



**CTPR 427: INTRODUCTION TO COLOR GRADING**

**Units: 2**

**Spring 2025 - Tuesday - 9-11:50**

**Location:** Lectures: SCB-B104, Labs: SCA-B154

**Instructor: Andrew Balis**

**SA: Linnan Liu**

## Course Description

This class is an introduction to the art, craft and science of color grading, also known as color correction and color timing. The course will explore various aspects of grading and how it can enhance and improve storytelling. The objective is for students to gain a greater understanding of the nuances of photographed images and how images are perceived, then apply color grading techniques to reshape the images.

The class consists of lectures, reviews of media, discussions, and hands on exercises using the color grading tools of DaVinci Resolve.

## Learning Objectives

- Students will develop a working knowledge of aspects of color theory related to color grading.
- Students will develop a working knowledge of DaVinci Resolve application.
- Students will re-balance the contrast and color of images, the core foundation of a colorist's work.
- Students will create cohesive looks for scenes.
- Students will apply techniques to use color creatively to impact the "mood" and "feel" of a scene.
- Students will apply secondary color grading tools to isolate and adjust areas of the frame or individual colors in the frame.
- Students will utilize color grading techniques that are similar to toolsets found in other applications.

**Prerequisite(s):** CTPR 310 or CTPR 508

## Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

For online sessions and assignments, students need to have a computer that is capable of running the free download version of DaVinci Resolve. Students also need an approved hard drive to store the video assets used in class. The SA will provide a list of approved drives. The computer and hard drive must be available by the first week of class.

## Readings and Supplementary Materials

"The Art and Technique of Digital Color Correction", by Steve Hullfish (2nd Edition). I will be teaching concepts that can be revisited in the book throughout the semester and the book can be used for a concept refresher after the class has been completed.

"Hidden Colors", by Gry Garness. Interactive e-book. Available at <https://www.eureka-publishing.com/product/the-hidden-colors/> This book covers color theory concepts we will be exploring during the semester.

## Description and Assessment of Assignments

Grading will be based on a combination of elements, including class participation, a series of assignments and a final exam to determine the student's comprehension of the different aspects of color grading. Assignments and final exam will be completed in DaVinci Resolve.

20% - Class participation\*

20% - Assignment #1

20% - Assignment #2

20% - Assignment #3

20% - Final exam

*\*Class participation:* CTPR 427 is a workshop course that requires students to practice color grading techniques demonstrated in class. Students are expected to fully participate in all in-class exercises and discussions, and demonstrate competence in the techniques necessary for the successful completion of the assignments.

## 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

Assignments will be uploaded to specified Google Drive folders. Specifics for different assignments will be covered during the semester.

## Grading Timeline

Grading of assignments will be done in the two weeks following an assignment. Grading of the final exam will be done in the two weeks following the exam.

## Attendance Policy

Attendance refers to attendance in online Zoom class meetings. If a student is late or absent, please contact the professor and SA prior to class

### Absence

One absence will result in your final grade being lowered by two portions of a grade, i.e. from A to B+.

Two will result in your final grade being lowered one full grade, i.e. from A to a B.

Three will result in your final grade being lowered two full grades, i.e. from A to C.

Your grade will be lowered by one full grade for every absence after.

Lateness If more than 30 minutes late, it's considered an absence.

One lateness will not count against you, it's LA.

Two will result in your final grade being lowered by one portion of a letter grade, i.e. from A to A-.

Three will result in your final grade being lowered by two portions of a letter grade, i.e. from A to B+.

Four will result in your final grade dropping three portions of a grade, or one full letter grade i.e. from A to B. And so on...

If you arrive late, you MUST come to me during a break and let me know you are present. Please don't assume I saw you arrive. If you fail to do so, you may be marked absent.

## Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
<b>Week 1</b> Jan 14th	Overview of curriculum and course  Discussion and screening of examples of color grading fundamentals and process		
<b>Week 2</b> Jan 21st	Working in DaVinci Resolve: fundamentals  Introduction to video scopes for analyzing the luminance and color makeup of the image. Videoscopes for luminance		
<b>Week 3</b> Jan 28th	Primary color grading: Contrast  Exploring techniques to shape the contrast of images		
<b>Week 4</b> Feb 4th	Color Fundamentals:  Topics: color perception, color balance, natural color rendition, skin tone, color casts, communicating color.  Videoscopes for analyzing color		
<b>Week 5</b> Feb 11th	Primary color grading: Color Balancing  Color balancing techniques explored		
<b>Week 6</b> Feb 18th	Primary color grading: Color Balancing continued  Color balancing for stylistic effect- accentuating time of day, location, different light sources.		Assignment 1 start
<b>Week 7</b> Feb 25th	Working in DaVinci Resolve:  Project management, conforming projects in Resolve, basic color management.		Assignment 1 due
<b>Week 8</b> Mar 4th	Scene to Scene color grading  Color perception: Contrast effects, color harmony		

	Matching shots within a scene, and keeping a look cohesive and consistent throughout a scene or entire project		
<b>Week 9</b> Mar 11th	Exploring tools for aiding in scene to scene color grading		
<b>NO CLASS</b> Mar 18th	<b>No Class- Spring Break</b>		
<b>Week 10</b> Mar 25th	Introduction to advanced image workflows  Working with log and raw imagery, LUTs, color space transforms  Additional grading tools		Assignment 2 start
<b>Week 11</b> April 1st	Creative Process  Exploring strategies and workflows. Story and look arc, context, collaborator communication, settings looks for a project.  <b>Setting looks for Assignment 3</b>		Assignment 2 due
<b>Week 12</b> April 8th	Secondary color correction: the tools for manipulating image details.  Working with Power Windows in DaVinci Resolve.  Introduction to motion tracking.		
<b>Week 13</b> April 15th	Secondary color correction: HSL qualifiers  Working with qualifiers/keys in DaVinci Resolve.		Assignment 3 start
<b>Week 14</b> April 22nd	Stylized Looks		Assignment 3 due
<b>Week 15</b> April 29th	Advanced color grading tools		
<b>FINAL EXAM DUE</b> (NOT IN PERSON)	Each student color corrects a final short project for their final exam.		Final exam due: May 9th

## 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](http://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](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

### Support Systems:

*Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*  
[engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://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](http://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](http://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/ssu](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssu)

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](http://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](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://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](http://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](mailto: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**