THE DIGITAL ACTOR
THTR- 410| SPRING 2024
TUESDAY/THURSDAY 12:00 PM- 1:50 PM |SHR 105
Instructor: Tessa Slovis

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*Office Hour appointments can be made via email or text.

Course Description

The actor is the entrepreneur- the CEO, CFO and leader of their own business. And let's get real…digital and social media have become essential for the artist. But, with everything at our fingertips it can be a challenge to figure out how to find our voice as creatives within it. This is course is an amalgam of business, marketing and creative development specifically focused on how to use the social, digital and new media as a vital source for the actor's career.

Learning Objectives

This course will fine-tune our students' already present skills and and channel their work as artists into the virtual sphere. We will work to discover the individual voice of each artist and use it to begin their journeys of:

- Self Promotion and Marketing

- Creative and Professional Communication

- Content Creation and Self Generated work

We will watch, read and study the work of great digital media entrepreneurs and creators as well as create our own original content. Students will gain proficiency in digital media analytics, writing and producing short form content, necessary actor tools (Actors Access and Casting Networks) and more.

Students will also participate in in and out of class group activities encouraging collaboration and in the moment problem solving.

Course Notes

Students must have access to a Computer (preferred), tablet or smartphone. Students will also be asked to bring in movie clips and footage on their devices. *** **this does not mean students will be allowed to keep devices open throughout class***

You will be given a digital media google drive portfolio to keep all drafts of your in class work

and assignments. This will also be where you will turn in your written assignments.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

All assignments will be assessed based on effort, proficiency and communication of thought. Students will be graded for their work ethic and ability to think critically and outside the box. Assignments must be turned in on time, showing clear effort, self-challenge and an evident aim to do the best a student can do.

Students will be expected to bring and keep a separate notebook or tablet for lecture notes. All assignments and projects will be kept in a google drive folder for the students to reference throughout the semester.

Students are requested to arrive early (which means on time) to class.

Participation

Everyone participates differently. We all have our own individual experiences and strengths that inform how we participate and communicate in and out of the classroom. Thus, participation can look like the following:

• Contributing insights and asking questions in class

• Engaging creatively and diligently with assignments

• Reaching out with questions and thoughts on the work

• Sharing relevant ancillary articles, films, work, to peers and professor - Requesting office hour time to discuss grades and improvement

Grading Breakdown

Course shall contain at least three assignments, projects, exams, papers or exercises which shall be evaluated during the semester and which shall provide an analytical record of each student's progress in the course.

• Attendance shall be weighted at no more than 15% as per University Guidelines.

• There shall be no unexcused absences.

• No late assignments, projects, exams, papers, or exercises shall not be accepted unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the teacher or unless exceptional circumstances occur.

Table 1 Grading Breakdown

Assessment Tool (assignments)	Points	% of Grade
Participation	10	10%
Course Assignments	30	30%
In Class Exercises	15	15%
Mid Term	20	20%
Final	20	20%
Growth and Effort	5	5%
TOTAL	100	100%

Grades are dictated by:

- Focus and concentration in class

- Performance of exercises

- Communication of selected skills

- Active in-class student analysis

- Constructive feedback of classmate's presentations

- Meeting all assignment deadlines

- Availability to fellow classmates for collaboration

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

Table 2 Course Grading Scale

Letter grade	Corresponding numerical point range
A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72

Letter grade	Corresponding numerical point range
A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Further Grading Notes: If the GPA falls between two grades, the final grade will be weighted toward the positive end of the scale for students with excellent/good attendance & class participation and toward the negative end of the scale for those with average/poor attendance & participation.

Assignment Submission Policy:

Each assignment will have a different mode of submission. Please pay close attention to how an assignment must be submitted and when.

Attendance Policy:

No unexcused absences. **Unexcused Absences** will directly affect your grade. Extreme **lateness** will be counted as an **absence**. All latenesses and absences need to be documented by the student at fault via email. The student must email the professor of the class they are missing.

Classroom norms:

This classroom is a space of deep respect and support for your fellow artists. Discussion, challenge and debate is welcome but always with a focus on mutual respect and reverence for the voices and opinions of your peers. Art is vulnerable, sharing your voice is vulnerable: Be Kind.

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.

Academic dishonesty has a far-reaching impact and is considered a serious offense against the university. Violations will result in a grade penalty, such as a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and disciplinary action from the university itself, such as suspension or even expulsion.

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.

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

AI Generators

This course aims to develop creative, analytical, and critical thinking skills. Therefore, all assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups. Students may not have another person or entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI-generated text, code, or other content is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

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. 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).

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.

Table 3 Course schedule

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings/ Preparation	Deliverables
Week 1	You "like" it, I "love" it: Why social media can be a powerful tool for the artist. A discussion of who we are and why we create.		Assignment: "My Story Feels Like…" Written prompt Digital assignment for "My Story Feels Like…" prompt
Week 2	In class discussion and presentation of digital assignment Your "self" vs. "Selfie": Maximizing your voice . Learning the basics of your actor toolkit. Who you want to reach.		Personal Mission statement
Week 3	Web Resources for the actor. Pitching your content: applying our stories to content creation and ideation.	Artist Study: Morgan Cooper	Assignment: Create a digital platform for your resume via a web page, actors access, casting networks, linkedin. Edit your cover letters based on feedback from class. Due Assignment: Write a short pitch for your "content creation plan" to present in week 4/5 class
Week 4	Short Pitch Presentations		Assignment: Expanding the pitch. We will be creating fully realized pitch decks with comps and details
Week 5	Pitch Deck presentation 1 and Feedback Session		You will receive written feedback and will begin to make changes and additions to your project.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings/ Preparation	Deliverables
Week 6	Pitch Deck presentations and Feedback Session		Mid Term Assignment: Expanding even further on your pitch project, you will now add a campaign plan for how you will execute your project. This will include schedule, assets and written descriptions based on your pitch. Self Analysis (Prompt will be given in class)
Week 7	From pitch to social Page: Learning how to translate your voice to moving image and visual representation Artist Study: Issa Rae		
Week 8	Project execution work and approach Group Exercise: Rapid Fire Storytelling #1	Mid Term Pitch Assignment and Self Analysis due	
Week 9	Productivity and Approach Artist Study: Quinta Brunson		Assignment: Create your own business plan with identifiable goals and deliverables. Due by Class Week 10.
Week 10	Presentation of business plans		
Week 11	The big share: Getting your content into the public domain. Group Exercise: Rapid fire storytelling #2		Students will begin to share the work we have been developing in the pitch decks on public social media pages and track their analytics for 2 weeks.
Week 12	Project Updates and Sharing Group activity- Build your own marketing plan		
Week 13	Class Discussion: building an actor's network.		

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings/ Preparation	Deliverables
Week 14	Review for final, Final essay topics announced. Students who are ready to present their content may do so this week as well.		4-5 page analysis and reflection- Prompt will be provided during Study week.
FINAL	Your final will include 3 items to turn in and present: 1. YOUR DIGITAL PORTFOLIO - A digital portfolio which will include your actor materials: headshot, resume, photos and bio. 2. CONTENT PRESENTATION 3. YOUR 5 PAGE REFLECTION		

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

Statement on University Academic and Support Systems

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.