SELECTION GUIDELINES

546 FICTION

SPRING 2017

IMPORTANT: WE HAVE ADDED NEW POLICIES AND REGULATIONS TO THE SELECTION PROCESS. PLEASE READ THIS DOCUMENT FULLY EVEN IF YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE 546 SELECTION GUIDELINES.

DESCRIPTION OF 546 PROJECTS

546 Projects are shot on HD and may run a maximum length of 12 minutes plus credits. Please be advised that the submitted scripts may be no more than 10 pages maximum, properly formatted using Courier 12 type.

We are open to traditional as well as experimental narratives. In the past, students have sometimes tried to second-guess the faculty’s taste, looking at past films as indicators of future choices. In truth, the Faculty is made up of an eclectic group of filmmakers who are interested in all kinds of films. The only stories we discourage are those that are derivative. Instead we urge writers to work on pieces which authentically spring from your own imagination or experience.

“Producibility” is also a factor. Scripts should be able to be feasibly made within the structure and limitation of the 546 class (i.e. 546 has a set budget, set shooting ratio and set shooting schedule). Scripts with very young children may also be problematic due to their extremely limited working hours under California law. Locations should be limited in number, and along with period production aspects or exotic weather conditions, be easily available at little or no expense. Weapons, special effects and stunts must also be limited in nature and not integral to the story’s structure. Further, it is not permitted to use highly technical equipment (i.e….Steadicams, cranes, car mounts etc…)

For further clarification on these issues please consult the USC PRODUCTION SAFETY MANUAL and the ADVANCED PRODUCTION HANDBOOK. Both are available through the Student Production Office and online at: https://scacommunity.usc.edu

OVERVIEW OF THE SELECTION PROCESS

Scripts, directors and producers are chosen separately. There will be a first cut of approximately 25-30 scripts, 10-12 directors and up to 20 Producers. Each director and producer who makes the first cut may team with a writer on a script. The director, the writer and one producer will pitch the script to the 546 faculty and two student representatives. A maximum of three projects will be selected and produced.
SCRIPT SELECTION

Submission Process:
Students majoring in any SCA graduate division or enrolled in a SCA graduate course may submit scripts. In the event that the script is chosen for production, the writer must collaborate with the director and producer on at least TWO ADDITIONAL DRAFTS and a SET OF REVISIONS (if deemed necessary).
These revisions must be completed before the end of this FALL semester.
In addition, the writer must be available to meet with the writing instructor on the dates attached.

A committee composed of members of the writing and/or production faculty, and selected students will evaluate the scripts. Scripts will be judged anonymously and blindly.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY. SCRIPTS THAT DO NOT MEET THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES MAY BE DISQUALIFIED:

Scripts must be REGISTERED and SUBMITTED electronically. Scripts must be uploaded (in PDF format ONLY) on the SCA community website (https://scacommunity.usc.edu) – Select “546 Script Competition” – by SUNDAY, October 23rd, at 11:59PM. You MUST register as a user on the site in order to upload your script, and registration may take up to 24 hours to occur. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL OCTOBER 23rd TO REGISTER.

Script Format Requirements: INCLUDE A TITLE PAGE with ONLY the title of the script appearing on it. DO NOT include ANY name or identifying contact information ANYWHERE on the PDF scripts. By registering, we are able to identify what copy belongs to you after the blind scoring is complete.

Submissions will not be accepted if any of the above has not been followed correctly, so PLEASE follow the instructions and be prepared to make changes on the submission day as needed. PLEASE DO NOT ASK FOR EXCEPTIONS.

You may only submit a maximum of 2 scripts. Scripts submitted to 546 cannot be submitted to 480.

October 23rd
Upload scripts to SCA Community Website.

October 26th
Producer’s info session at 5 PM in SCA 255.

October 26th
Director’s reels due at 11:30 AM emailed to John Watson at jwatson23@mac.com (cc: davidrqliu@gmail.com).

October 30th
Producing applications due at 9:00 PM emailed to John Watson at jwatson23@mac.com (cc: davidrqliu@gmail.com).

November 4th
First round of scripts chosen, director & producer semi-finalists. Notifications sent via EMAIL BLAST to student body by 5:00 PM. Scripts emailed November 5th by 9 PM.

November 7th
Mandatory meeting for writer, producer and director finalists at 5PM at SCI 106.

