

PR 487 Multimedia PR Content: Introduction to Audio/Video Tools 2 Units

Spring 2025 – Tuesdays – 9-10:40 a.m.

Section: 21270R

Location: ANN 413

Instructor: Jonathon Stearns

Office: By appointment – Zoom or ANN Lobby

Office Hours: Posted 1st week of class

Contact Info: js51884@usc.edu

Course Description

An introduction to the techniques and practices for writing, developing, producing, and publishing original multimedia content.

Class sessions will be divided between lecture/presentations and lab sessions in visual storytelling, cinematography, photography, editing, audio/sound design, motion graphics. Homework assignments are largely focused on producing and delivering the major assignments.

Minimum Required equipment:

A laptop and a camera phone. Other cameras (DSLR, DJI, etc. are welcome).

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Write, develop, produce, edit, and publish multimedia content.
- Demonstrate professional production capabilities using equipment including cameras, lighting, and audio.
- Demonstrate professional postproduction capabilities, including video editing, graphics, color correction, multitrack sound mixing, and publishing.
- Demonstrate an expanded knowledge of professional media practices and terminology
- Work in Adobe Premiere
- Critique from an informed perspective

Recommended Preparation:

- Install Adobe Premiere on your computer and confirm it is operational. You will be provided access to the Adobe Creative Suite. (note: Chromebooks are not able to run Adobe Premiere)
- Have at least 100 GB available space on your computer
- Have at least 100 GB of available space on your camera phone
- Acquire a backup drive (refer to PR487 Recommended Equipment Guide in Brightspace Content folder)
- Review the major assignments and consider ideas for your class projects

Course Notes

Standard letter grade.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Students build skills in professional techniques and practices through in-class and external assignments. There will be three main video assignments and several short-term lab-exercise assignments throughout the semester. Students are encouraged to be creative as they write, produce, and edit original media content. Work will be to be presented and discussed in class in a safe, instructor-moderated environment. There will be a final essay.

At least one office meeting will be mandatory.

Assignments are modelled after industry standards. Students will receive feedback on projects and have the opportunity to make revisions. Creativity is encouraged as students share their own unique perspectives and stories, and develop their own creative style as content creators. Participation in class discussions is an essential part of the process and reflects professional standards.

Grading

a. Grading Breakdown

Description of assessments and corresponding points and percentage of grade.

Assessment Tool (assignments)	Points	% of Grade
Micro Documentary (proposal, draft, and final edit)	20	20%
Interview (proposal, draft, and final edit)	20	20%
Ad Promo (proposal, draft, and final edit)	20	20%
Lab / Workshops (multiple short-term assignments)	30	30%
Participation	10	10%
TOTAL	100	100

b. Course Grading Scale

Letter grades and corresponding point value ranges.

Letter grade and corresponding numerical point range		
95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B- (B minus)	67% to 69%: D+ (D plus)
90% to 94%: A- (A minus)	77% to 79%: C+ (C plus)	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+ (B plus)	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D- (D minus)
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C- (C minus)	0% to 59%: F

c. Grading Standards

“A” projects meet or exceed the requirements of the assignments and are produced at a high level. Assignments represent successful execution from concept to publication. Other factors include demonstrating the use of professional techniques and practices, strong effort, response to instructor and peer feedback, the meeting of deadlines, and communication.

“B” projects have met some but not of the requirements for the assignments and are produced at a mediocre level. Additional work is required to realize the concept. Professional techniques and practices are not adequately demonstrated, A lack of effort and/or response to instructor and peer feedback. Missed deadlines and poor communication.

“C” projects do not meet the requirements of the assignments and are produced at a low level. Missed assignments. Submitted work does not successfully realize the original concept. Lack of representation of professional techniques and practices, lack of effort, inadequate response to instructor and peer feedback, missed deadlines, and a lack of communication.

“D” projects do not meet the requirements of the assignments and are produced poorly, needing extensive work. Do not represent effort and inadequate response to instructor and peer feedback.

“F” projects have major flaws and fall short of meeting most or all of the requirements.

d. Grading Timeline

Assignment deadlines will be clearly provided. Major assignments that meet deadlines will be assessed and students will have to opportunity to make revisions and re-submit. Lab work will generally be completable in-class, and due the same week.

Assignment Rubrics

Grades will be based on projects meeting the requirements of the assignments while demonstrating an understanding of the techniques and practices taught in class. Effort and a response to feedback are also key factors.

