, please visit Native-Land.ca to discover the Original People of your home.

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 Prof. Jeffords and your SA, Hannah Miller, 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. 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.

Students must contact the professor or SA 24 hours prior to class start time if they need to miss class for any reason.

Info on use of AI Generators in the John C. Hench Division of Animation and Digital Arts

In this course, AI may be used as reference or inspiration for your work, but we do not accept AI-generated art as your own original work as it is deemed derivative of other works whose originators may not have granted permission for its use

Course Description

This course will be an introduction to the techniques and uses of storyboards for Film and TV Animation. While many of the methods discussed may be applied to storyboarding for Live-Action films or TV, this class will not focus on the specifics of Live-Action storyboarding. Emphasis will be on – ***telling a story with pictures*** – which is the foundation of all cinema, old and new. Students will have the chance to develop their abilities to communicate visually, with clarity. Some aspects of the class will be designed to simulate a “real time” professional storyboarding experience, working from assigned script pages, established character and environmental designs, all toward giving students an overview of what to expect when eventually entering the demanding, active and – yes – fun arena of animated filmmaking. Final projects can include – but not mandatorily - the creation of storyboards focusing on students’ original ideas as well, from concept to execution, and, after individual consultation with the instructor, will be based on a student-by-student basis.

For class demonstration purposes, the instructor will be working on a digital tablet and/or animation storyboard software. (IMPORTANT NOTE: This class is NOT designed to teach the technical aspects or techniques of any digital storyboarding or design software, such as Photoshop, Sketchbook, Toon Boom or Storyboard Pro.)

Grades

Grading will not be based on group critiques, classroom participation and accurate delivery of assignments. Students will be judged by completion of assignments by given deadlines, willingness to take direction, execution of revisions and overall improvement demonstrated over the span of the course. Students will NOT be graded on personal drawing skills, but will be expected to accurately communicate ideas, actions and scenarios in a graphic, clear, visual manner.

Grading Breakdown

- Assignments 40%
- Class participation & participation in lectures 20%
- Final project 40%

Projects will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- a. Accuracy of assignment guidelines
- b. Demonstration of principles covered in class
- c. Communication of ideas

Final projects will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- a. Completion
- b. Communication of narrative or intent
- c. Effectiveness of timing and execution

Electronic Media in Class

You may use your laptops and/or portable digital drawing tablets for notes and/or translation, but NOT for social media or YouTube (except for research purposes approved by the instructor) during lectures. Absolutely no social media or texting during lectures. Keep phones on mute.

Supplies

Digital Storyboarding preferred. Storyboard software such as Storyboard Pro, Adobe Photoshop, or Procreate are encouraged for those students who know how to use them. Presentation of assignments using Preview, Adobe Bridge, or the like are also encouraged.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

While storyboarding is largely a “Learn by Doing” craft, several books have been published, which provide, if not fully “How To” information, good inspiration for the student artist. All the books listed below are relatively inexpensive and available new and/or used, and in paperback, on Amazon.com or other online stores, as well as book and art supply stores:

- ***FILM DIRECTING: SHOT BY SHOT*** by Steven D. Katz
- ***CARTOON ANIMATION*** by Preston Blair
- ***DISNEY ANIMATION – THE ILLUSION OF LIFE*** by Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnson
- ***DIRECTING THE STORY*** by Francis Glebas

Course Schedule:

