



CPTR 464
Section 18568D

Directing the Television Sketch Comedy Show

Units: 2

Spring 2025

Monday: 1:00-5:00PM

3 Fridays: (2/28, 4/4, 4/25) 2pm-10:00 PM

Location: RZC Stage D/E

Professor: Robert Schiller

Office: SCA 408

Office Hours: By Appointment

Contact Info: rschiller@cinema.usc.edu

Student Assistant: Amanda Chen

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281-665-9009

COURSE SUMMARY

This is a 16-week course in Directing the Comedy Sketch Show using the techniques of live multi camera television. Sketches are written by the writing class and acted by the acting class. The short comedic pre-shot interstitial films will be created by director/writing teams. The Sketch Comedy class will work with Trojan Vision students to create 3 live shows to air on Friday evenings in front of a live audience. Directors will be assigned sketches each week and will rehearse sketches with actors. Sketches will be shown at the end of class for review and critique. Directors will work with actors as well as collaborate with the writers. Students will learn the role of the director through prep, sketch/script analysis, production meetings, rehearsals and run thrus. Students are responsible for finalizing the details for each sketch in the live show including set design, set placement in studio, graphics, music and roll-ins for film shorts, props, costumes, and make-up. The directorial role as production team leader and visionary is emphasized.

INTERSTITIALS - Directors will team up with a writer to create, cast, shoot and edit at least one interstitial for one of the live shows.

PRE-REQUISITES

Although enrollment in 464 is open, suggested preparation includes CTPR 371, CTPR 523, CTPR 476, CTPR 484, participation in Trojan Vision or outside television production training or experience. Preference for admission may be given to students who have such preparation.

Instructors Statement

This is a *fast paced class*. The ability to communicate with actors and work a scene quickly to its comedic best is essential. Translating the scene through a multi camera format is the unique opportunity this class offers! When 8pm hits, we go LIVE. Anything can and WILL happen despite our prep and rehearsal. It is the excitement of live TV in front of a live studio audience. No reshoot, or pick ups!! There is not another production class like it!

Class Philosophy

If you can collaborate and execute your directoral ability Live, you can do any genre or format in the world of TV production. Hands on learning by doing in a collaborative professional atmosphere. High level of enthusiasm, adrenaline and quick thinking is required.

Grading Breakdown

| Assignment | Points | % of Grade |
|--|---------------|-------------------|
| Prep-Sketch Breakdown & analysis | 15 | 5 |
| Sketch Rehearsal - Vision,communication,collaboration,creativity | 15 | 15 |
| Camera Blocking: Script Prep Working with crew -Making adjustments Creativity | 15 | 15 |
| Show Day – prep, collaboration, leadership, | 10 | 15 |
| Marked Booth Line Cut Script | 10 | 15 |
| Set up & Wrap show day 5/per show | 15 | 15 |

| | | |
|----------------------|-----|-----|
| Interstitial Project | 20 | 20 |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 |

Attendance is mandatory for each class

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 |

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.

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.

| Class/Show | Date | Class Description | Assignment Due Dates |
|-----------------|------|---|--------------------------------|
| Class 1 | 1/13 | Orientation-Sketch rehearsal techniques, comedy, blocking, View SNL episode. | Assign Interstitial show dates |
| <i>No Class</i> | 1/20 | <i>Martin Luther King Day</i> | |
| Class 2 | 1/27 | Table Read/Rehearse/Run thru Sketches for show 1/Lecture | |
| Class 3 | 2/3 | Table Read/Rehearse/Run thru Sketches for show 1/Lecture | |
| Class 4 | 2/10 | Table Read/Rehearse/Run thru Sketches for show 1/Lecture | |
| <i>No Class</i> | 2/17 | <i>Presidents Day</i> | |
| Class 5 | 2/24 | Table Read/Rehearse/Run thru Sketches for show 1/Lecture multi camera/booth/cutting cameras | |
| SHOW 1 | 2/28 | Blocking Rehearsal Run Thru, Show 1 | |
| Class 6 | 3/3 | Table Read/Rehearse/Run thru Sketches for show 2/Lecture | |
| Class 7 | 3/10 | Table Read/Rehearse/Run thru Sketches for show 2/Lecture | |
| <i>No Class</i> | 3/17 | <i>Spring Break</i> | |
| Class 8 | 3/24 | Table Read/Rehearse/Run thru Sketches for show 2/Lecture | |
| Class 9 | 3/31 | Table Read/Rehearse/Run thru Sketches for show 2 multi camera/booth/cutting cameras | |
| SHOW 2 | 4/4 | Blocking Rehearsal Run Thru, Show 2 | |
| Class 10 | 4/7 | Table Read/Rehearse/Run thru Sketches for show 3 | |
| Class 11 | 4/14 | Table Read/Rehearse/Run thru Sketches for show 3 | |
| Class 12 | 4/21 | Table Read/Rehearse/Run thru Sketches for show 3 multi camera/booth/cutting cameras | |
| SHOW 3 | 4/25 | Blocking Rehearsal Run Thru, Show 3 | |
| Class 13 | 4/28 | Wrap up and review | |

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Recommended Viewing: watch episodes of SNL with the sound off in order to analyze how the scenes are blocked and which cameras are have the shot.

There will be an attendance-optional field trip to The Groundlings theatre, 7307 Melrose ave in Hollywood, to watch the improv. Currently scheduled for January 23rd at 8pm.

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/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

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