

USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR 105: Introduction to Screen Acting (Section 001-62607R)

Units:2.0

Spring 2025/Thursday/2:00pm-3:50pm

Location: SHR-105

Instructor: Adam Chambers

Office Hours: Per request/Reach out and we'll discuss

Contact Info: adamcham@usc.edu

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to introduce the craft of on-camera acting. While SDA has a focus on stage, it is impossible to think that in today's technological world that having a skill set on camera is not increasingly helpful. We will be exploring the roles on set, the different styles of acting on camera, and the ability to access truthful emotions under imaginary circumstances. You will be performing on camera and off and expected to participate in all aspects of class. Since it is a performance based class the attendance is key. Some work will be done in class and some will be done on your own time and brought to class to show us what you have worked on.

Learning Objectives

- Finding out the roles on set. What's the process?
- How to get booked or book yourself.
- Explore type and how to create truth in the work on camera
- How to break down a script with different levels of prepared time.
- Actors will get a full assessment of their physical presence, energy, and how they carry themselves.
- Actors will understand the use of props, wardrobe, environment, etc while on-camera and how to make smart decisions regarding them.
- Actors will get a complete understanding of comedic (multi vs. single cam) and dramatic (procedural, serials, etc.) content and the inherent differences and nuances to consider. Along with other genres as well. (ex: horror, web series, kids' shows, found footage)
- Actors will understand what are the practical elements of strong self-taping and what the actor can control in creating auditions that stand out.
- We will explore sight lines, repetition, and marks.
- Actors will also be given the opportunity to ask questions to other people in the business as I will be bringing in guests to speak from time to time so they may get some other perspectives and some may get the chance to perform for some of them.
- Actors will be led in emotional availability work to really explore the range they are capable of getting to.

A Note From Adam: As a working actor and director I want to help make the process of on-camera fun and less stressful and allow actors to see all the things that we do to complicate the process. A relaxed and confident actor is the best kind of actor so I will be showing you ways to demystify the process. With all of this said, I am trying to recreate the real industry for you. So some of the classes will need to be adjusted based off of guests' schedules and sometimes the material will be sprung on you at the last second to give you a real practice of what it's like to balance life and work. Some of the classes may in the syllabus may need to be adjusted based on

schedule issues. Students should understand that the grading for this course is inherently subjective. I can (and will) specify my expectations for each assignment, and can discuss the grades I believe you have earned, but I cannot provide a scientific, objective justification for each grade. I welcome conversations about grades, and will always frame those conversations around my perception of your work and ability where it currently stands.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Since several assignments will include self-taping, and filming yourself or others, students will need internet access as well as access to a working digital camera. Mobile phones or tablets are desirable for easy mobility and access. Basic editing software (ie iMovie, Movie Maker, etc.), and access to basic sound and lighting equipment may also be useful, but *not* required. There will be days that bringing your laptop will be required so we can watch your footage.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Participation is key. I want this to be treated like the real industry. That's all part of the training process. How you show up and who shows up is going to be a big part of this grade. It's a self-discipline so it falls on your shoulders.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Performances	40	40
Attendance	15	15
Participation	15	15
Professional Behavior	15	15
Final	15	15
TOTAL	100	100

Performances- How each performance is performed. Etc, memorization, choices, commitment. Is improvement happening? Performances will be given a scale of 1-10 each time you perform you will be notified of your score for that performance. This will be based on prep, truthfulness, believability, quality of work, accuracy of lines, nerves, and overall entertainment. This score is up to the instructor decide based off of their professional experience. You will have a chance to redo or make up the assignment on your own time if you so choose.

Attendance- Tardy attendance if less than 15 minutes will result in a half-point deduction from the attendance grade for the day. A tardy arrival of more than 15 minutes will result in no points for attendance recorded for the day.

Participation- Engaged in class, asking questions, trying each and every activity fully.

Professional Behavior- How each student speaks with one another and the instructor, how they dress for the roles, and how they take direction. Communication.

Final- The final performance.

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 discussed in detail at the end of each class period. Assignments will be either emailed, uploaded, or presented in class per Adam's instruction.

Late Submission Policy

Assignments are expected to be completed by the due date & time. Grades on late assignments will be deducted. If an assignment is late it is deducted 15% for that assignment. Every week after that is late the assignment is deducted another 15% per week it's late. Some classes will have particular workshops/activities that are done only in class. It is your responsibility to communicate with the instructor or other students to see what the missed assignments were or will be and to coordinate with the instructor how or when you plan to make up the missed work.

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](#).

Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment

USC policy prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

SCampus Section 11.12(B)

Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. 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. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).