Assignment Submission Policy

- A. All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will automatically be given a grade of F.
- B. Assignments must be submitted via Brightspace (not emailed).

Laptop Policy

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the [Annenberg Digital Lounge](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website.

Add/Drop Dates for Session 001

(15 weeks: 1/13/2025 – 5/2/2025; Final Exam Period: 5/7-14/2025)

Link: <https://classes.usc.edu/term-20251/registration-calendar/>

Last day to add: Friday, January 31, 2025

Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund: Friday, January 31, 2025

Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit: Friday, January 31, 2025 [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]

Last day to add/drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund or change to Audit: Tuesday, February 4, 2025

Last day to withdraw without a “W” on transcript or change pass/no pass to letter grade: Friday, February 28, 2025 [Mark of “W” will still appear on student record and STARS report and tuition charges still apply.]

*Please drop any course by the end of week three for session 001 (or the 20 percent mark of the session in which the course is offered) to avoid tuition charges.]

Last day to drop with a mark of “W”: Friday, April 11, 2025

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

A weekly schedule of the topics, readings, and deliverables for the course.

Important note to students: Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.

Week/ Date	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/Due Dates
Week 1 Date: 1/14	INTRO/SYLLABUS REVIEW PHOTO Lab/In-class exercise Discuss Micro Doc assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete photo assignment • Complete Online experience survey • Acquire/download required software 	Photo LAB exercise DUE 1/19 Experience Survey due Due 1/21
Week 2 Date: 1/21	CINEMATOGRAPHY LAB In-class exercise Discuss Micro Doc	Write Micro Doc Treatment	Micro Doc Treatment Due 1/26 Cinematography Lab Exercise Due 1/26 Install Adobe Premiere Due 1/28
Week 3 Date: 1/28	EDITING Lecture/ LAB In-class exercise	Produce Micro Doc	Editing LAB exercise DUE 2/2
Week 4 Date: 2/4	Editing Workshop Part 2 In-class exercise	Edit Micro Draft	Micro Doc Draft Edit Due 2/10
Week 5 Date: 2/11	AGENCY DAY MICRO DOC Present Micro Doc Draft Edit Discuss interview	Write Interview Treatment	Optional – Acquire lavalier microphone and bring to class Feb 18
Week 6 Date: 2/18	ART OF SOUND + LAB In-class exercise Assign Interview	Pre-PRODUCE Interview	Interview Treatment Due FEB 23 Art of Sound Exercise Due 2/23
Week 7 Date: 2/25	Multitrack Audio/ Editing + LAB In-class exercise	PRODUCE Interview	Multitrack Audio Exercise Due March 2
Week 8 Date: 3/4	FILM CRAFT	EDIT Interview	INTERVIEW EDIT due 3/10
Week 9 Date: 3/11	AGENCY DAY Interview Discuss AD PROMO	Write Ad Promo Treatment	
Spring Break Date: 3/18	No Class- SPRING BREAK	Write Ad Promo Treatment	Ad Promo TREATMENT DUE 3/25

Week 10 Date: 3/25	Pre-Production – Storyboard + LAB In-class exercise	Production AD PROMO	Storyboard exercise DUE 3/30
Week 11 Date: 4/1	Effects and Transitions +LAB In-class exercise	Production/ Editing AD PROMO	Effects and Transitions +LAB DUE April 6
Week 12 Date: 4/8	Visual Story In-class exercise	EDIT AD PROMO	Visual Story DUE April 27
Week 13 Date: 4/15	AGENCY DAY AD/PROMO 1st Draft		
Week 14 Date: 4/22	FILM CRAFT		Film Craft Assignment DUE May 4
Week 15 Date: 4/29	RECAP		Final Essay DUE May 4
Final Exam Period Date: 5/13, 8-10 a.m.	Summative experience		FINAL DRAFT MICRO DOC FINAL DRAFT AD PROMO DUE April 14

Policies and Procedures

Additional Policies

The class covers a lot of material - new concepts and techniques are introduced almost every week with in-class exercises. Students who miss a session should schedule an office hour meeting as soon as possible

In class we will work with Adobe Premiere. Students may opt to use alternate platforms for the major assignments (i.e. Final Cut, Da Vinci, Cap Cut) but instructor support will be limited to Premiere Pro.

For the 3 main assignments, students are responsible for producing, editing and delivering finished work on schedule.

