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**.

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

Scripts must be **REGISTERED** electronically and **SUBMITTED** both electronically and in hard copy. Scripts must be registered and uploaded (in PDF format ONLY) on the SCA community website (**https://scacommunity.usc.edu**) – Select “546 Script Competition” by **SUNDAY, October 25th, 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 25th TO REGISTER.**

Once the script has been registered and uploaded on SCA community, print **THREE (3) hard copies** of your script. **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 hard copies or on the uploaded PDF scripts.

The three hard copies of your script must be turned in between **11AM and 1 PM on MONDAY, OCTOBER 26th**, in the Spielberg Lobby (outside of SPO). Scripts WILL NOT be accepted at any other time or location, but they also do NOT need to be turned in by the writer (i.e.…if you, the writer, are not available between **11AM and 1PM on the 26th**, someone else may turn the script in or you during that time). **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.** Also, be prepared to wait in line during busier periods.

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

- **October 25th**
  - Upload scripts to SCA Community Website

- **October 26th**
  - Hard copies due between 11am-1pm in Spielberg Lobby
October 28th  
Producer’s info session at 5pm in SCA 214
October 28th  
Director’s reels due at 11:30am in SCA 404 (546 Drop Box) Not a minute later!
November 1st  
Producing applications due at 9:00 PM emailed to John Watson at jwatson23@mac.com (cc: jennacavelle@mac.com)
November 6th  
First round of scripts chosen, director & producer semi-finalists (will be emailed & displayed in SPO at 5:00 PM)
November 9th  
Mandatory meeting for writer, producer and director finalists at 5PM at SCA 106.
November 13th  
Writer, director, producer collaboration contract due, emailed to John Watson at jwatson23@mac.com (cc: jennacavelle@mac.com) by NOON.
November 18th  
Twelve (12) copies of script (to be pitched) handed in to SCA 404 (546 Drop Box) by 11:30am. 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: jennacavelle@mac.com).
November 20th  
Pitches (SCA 255, results posted at 5pm in SPO)
November 22nd  
Potential Crew info session (SCA 110 from 12-4pm)
November 23rd  
Mon 3-8pm (SCA406) Script meetings (individual project meetings) with producers, directors and writers
November 25th  
Crew can be attached to projects at Noon
November 30th  
Mon 3-8pm (SCA406) Script meetings (individual project meetings) with producers, directors and writers
December 3rd  
Thurs 3-8pm (SCA406) Script meetings (individual project meetings) with producers, directors and writers
December 7th  
Mon 3-8pm (SCA406) Script meetings (individual project meetings) with producers, directors and writers
December 10th  
Thurs 3-8pm (SCA406) Script meetings (individual project meetings) with producers, directors and writers
December 13th  
Sunday - Prelim “Producible Draft” due to Tim Curnen at 6pm
December 14th  
Mon 3-8pm (SCA406) Script meetings (individual project meetings) with producers, directors and writers
December 16th  
Wed “Producible Draft” due to Tim Curnen at 6pm

DIRECTOR SELECTION

You may submit your reel to direct in 546 in SPRING 2016 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 3 class - 546, 547, or 479/486
(you need to have been in the class both semesters).

3) You have NOT yet directed in 546 or 547.

4) You are NOT already registered in a thesis class as a director - 581, 582.

Submission Process:

Potential directors need to submit a DIRECTOR’S REEL. This must be on DVD, clearly labeled with the student’s name, email, and contents of the DVD. The reel must be no longer than 10 minutes. DVDs 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 ELEMENTS ON THE REEL MUST HAVE BEEN PRODUCED IN A USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS PRODUCTION CLASS. PLEASE indicate what each piece is.

TWELVE (12) DVD copies of your directing reel need to be submitted to the 546 Drop box in SCA 404 by 11:30am, WEDNESDAY, October 28th. Make sure you check every reel to make sure they have picture and sound. Again, reels MUST be labeled with your name, email and contents of the DVD.

You will also need to include a resume that includes a LIST of all your USC School of Cinematic Arts Production courses with each DVD. 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.

PLEASE PACKAGE AS FOLLOWS: All resumes should be folded and inserted inside the individual DVD cases (paper or plastic) so that your NAME and EMAIL are fully visible. We will not accept loose resumes. Your TWELVE (12) DVDs should be sealed in 1 manila envelope. No rubber bands, string, or paperclips. Your envelope should contain TWELVE (12) DVD cases with a resume folded inside each one. On the outside of the envelope, write your name, “546 Directing Application,” and your email. APPLICATIONS THAT DO NOT FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.

546 Directors’ Reel Formatting Guidelines

Content:

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.
DVD authoring should be kept to a minimum. Upon inserting the DVD into the player, a menu should appear – again listing the name of the director and a listing of the projects, in order, on the DVD. There should be ONE BUTTON, which reads, “Play Reel.” The clips should play in the order you decide, one after the other for a total running time not to exceed 10 minutes. Please do not submit DVDs which return to the menu after each clip. After the entire reel has played, you can return to the menu screen.

It would be best if you mark each new clip with a chapter marker and if you enable FWD and RWD so that we can fast forward and rewind or skip to the previous chapter as necessary.

If you must secure your case or sleeve with tape, please be considerate:
1. Do not use scotch tape (it is hard to see and to peel)
2. Use paper tape (it is easier to see and to peel)
3. Leave a folded “tab” at one end of the tape to facilitate peeling.

* Test your DVDs on a player other than the burner you recorded them on before submitting them.
** Don’t wait until the last minute to burn your copies-late submissions will not be accepted.

PRODUCER SELECTION

Eligibility:
Potential producers need to have completed, or be currently enrolled in CTPR 508, and attend the POTENTIAL PRODUCERS’ MEETING, Wednesday October 28th at 5:00pm in SCA 203

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: jennacavelle@mac.com) by Sunday November 1st at 9pm to be considered.

FIRST CUT

By 5pm on FRIDAY, November 6th, 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 11am on Saturday November 7th.
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 Monday, November 9th at 5pm at SCA 112.

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 13th, and the collaboration contract should be turned in to John Watson via email (jwatson23@mac.com) (cc: jennacavelle@mac.com)

Twelve (12) copies of the script to be pitched should be turned in to the 546 Drop Box in SCA 404 by 11:30am, Wednesday, November 18th. The scripts will be picked up at 11:30am sharp. There are no exceptions!

You must also sign up for a pitch time on Wednesday, November 18th. 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 20th, beginning at 8am 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 22nd, in SCA 110 from 12pm – 4pm. This will be an opportunity for you to meet the producers and directors for the Spring 2016 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 29th, at 6pm
• 2nd revised draft to Tim Curnen on Sunday, December 6th, 6pm
• A prelim producible draft due to Tim Curnen on Sunday, December 13th, at 6pm.
• A producible draft to the entire faculty on Wednesday, December 16th, at 6pm.

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.