November 11th
Writer, director, producer collaboration contract due, emailed to John Watson at jwatson23@mac.com (cc: davidrqliu@gmail.com) by NOON.
November 16th  Twelve (12) copies of script (to be pitched) handed in to SCA 404 (546 Drop Box) by 11:30 AM. Not a minute later! Along with any digital pitch materials (for testing). Send digital version of the Script to John Watson at jwatson23@mac.com (cc: davidrqliu@gmail.com).

November 18th  PITCHES (SCA 255, results posted at 5 PM in SPO)
November 20th  Potential Crew info session (SCA 112 from 12-4 PM)
November 21st  Mon 3-8 PM (SCA 361) Script meetings (individual project meetings) with producers, directors and writers
November 23rd  Crew can be attached to projects at NOON.
November 28th  Mon 3-8 PM (SCA 361) Script meetings (individual project meetings) with producers, directors and writers
December 1st   Thurs 3-8 PM (SCA 231) Script meetings (individual project meetings) with producers, directors and writers
December 5th   Mon 3-8 PM (SCA 361) Script meetings (individual project meetings) with producers, directors and writers
December 8th   Thurs 3-8 PM (SCA 231) Script meetings (individual project meetings) with producers, directors and writers
December 11th  Sunday - Prelim “Producible Draft” due to Tim Curnen at 6 PM
December 12th  Mon 3-8 PM (SCA 361) Script meetings (individual project meetings) with producers, directors and writers
December 14th  Wed “Producible Draft” due to Tim Curnen at 6 PM

DIRECTOR SELECTION

You may submit your reel to direct in 546 for the SPRING 2017 semester only if:

1) You have completed or currently are enrolled in CTPR 532 at the time of submission.
2) You have already held a crew position in a Production III class or sequence: CTPR 546 (once), CTPR 547 (once), or any 6-unit combination of the following: CTPR 479, CTPR 523, CTPR 464, CTPR 484, CTPR 486.
3) You have NOT yet directed in CTPR 546 or CTPR 547.
4) You are NOT already registered in a CTPR 581 or CTPR 582 class as the director of a thesis film.
5) You are NOT already registered in CTPR 585.
6) You have NOT registered in CTWR 533a or CTWR 533b.
7) You have NOT taken CTPR 546/547 twice as a registered crew position of any kind. Example: If you have performed sound on a 547 and sound on a 546, you are not eligible to direct as you have met both Production III and Advanced Project requirements.
8) You have NOT yet fulfilled -- and will NOT fulfill next semester, concurrent with CTPR 546 Directing -- your Advanced Project Requirement through the various pathways.
9) You have NOT taken 546/547 twice as a registered crew position of any kind. Example: If you have performed sound on a 547 and sound on a 546, you are not eligible to direct as you have met both Production III and IV requirements.
10) You have NOT registered in 533a or 533b.
11) You have NOT met both Production III and Production IV requirements already through the various pathways.

If you are in doubt about your eligibility, please arrange a meeting with Claudia Walters (cwalters@cinema.usc.edu).

**Note:** If you are selected to direct CTPR 546, you will not be able to register subsequently for CTPR 581, CTPR 582, CTPR 585 or any other Advanced Project.

**Submission Process:**

Potential directors need to submit a **DIRECTOR’S REEL**. The reel must be no longer than 10 minutes. **REELS THAT ARE LONGER THAN 10 MINUTES MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.** In the past, students have struggled over what to submit as a directing reel. The Committee is open to any example – narrative, experimental or documentary – that clearly demonstrates your directing abilities. This might include a 507 or 508, a 532 scene, or an excerpt from a longer work or scene. **REELS MUST INCLUDE A COMPLETE PIECE, IE...ONE 507 OR 508 OR AN ENTIRE 532 SCENE, AND AT LEAST ONE SCENE THAT INCLUDES DIALOGUE.** All reel material must have been produced in a USC School of Cinematic Arts production class. PLEASE indicate what each piece is.

The directing reel **must be emailed in the form of a password-protected Vimeo or YouTube link** to the Lead 546 Faculty, John Watson (jwatson23@mac.com) and CC the Lead 546 SA, David Liu (davidrqliu@gmail.com) by **11:30 AM, Wednesday, October 26th**. Make sure you **check every reel** to make sure they have picture and sound. Make sure your password is correct or you could be disqualified.