All assignments, lecture slide shows, tutorial videos, equipment recommendations, etc. will be available in Brightspace.

Communication

Students should schedule at least one office hour session (look under the Brightspace page for this class under USC Zoom to schedule). Additionally, students are expected to respond to all communications in a timely manner and be prepared to engage in class discussion. Please inform Professor of technical problems, production delays, or any other circumstances that prevent the meeting of assigned deadlines and/or meeting assignment parameters. Software issues can often be resolved via zoom, don't hesitate to reach out with any questions, or refer to the digital lounge.

Classroom Policies/ Norms

As the class requires participation and peer review of creative work, often presented in draft form, mutual respect and kindness will be required. Critique should be constructive. It is a place to learn and grow and develop your own creative voice - not a competition. Project subject matter should consider the of the class as a whole.

Course Evaluations

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester in addition to a mid-semester evaluation and assessment.

Internships

The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course that undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to 1 percent of the total available semester points for this course. To receive instructor approval, a student must request an internship letter from the Annenberg Career Development Office and bring it to the instructor to sign by the end of the third week of classes. The student must submit the signed letter to the media organization, along with the evaluation form provided by the Career Development Office. The form should be filled out by the intern supervisor and returned to the instructor at the end of the semester. No credit will be given if an evaluation form is not turned into the instructor by the last day of class. Note: The internship must be unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism or public relations class.

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies

USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation, is prohibited. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

The USC Student Handbook (<https://policy.usc.edu/studenthandbook/>)

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the [USC Student Handbook](#). All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), 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 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](#).

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity

https://catalogue.usc.edu/preview_entity.php?catoid=16&ent_oid=3459

“Since its founding, the School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found plagiarizing, fabricating, cheating on examinations, and/or purchasing papers or other assignments faces sanctions ranging from an “F” on the assignment to dismissal from the School of Journalism.”

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

Academic Integrity violations (academic dishonesty) include, but are not limited to: Plagiarism and Cheating

- The submission of material authored by another person or entity (such as an AI tool – see below) but represented as the student’s own work, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near-verbatim form.
- Re-using any portion of one’s own work (essay, term paper, project, or other assignment) previously submitted without citation of such and without permission of the instructor(s) involved.
- Improper acknowledgment of sources in essays or papers, including drafts. Also, all students involved in collaborative work (as permitted by the instructor) are expected to proofread the work and are responsible for all particulars of the final draft.
- Acquisition of academic work, such as term papers, articles solutions, or other assignments, from any source and the subsequent presentation of those materials as the student’s own work, or providing academic work, such as term papers, solutions, articles or assignments that another student submits as their own work.

Generative AI Policy

The USC Annenberg Public Relations and Advertising program views generative AI as an addition to USC’s digital literacy tools that students are encouraged to experiment with and use inside and outside the classroom. Students may use generative AI tools such as Chat GPT to help complete their class assignments but must disclose such use in the bibliography or notes section. Students are solely responsible for the quality and the accuracy of their submissions, regardless of whether they were completed with the aid of generative AI.

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 accommodations are 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.

Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:

To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the Financial Aid Office webpage for undergraduate- and graduate-level SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

Support Systems:

USC Annenberg has an embedded student health counselor, Dr. Kelly Greco. Dr. Greco helps students prioritize their mental health and emotional well-being. In this video, she shares a few tips for how to "Fight On" every day. Students may schedule sessions with her through MySHR or by calling (213) 740-9355 (WELL). USC Student Health services are also available to support student's mental health journey by visiting: <https://sites.usc.edu/counselingandmentalhealth/>

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 consists 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) 740-2500

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.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

<https://annenbergscholarships.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenbergscholarships-and-awards>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

Annenberg Student Emergency Aid Fund

<https://annenbergscholarships.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenbergscholarships-and-awards>

Awards are distributed to students experiencing unforeseen circumstances and emergencies impacting their ability to pay tuition or cover everyday living expenses. These awards are not intended to cover full-tuition expenses, but rather serve as bridge funding to guarantee students' continued enrollment at USC until other resources, such as scholarships or loans, become available. Students are encouraged to provide as much information in their application, as well as contact their academic advisor directly with questions about additional resources available to them.

About Your Instructor

Jonathon Stearns is an award-winning filmmaker, writer, and educator with many years of professional experience in feature films, television, documentary, experimental film, advertising, music videos, web content, immersive experiences, and video design. He runs an LA-based production company. He is also part-time professional musician.