Course evaluation

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students' experience in the class. You should expect to receive an email update once the system has launched to provide your feedback on this course. In addition, you are always welcome to connect with with me as the instructor to offer any feedback on the course. I will often give you feedback after performances in the class directly but that is not a guaranteed direct reflection of your grade.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

A note from Adam: Questions are the best way to learn something. So please don't be afraid to ask anytime you have one. I will leave room in the course for this so please be prepared that questions may move some things around and could extend classes into the following weeks. We also have to leave room for the possibility of not getting to everyone in one class and it extends into the beginning of another class.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1 1/16/25	-Intro to class - What to expect - How to make this a long term plan -What has you stuck?	This is a lecture day with the opportunity for questions.	
Week 2 1/23/25	-Who are you? -What is set like? The roles, Your responsibility. - Type cast/through line	-Ennegram Test	You will be given the link to the free test that week. You must bring in the given info you find the day of class for an inperson discussion

Week 3 1/30/25	-The Interview -We will be treating this as if you are meeting a casting director or an agent for a general meeting.	-each student will be interviewed on camera and we will watch back the interview to see what they do and habits are.	Due in class at the time.
Week 4 2/6/25	-Playback.	We will watch the playback of the interviews to watch how we behave on camera	All material will be expected to be memorized in class
Week 5 2/13/25	-Shooting a one take "monologue"	Each actor will write and then shoot with a partner on their phone or with a camera a single one take.	Memorized pieces are due say of class and in person
Week 6 2/20/25	-Review the one takes from the week before	Have the material sent or viewable for class	
Week 7 2/27/25	-The audition self tape	You will submit a self tape	Material will be due by the class.
Week 8 3/6/25	In person call back Kid show, horror, crime drama	Students will be coming in with different styles and doing an in person callback for different tones of shows/films.	This will all be done in class.
Week 9 3/13/25	-Review in Viewpoints and an emotional exercise	Students will be given a lesson in choices and using the viewpoints method but also a lesson in how to tap into emotional availability.	-Review in Viewpoints and an emotional exercise
Week 10 3/27/25 Week 11 4/3/25	-Reverse roles. Be the directors. See how it works through the lens and how an actor works.	Half of the students will be actors and the others will be writer/directors. We will do this for 2 weeks.	Work will be done in class. The writing will be day one and the plotting. Shooting will be over the next weeks outside of class.
Week 12 4/10/25	-Guest Speaker	We will be having an industry professional come into class for a Q&A	-Guest Speaker
Week 13 4/17/25	-Continuity	We will be performing material found by each student and focus on the importance of continuity in camera work.	Memorized pieces due during class.
Week 14 4/24/25	-Playback of the week before	We will watch the playback from the continuity	
Week 15 5/1/25	-Performing Code Pink	Pick a role from the show and make the monologue fit your through line. You will do this in person and	Memorized pieces due during class.

		get feedback so you can self tape for the final . you will also be picking music.	
Final 5/8/25 2pm-4pm	-self shot monologues from Code Pink	Each student will send in their self taped monologues based off of feedback from the last week.	All material is due before the final.

SDA PRODUCTIONS, ISPS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

SDA productions, ISPs and Extracurricular Activities* will not excuse you from any class work. There will be no exceptions made for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, homework or lack of class participation resulting from your involvement in any of the above. Your grade will reflect your work in this class, independent from work in any other class or activity.

*Activities that have been officially sanctioned by the larger university (such as marching band, song girls, or varsity sports) are exempt. You must submit official documentation to your professor regarding your participation in an event prior to your absence.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion + Intimacy in Theatre Consent Culture Statement

Through our pluralistic approach of diverse pedagogies, methodologies, ideologies, and modalities of artistic expression, we invite(engage) and challenge students to expand their breadth and depth of knowledge, complexity, and range of the human experience. Even though we nurture, guide, and challenge our students to embrace the unknown or unfamiliar and step outside of their comfort zones through storytelling/art, we aim to practice effective strategies and offer tools to students mindful of their physical, psychological, social, and emotional wellbeing. In alignment with professional and industry standards, we will integrate core principles and techniques of Intimacy in Theater and Building Cultures of Affirmative Consent. This will provide agency, offer resources and support to the teachers, students, directors, and staff to establish healthy boundaries of consent when working on material that is physically, intimately, or emotionally charged content in both the classroom and production.

SDA Student Support & Reporting Form

To facilitate a supportive environment of accountability, SDA has created an internal system of reporting for students to address issues/concerns and to offer feedback or suggestions for improvement. This mechanism provides a pathway for reporting and offering feedback without fear of retaliation or judgment. Any submission filed through this form will be reviewed and processed accordingly through SDA Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

To file a report, please visit: <https://bit.ly/SDAstudentreporting>

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:

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.