- WEEK 1 (Aug 26): **“SHOW IT. DON’T TELL IT.”** and **“THE TWO ENEMIES OF STORYBOARDING”** - Visual Storytelling Overview. In-class quick assignment and discussion. First Home Assignment Due in two weeks.
- WEEK 2 (Sep 2): **NO CLASS!** Labor Day.
- WEEK 3(Sep 9): Turn in Assignments Group Critique, discussion, and instructor lecture - **“COMPOSITION, STAGING, AND BALANCE...”**. **STORY EXERCISE #1 “Fractured Fairytale”** (Due in two weeks)
- WEEK 4 (Sep 16): **“PROFESSIONAL PITCH DEMONSTRATION”** - Group Q & A. In class working session. Review concepts and “thumbnails” of work-in-progress. Individualized discussions with instructor.
- WEEK 5 (Sep 23): **“THE PITCH”** – Students pitch their scenes. Group critique. Instructor tips on presentation of storyboards. How to approach revisions. Third storyboard assignment given – **“THE SCRIPTED SCENE”** (Advanced version of assignment from Week 3. Due in 4 Weeks.)
- WEEK 6 (Sep 30): Short Lecture - **“STORY FINESSE”**. Review concepts and “thumbnails” of work-in-progress. Individualized discussions and drawing examples with instructor.
- WEEK 7 (Oct 7): **INDIVIDUALIZED STUDENT/INSTRUCTOR DISCUSSIONS** – Group Q & A. In class working session. One-on-one instructor assistance.
- Fall Recess (Oct 10-11)
- WEEK 8 (Oct 14): **INDIVIDUALIZED STUDENT/INSTRUCTOR DISCUSSIONS** – Group Q & A. In class working session. One-on-one instructor assistance.
- WEEK 9 (Oct 21): **PITCHES – Scripted Scene** Pitch review. **STORY EXERCISE #2 “Action/Suspense, Comedy, or Drama?”** – (Due in 1 week)
- WEEK 10 (Oct 28): Turn in Assignments Group Critique, discussion, and instructor examples. **“HONING SKILLS”** – Instructor presentation and student in-class exercises based on class needs. (i.e., improving camera angles, cutting, lens choice etc.) Final assignment given: **“STORY TEST”** – Students will create an original story from their choice of 1 of 3 story prompts. Due in 5 weeks (Dec 2)
- WEEK 11 (Nov 4): **“CONCEPT REVIEW”** – Instructor will review the students’ concepts to make sure they are achievable within the timeframe. One-on-one instructor assistance.
- WEEK 12 (Nov 11): **“WORKSHOP CLASS PART ONE”** – Instructor “Walk-Around”. All students must check in. One-on-one instructor assistance.
- WEEK 13 (Nov 18): **“WORKSHOP CLASS PART TWO”** – Instructor “Walk-Around”. All students must check in. One-on-one instructor assistance.
- WEEK 14 (Nov 25): **“WORKSHOP CLASS PART THREE”** – Instructor “Walk-Around”. All students must check in. One-on-one instructor assistance.
- Thanksgiving Break (Nov 27-Dec 1)
- WEEK 15 (Dec 2): **“FINAL PITCHES”** – Final Pitches of your original story are due. They should be submitted electronically and will be presented orally in the final class period. Instructor Summation. Due at 7:00pm (PST)
- Fall semester classes end (Dec 6)
- Study Days (Dec 7-10)
- Final examinations (Dec 11-18)
- Final exam due: Electronically, Monday Dec. 16th at 9pm

Assignment format:

The aspect ratio for all storyboarding assignments will be 16:9. A digital template with a dialogue section will be provided. Storyboarded scenes should be delivered as both layouts and individual panels. To get credit for the assignment, these files should be placed into the designated class folder on the day of the pitch. The individual panels will be used for in-class pitching and the layouts will be used by the instructor for the purpose of review and grading. Layout pages should be 8 1/2 x 11 inches (landscape mode), with approx. 20–25 panels per page. These should be turned in on the day of the pitch. If you need assistance on how to quickly create layout pages there will be instructions in the “class tools” folder. Please have your files uploaded BEFORE CLASS on the day of the pitch. For assignments on which the instructor will be providing draw overs, you will be asked to create a single layered photoshop file of your layout sheets.

The School of Cinematic Arts Support Systems and Statements:

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 persons 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 or anonymously submit a report on SCA Community: <https://scacommunity.usc.edu/secure/diversityEquity/> You can also read more about how to report discrimination based on a protected class here: <https://eeotix.usc.edu/get-help/what-are-my-choices-text/>

SCA Office of Student Services

213-740-8358 or StudentAffairs@cinema.usc.edu

SCA Embedded Therapists

Students enrolled in an SCA major program can schedule an appointment with an embedded therapist for the School of Cinematic Arts through the student health portal [MySHR](#).

SCA Community

For additional SCA resources please visit scacommunity.usc.edu

[Creative Technology and Support](#)

(213) 821-4571

creativetech@cinema.usc.edu

Location: SCA 128

Support Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM - 8:30 PM

<https://knowledgebase.sca.usc.edu/>

<https://workstations.sca.usc.edu/>

Physical Production Office

The Physical Production Office assists students and faculty with production-related matters including production numbers, locations, permits, insurance, gear and equipment vendors, safety issues, and crew and actor policies. More information can be found by visiting the online [Production Procedures and](#)

[Safety Handbook](#). The Physical Production Office is located at SCA 304 and is open every weekday from 9am-5pm (Fridays 9am-1pm). You can also reach the Office by calling 213-740-1298 or by email at spo@cinema.usc.edu.

Office of Industry Relations
School of Cinematic Arts - SCA 235
(213) 740-4432
ir@cinema.usc.edu

Cinematic Arts Library Research Guide
<https://libguides.usc.edu/cinema>

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

accommodation is 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:

COVID-19 Resource Center - <https://coronavirus.usc.edu/what-should-i-do/>

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 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.

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

“ Story is Everything. Nothing can take it’s Place.” - Walt Disney