In your email, you will also need to include a **resume in PDF format** that includes a **LIST of all your USC School of Cinematic Arts Production courses**. Please list the semester in which you were enrolled, the instructor(s) name and what position you held (if applicable) as well as your **full name, phone number and email**. Please also include any other relevant experience.

**546 Directors’ Reel Content Guidelines**

Your reel should include at least one completed work in its entirety. This can be a 507, 508, 532 or other whole project. It can also include excerpts from your other work. We urge you not to submit a montage, as this is not a suitable representation of your work or ability as a director.

**PRODUCER SELECTION**

**Eligibility:**
Potential producers need to have completed, or be currently enrolled in CTPR 508, and attend the **POTENTIAL PRODUCERS’ MEETING, Wednesday October 26th at 5:00 PM in SCA 255.**
Submission Process:
At the Potential Producers’ Meeting, John Watson will talk with interested producers and answer any questions you may have about the 546 process. You will be given a list of response questions, and you must email your answers to these questions to John Watson at jwatson23@mac.com (cc: davidrqliu@gmail.com) by Sunday, October 30th at 9 PM to be considered.

FIRST CUT

By 5 PM on FRIDAY, November 4th, A FIRST CUT of approximately 25-30 eligible scripts, 10-12 eligible directors and up to 20 eligible producers will be posted outside the Student Production Office and emailed through a SPO blast.

Copies of the First Cut Scripts will be emailed to directors and producers only before 11 AM on Saturday November 5th.

MEETING FOR WRITERS, DIRECTORS AND PRODUCERS

There will be a mandatory meeting for prospective directors, writers and producers to become acquainted with each other’s work and discuss the possibility of collaborating. This meeting will take place on Tuesday, November 7th at 5 PM at SCI 106.

Writers must agree to work only with one director/producer team. In the event that more than one potential team is interested in any given script, the writer will decide which student best fits his/her material and agree to work with that team only. There will be more scripts available than directors so some scripts will not end up being chosen or pitched. We are weighting it this way so potential directors and producers will have some choice in terms of material.

In the event that a student makes the first script as well as the director’s or producer’s cut, the student may pitch only as a director on a script he/she has NOT written.

COLLABORATION

In order to pitch a project, a writer, director and at least one producer need to commit to working with one another. We have drawn up a COLLABORATION CONTRACT outlining the standard agreement between producers, directors and writers. This form will be available at the director/producer/writer meeting and must be signed by the producer(s), director and writer. The decision of which script to pitch should be made by NOON, FRIDAY, November 11th, and the collaboration contract should be turned in to John Watson via email (jwatson23@mac.com) (cc: davidrqliu@gmail.com).

TWELVE (12) copies of the script to be pitched should be turned in to the 546 Drop Box in SCA 404 by 11:30 AM, Wednesday, November 16th. The scripts will be picked up at 11:30 AM sharp. There are no exceptions!

You must also sign up for a pitch time on Wednesday, November 16th. The sign-up sheet will be posted on John Watson’s door (SCA 438) by 8:00 AM on that day. Pitches are scheduled in 15-minute intervals beginning at 8 AM.
THE PITCH

Pitches will occur on FRIDAY, November 18th, beginning at 8 AM in SCA 255. 546 Fiction pitches ARE NOT open to the public, and only writers, producers and directors are welcome to attend. Final project selections will be posted by 5 PM of the same day on the SPO door.

MEETING FOR CREW

There will be an informational meeting for all prospective crew members on Sunday, November 20th, in SCA 112 from 12 PM – 4 PM. This will be an opportunity for you to meet the producers and directors for the Spring 2017 films, and to hear from them about their projects.

SCRIPT REVISIONS DEADLINES

Revised drafts are due as follows:

- 1st revised draft to Tim Curnen on Sunday, November 27th, at 6 PM
- 2nd revised draft to Tim Curnen on Sunday, December 4th, 6 PM
- A prelim producible draft due to Tim Curnen on Sunday, December 11th, at 6 PM.
- A producible draft to the entire faculty on Wednesday, December 14th, at 6 PM.

A “producible draft” is essentially a locked draft. That is, while minor changes can still be made, all major elements affecting production decisions – the cast of characters, the content and running order of the scenes, the number and nature of locations, and all other significant production requirements – are in place. In short, if future changes are not approved, this draft will serve you well.