USCSchool of Dramatic Arts

THTR 441 Advanced Sound Design
Spring 2025—Tu, Th—1 to 2:50
Location: DAB LAB

Instructor: Philip Allen
Office: BIT M4
Office Hours: By Appointment
Final Exam: May 14, 2pm DAB LAB
Contact Info: Phil Allen: philipga@usc.edu;

Course Description
Students will explore advanced techniques of theatrical sound design. The course will focus on the use of digital mixing technology in musical theatre performance, with an emphasis on system design and console programming and operation in real time musical performance situations.

Overview
Students will learn digital mixing console programming on a variety of platforms. They will also study the process and approach for implementing a live mix in a complex multi-zone sound system. Students will break down a variety of show scripts to learn the ideal approach to cue structure for live performance of complex material with simultaneous integration of live instruments, vocals, and prerecorded material.

Learning Objectives
After this course, the student should be able to do the following:

1. *Understand digital console architecture and operation.*
2. *Create programming templates to use in small, medium, and large designs.*
3. *Learn industry standard cuing and script management standards.*
4. *Understand how to work with design elements in real time with live actors.*

Prerequisite(s): THTR 436

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials
TEXT: Mixing a Musical; Shannon Slaton. Falsettos Libretto (Samuel French); William Finn. Rent Libretto (Amazon); Jonathan Larson. Chicago Libretto (Samuel French); Fred Ebb & Bob Fosse
MATERIALS: **students are required to bring a USB memory stick with at least 8GB of memory space to all class meetings!!**

Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments
FOR SDA Assignments: Grades will be assigned according to the above criteria. Students can check their progress at any time by scheduling an appointment with the instructors during office hours.

Grading Scale for SDA: **A** indicates work of excellent quality; **B** of good quality; **C** of average quality; **D** of below average quality; and **F** indicates inadequate work.

Grading Breakdown

Grading will be based on projects assigned in class. There will be at least four projects including the final; and there may be as many as six. All projects will count for an equal percentage of the final grade.

All projects will be completed on SDA design lab sound workstations unless otherwise noted at the time of the assignment.

The SDA GUIDELINES on GRADING as published elsewhere in this handbook are:

- *Each 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. Studio Courses must delineate how participation will be graded (in class exercises, scene study, etc.)*
- *There shall be no unexcused absences.*
- *No late assignments, projects, exams, papers, or exercised shall be accepted unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the teacher or unless exceptional circumstances occur.*

Assignment Submission Policy

The due dates for all assignments will be given in class. Failure to complete an assignment by the due date will result in lowered grading for that work.

Additional Policies

- **ATTENDANCE and Participation**: Attendance and participation in class is mandatory because design is primarily experiential process. According to School of Theatre guidelines, **no unexcused absences** are allowed. An excused absence is due to serious illness, grave emergency or significant acting work with appropriate SOT leave of absence. Please inform the instructor of your absence. You are responsible for all work missed. An extended absence, even if excused, could seriously affect your work and grade in class. Please consult with instructor if such a situation arises.
- **TARDIES**: will not be accepted into class.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

WEEK 1	COURSE INTRODUCTION – MATRIXING SOUND
WEEK 1	SOLO VOCAL PROGRAMMING DEMO
WEEK 2	SOLO VOCAL PROGRAMMING PRESENTATION
WEEK 2	SOLO VOCAL MIX PRES., FALSETTOS PROG. DEMO
WEEK 3	FALSETTOS PROGRAMMING PRESENTATION
WEEK 3	FALSETTOS PROGRAMMING REVISON & ROUGH MIX
WEEK 4	FALSETTOS MIX PRESENTATION, RENT PROG. DEMO
WEEK 4	RENT PROGRAMMING PRESENTAITON, VCA DEMO
WEEK 5	RENT VCA CUING PRESENTATION & ROUGH MIX
WEEK 5	RENT MIX PRESENTATION, CHICAGO PROG. DEMO
WEEK 6	CHICAGO PROG. & VCA CUING PRESENTATION
WEEK 6	CHICAGO MIX PRESENTATION
WEEK 7	CHICAGO MIX PRESENTATION
WEEK 7	YAMAHA CONSOLE INTRO

WEEK 8	RENT ALTERNATE PROGRAMMING DEMO
WEEK 8	RENT ALTERNATE PROGRAMMING PRESENTATION
WEEK 9	RENT ALTERNATE PROG. REVISION, ROUGH MIX
WEEK 9	RENT ALTERNATE MIX PRESENTATION
BREAK	BREAK
WEEK 10	TBD
WEEK 10	TBD
WEEK 11	ITW PROGRAMMING DEMO
WEEK 11	ITW PROGRAMMING PRESENTAION 1
WEEK 12	ITW PROGRAMMING PRESENTAION 2
WEEK 12	ITW VCA CUING PRESENTAION, ROUGH MIX
WEEK 13	ITW BAND MIX
WEEK 13	ITW MIX PRESENTATION, SLM PROGRAMMING DEMO
WEEK 14	SHE LOVES ME PROGRAMMING PRESENTAION
WEEK 14	SHE LOVES ME ROUGH MIX
WEEK 15	SHE LOVES ME PRESENTATION
WEEK 15	LAST RODEO

Important Dates:
1. **1-31:** Last day to add or to drop this class without a grade of "W" or to select the "P/NP" option.
2. **4-11:** Last day to withdraw with a grade of "W"

Read the Fine Print
1. The above schedule and procedures in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.
2. It is the responsibility of each student to know and follow all the written guidance given by the instructor in this syllabus.

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).

Course Evaluations
[Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students' experience in the class. The process and intent of the end-of-semester evaluation should be provided. In addition, a [mid-semester evaluation]() is recommended practice for early course correction.]

NOTE: *All undergraduate classes must meet for the Final Examination as established by the University. You may not hold your final examination on the last day of classes.*

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.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Integrity:
The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, compromises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, 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. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity 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.

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.

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.

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Equity, Diversity & Inclusion + Intimacy in Theater 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.

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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

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 is comprised 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) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
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.

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