



USC

ADVANCED DIRECTING

CTPR 552 – Spring 2025

Section#: 18790

Units: 2

THU 1PM - 4:50PM

Room SCA 363

Instructor: Jeremy Kagan

Office Hours: Thursdays by appointment

Contact Info:

Phone: 914-413-0318

Email: kagan@usc.edu

Teaching Assistant: Chae Talley

Phone: 206-384-6088

Email: ctalley@usc.edu

Syllabus for 552: ADVANCED DIRECTING

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is to be an opportunity for you in one semester to make a film.

That said, there are some requirements and realities. With limited equipment, the films will be made more in "dogma" style and should be from 5 to 8 minutes long. They can be shorter as well. We know just making a good minute film can be a challenge. They can be any genre you like. It is required to have a shooting script ready by the **fifth** class.

In the first four classes students will also be making 1 to 2 minute films in different emotional genres which can be shot on mobile phones and edited on your computers. Students will also have some choices here. They can continue to make these shorter films or make the longer one BUT again - for the longer ones you **MUST** have a script ready to shoot in the fifth week, so you have 5 weeks then of production and 5 weeks editing. Each script **MUST** have safety meetings.

These short exercises are to create cinematically in any form six basic emotions: JOY, SADNESS, FEAR, ANGER, DISGUST, and SURPRISE.

And a third assignment is for each student to pick an exceptional director whose work that they are not familiar with and watch at least 3 of their most respected movies and then bring in clips to illustrate how they deal with common problems of performance, camera, and editing.

These are a list of directors:

Fritz Lang
Ingmar Bergman
Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger
Francois Truffaut
John Cassavetes
Andrei Tarkovsky
Sidney Lumet
Agnes Varda
Howard Hawks
Federico Fellini
Satyajit Ray
Clair Denis
Preston Sturges
Michael Curtiz
Jean-Luc Goddard
Frank Capra
Billy Wilder
Akira Kurosawa
Robert Bresson
Sergei Eisenstein
Bernardo Bertolucci
Pier Paolo Pasolini
Ken Loach
John Ford
David Lean
Michelangelo Antonioni
Stanley Donen
Jacques Tati
Jean Renoir
Elia Kazan
Carl Dreyer
Souleymane Cissé

The class will also provide another opportunity in group dynamics essential to directing by having each student share with the others the production roles on their films.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

To learn by making another longer digital film the director's responsibility in leadership, vision and knowledge of techniques of motivating performance, blocking for camera and use of visual and aural elements to create an affective movie.

To explore directing problems and learn techniques by studying masters and gaining experience in performance and use of camera for story telling.

PREREQUISITES

Each student must have taken both intermediate directing 532 and directing techniques 533 or have taken 532 and directed a 546.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

1. Students intending to make a longer film will create or obtain a script that will be the basis for the final project 8 minutes or under and shooting script due on the fifth week.
2. During the second week students for the longer film will bring in their actors for rehearsal either in person on zoom with the goal of finishing production on week ten. Post-production the next five weeks.
3. Each student will make at least 4 one to two minute exercises to explore directorial ways to create emotion in the viewer.
3. Each student will pick an accomplished director and bring in examples or their work class.

GRADING

Grading will be determined by evaluation of the learning over the semester that shows the student's understanding and expression of the concepts taught in the class as revealed in their final project.

for film projects ----- 75%
for studied director ----- 15%
for class participation----- 10%

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1

The first class will explain the requirements and also reexamine concepts of casting, rehearsal and camera placement. The students will share their intentions on what they want to make and why. Students will pick directors' work to explore.

Students will be divided into two groups: GROUP A & GROUP B. These groups will alternate filming weekends for the first exercises of the class.

Week 2

Students will show their first short project.

GROUP A will shoot **Exercise 1** over Weekend 2.

Week 3

Students will present the first draft of their longer script if they are doing one.

First presentation of chosen directors' work.

Group A will show Exercise 1.

GROUP B will shoot **Exercise 1** over Weekend 3.

Week 4

Students will show their second project

And presentation of first director's work.

Group B will show Exercise 1.

GROUP A will shoot **Exercise 2** over Weekend 4.

Week 5

Shooting draft of the longer scenes presented.

Group A will show Exercise 2.

GROUP B will shoot **Exercise 2** over Weekend 5.

Week 6

Students will present the first draft of their longer script if they are doing one.

Group B will show Exercise 2.

GROUP A will shoot **Exercise 3** over Weekend 6.

Week 7

Rehearsals in class begin.

Group A will show Exercise 3

GROUP B will shoot **Exercise 3** over Weekend 7.

Longer Film directors will begin shooting.

Week 8

Production Dailies of longer films.

Presentation of Directors clips

Group B will show Exercise 3.

GROUP A will shoot **Exercise 4** over Weekend 8.

Longer Film directors will continue shooting.

Week 9

Production Dailies.

Group A will show Exercise 4.

GROUP B will shoot **Exercise 4** over Weekend 9.

Longer Film directors will continue shooting.

Week 10

The studied directors or scene presentation continues.

Group B will show Exercise 4.

GROUP A will shoot **Exercise 5** over Weekend 10.

Week 11

First cut of Longer Films.

Group A will show Exercise 5.

GROUP B will shoot **Exercise 5** over Weekend 11.

Week 12

Second cut of Longer Films.

Group B will show Exercise 5.

GROUP A will shoot **Exercise 6** over Weekend 12.

Week 13

Postproduction notes.

Presentation of Directors clips

Group A will show Exercise 6.

GROUP B will shoot **Exercise 6** over Weekend 13.

Week 14

Group B will show Exercise 6.

Presentation of the first set of finished films with commentary and analysis.

Week 15

Presentation of the final set of finished films with commentary and analysis.

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.