



USC

INTERMEDIATE DIRECTING
CTPR 532 – Spring 2025

Section#: 18629

Units: 2

THU 7:00 PM - 10:30 PM

SCA STAGE 2

Instructor: Jeremy Kagan

Office Hours: Thursday by appointment

Contact Info:

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Course Description:

This class is a practicum in directing actors for all forms of cinematic expression.

The class is also an experiential application of a variety of directorial skills and tools that are used aesthetically and professionally to create effective performances whether dramatic or comic.

The class is a production class in a “lab” type structure where each student will make three digital films. The first is a one-minute video “sketch” to explore sight and sound to elicit emotion. The second piece is a 5-minute scene exercise with two actors, and the third project is another 5-minute exercise with three or more actors.

The teacher will lead the class in an in-depth examination of the rehearsal process as the scenes are presented and offer alternative ways of achieving affect in directing actors.

The class will also provide an opportunity to work directly with actors from USC’s MAF program. You will be required to use these actors for at least one role in your scenes.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes:

To experience what a director does to translate a script into a living entity of moving images through motivating performance.

To learn various techniques of casting actors.

To experience in depth the rehearsal process.

To experience leadership qualities motivating others.

To examine use of camera and sound for effective presentation of performances.

To understand and experience how editing can effect the actor’s performance.

Prerequisites:

16 students will be admitted to the class. Each student must have taken the Core Courses 507 and 508.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials:

**the eTextbook – KEYS TO DIRECTING –
WWW.KEYSTODIRECTING.COM \$36.00**

Suggested Readings:

Elia Kazan’s lecture on Directing printed by the DGA

I’ll Be In My Trailer – John Badham

A Sense of Direction, William Ball, Drama Book Publishers

Improv, Keith Johnstone, Routledge.

Boleslavski’s 6 Lessons on Acting.

Weston’s Directing Actors,

Meisner's On Acting,
Clurman's On Directing, and
The 5 C's of Cinematography and Katz's Shot by Shot.

Description and Assessment of Assignments:

1. Each student will make a one-minute exercise dealing with an emotion.
2. Each student will do a film (using digital equipment) of five minutes to come from copywriter-cleared exiting material like plays, or short stories or scenes from novels or graphic stories. Scenes from already produced movies are acceptable but not preferred.

PLEASE NOTE:

Students may not use copyrighted material to 'adapt' scenes without the permission of the author. No adaptations of copyrighted material may be used without the permission of the author or the author's estate. No scenes from plays, movies or books may be adapted or used without permission of the author's estate.

If you wish to use such scenes, you must apply to the authors, or the license holders of the copyrighted material for their adaptations.

Permission for such use will likely be granted if the students ask which should be done well in advance.

You may use the materials already included in the many books, such as *101 scenes for actors*. There are many of these books, which include scenes, which may be suitable for this purpose without attendant copyright issues.

Fair Use: students may use copyrighted material only in the classroom. This means if you do not have permission what you make only can only be shown in class and not on any social media, which may be an issue with some of your actors who expect to potentially show their work.

Each student will cast and rehearse the scene before presenting the scene in class "off book" with appropriate props and wardrobe. These scenes are to be **NO MORE THAN 5 MINUTES**. This is a strict rule.

These first scenes will be with only two characters. Two weeks later they will bring in the shot and edited version of the scene.

3. Their next project is also five minutes. As above the scene will be rehearsed in class and two weeks later the edited version will be presented. But in this exercise the students will be working with three of more actors.
4. Also during the semester each student will bring in two scenes from movies or TV shows or other cinema that they admire and present storyboards and camera placement floor plans that allow them to study how a good scene was shot and edited. These clip analyses will be continually presented through the semester.

532 Schedule and Topics - SCA Stage 2
Spring 2025
Based on 15+ classes - Professor Jeremy Kagan

Class 1 –

Topics: Introduction to 532, Housekeeping, CASTING

Class 2 –

Topics: DIRECTING TECHNIQUES - Intentional Directing

Class 3 –

Topics: DIRECTING TECHNIQUES - Attitudinal Directing - Character Creation

Class 4 –

Topics: REHEARSAL TECHNIQUES

The professor will work with two actors demonstrating various approaches

Class 5 –

FIRST PROJECT - one minute film presenting an emotion utilizing any filmic technique (from found footage online, to preferably whatever can be created by the students)

Class 6 –

EXERCISE - Group A rehearsal scene: five-minute scene with two actors
Group C scene analysis from movie or TV show

Class 7 –

EXERCISE - Group B rehearsal scene: five-minute scene with two actors
Group D scene analysis from movie or TV show

Class 8 –

EXERCISE - Group C rehearsal scene: five-minute scene with two actors
Group A presents filmed scene they brought into rehearsal
Group E scene analysis from movie or TV show

Class 9 –

EXERCISE - Group D rehearsal scene: five-minute scene with two actors
Group B presents filmed scene they brought into rehearsal
Group A scene analysis from movie or TV show

Class 10 –

EXERCISE - Group E rehearsal scene: five-minute scene with two actors
Group C presents filmed scene they brought into rehearsal
Group B scene analysis from movie or TV show
Group C present clip analysis 2.

Class 11 –

Group A rehearsal scene: five-minute scene with three or more actors
Group D presents filmed scene they brought into rehearsal
Group C scene analysis #2 of from movie or TV show

Class 12 –

Group B rehearsal scene: five-minute scene with three or more actors
Group E presents filmed scene they brought into rehearsal
Group D scene analysis #2 of from movie or TV show

Class 13 –

Group C rehearsal scene: five-minute scene with three or more actors
Group E scene analysis #2 from movie or TV show

Class 14 –

Group D rehearsal scene: five-minute scene with three or more actors
Group A scene analysis #2 from movie or TV show

Class 15 –

Group E rehearsal scene: five-minute scene with three or more actors
Group B scene analysis #2 from movie or TV show

NOTE - THERE MAY BE TWO ADDITIONAL CLASSES IN THE LAST WEEKS OF THE SEMESTER

Grading Breakdown

Grading will be determined by evaluation of the exercises and learning over the semester as reflected in the student's understanding and expression of the concepts taught in the class.

Assignment	% of Grade
1 minute scene	5%
2 people scene	40%
3 people scene	40%
clip analysis	10%
class participation	5%

Production Division Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Two unexcused absences will result in a student's grade being lowered by one full letter (IE: A becomes B). A third unexcused absence will result in a student's grade being lowered by one, additional full letter (IE: B becomes C). A student's grade will be lowered by one full letter for each additional unexcused absence. Two late class arrivals equate to one full absence.

In order for an absence to be excused, the student must have approval from the professor and provide documentation at the next attended class session.

If a student misses class due to an emergency, the student must contact the professor prior to class or contact the Production Office at 213-740-3317.

Your timely attendance is required and a sign of your commitment to your word and integrity. So if you are late more than twice there will be a consequence in your grading.

SAFETY & RESTRICTIONS

All students are expected to abide by SCA Safety Guidelines. Violations of any of the safety guidelines may result in disciplinary action ranging from confiscation of footage to expulsion from the University.

MAKE SPECIAL NOTE of policy regarding the use of minors, cars, or weapons which requires the employment of a studio teacher or an off-duty police officer.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is 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 Instructor (or D.A.) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301, and is open 8:30am-5:00pm Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

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” <https://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, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu/>

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. <http://dsp.usc.edu>

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. <https://diversity.usc.edu/>

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, <http://emergency.usc.edu>

USC Department of Public Safety – 213-740-4321 (UPC) and 323-442-1000 (HSC) for 24-hour emergency assistance or to report a crime.