

## Final Thoughts

We're very proud of our program, and hope to see you become a strong member of our Digital Filmmaking community. To repeat what the first page of this handbook says: while you're here, make films. Tell stories. Make a lot of them. Help others to make their films as soon as you can and learn from them. Then make even more films.

There has never been a time more open to filmmaking than right now. The technology available to you is unlike what has ever been available before. Take advantage of that. People from around the world can see your films. How cool is that? Anyone who isn't making films all the time just doesn't want to make films.

Don't let the UCA festival be your only festival. Get your films out into the world. The simplest festivals to enter (because they're local) are the Little Rock Film Festival (submissions are usually taken in Feb/Mar), IndieMemphis (submissions in June), and the Ozark Foothills FilmFest (submissions in Nov.). But why not send your film out into the larger world? The deadline for Palm Springs International ShortsFest (the largest short film festival in the world) is usually in May, and other festivals are listed on IMDB and withoutabox.com. You should be proud of what you do here (we are!)— let other people see it by getting your films into festivals!

So keep making films, and make sure to keep copies of them—you can't show them to people (or employers) if you can't find them! Set aside a shelf for all the copies of your films on DVD and on tape. And keep multiple copies of the best ones so you always have copies to give to people.

Get involved as early as you can and don't stop making films!

And welcome to UCA, the Center of Filmmaking!

# The U.C.A. Digital Filmmaking Student Handbook

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## Welcome to UCA, the Center of Filmmaking!

The University of Central Arkansas' Digital Filmmaking program is the only program like it in Arkansas. Our program is completely designed around filmmaking and if you want to make films, you're in the right place.

A couple of things you should know about our program: first, filmmaking is a team sport. No one makes films by themselves. When you hear someone talk about the new Steven Spielberg film, what they really mean is the new Steven Spielberg, Michael Kahn (editor), Janusz Kaminski (director of photography), John Williams (composer) collaboration, along with the writer(s), sound designers, producers, production and costume designers, gaffers, best boy, asst directors, and a whole slew of other people that work together to make a film. There is no such thing as "A Film By..."

Our goal at UCA is to teach you about as many of the filmmaking roles as possible, to help you understand how a film is made. But the best way to learn about how a film is made is to work on films. A lot of them. If by your sophomore year, you haven't worked on someone's film, you're already a couple of steps behind. Someone's making a film all the time around here, so get involved. Learn as much as you can as often as you can. Why else are you in film school, right?

There will never be a time to learn about film like you have in front of you right now, so take advantage of it.

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## Getting a Job in Film

At some point, you're probably going to want to get a job in film - seems pretty natural, given the film degree and all... Some people will choose to move to somewhere the industry is a bit more established: Shreveport, Chicago, Los Angeles, Dallas, New York. There are a lot of places around America (and the world) with a lot of jobs.

But Conway and Little Rock have quite a few video production houses - go to the yellow pages under "Video Production" - you'll be amazed. And more are being opened all the time.

And the jobs aren't just limited to specialized production facilities. This is a growth industry - everybody needs a video nowadays. In the same way that not every Creative Writing major becomes a novelist, but can instead branch into other fields where their writing helps their work, a filmmaking degree can work in the same way.

So how do you get hired? You have to be able to show that you can make films. If you only made the films you were assigned in class, your demo reel is going to look pretty slim compared to someone who really worked to make a lot of films. Your resume will look empty compared to someone who can list their films that got accepted into festivals and maybe even received awards.

Make films that people will want to see - films that show off what you can do with the medium and tell an interesting story. The standard YouTube fare of people tripping and getting hit with stuff has yet to get anyone a job anywhere. A story about a guy waving around a gun and cursing at everyone really isn't interesting to anyone but your buddies. And the "students looking for an idea" story has already been mentioned. That's the kind of thing that's fine to do for your family and friends who'll think you're great no matter what you do, but this is college. Try a little harder. Find a compelling story and tell it from your point of view. We'll help you.

By the way, another great way to get a job in film and video is to do an internship - it's highly recommended! How better to get work than to already be on the job?

Secondly, find something that you're really interested in for a minor. The minor is a chance to expand your college experience outside of just filmmaking. Nobody wants to hear stories from someone who only knows about making films!

And as if all that wasn't enough, you also have to decide if you want to go for a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree. It can be a little confusing, so talk to your advisor. But to put it as simply as possible...

A B.A. degree means taking nine hours (three classes) of a foreign language. Or, if you have previous language experience, you can take three hours (1 class) of a modern foreign language on the 2000 level or above.

A B.S. degree means concentrated study in either math or science. If you choose math, you have to take two math courses with a higher course number than you took for your gen ed math. They actually check that, if you can believe it! Or, if you've already taken MATH 1390 (College Algebra) for your G.E., then you can take MATH 1360 (Math in Society) and then either MATH 2311 (Statistics) or MATH 1395.

If you choose science, it's a bit simpler. You have to take two classes in the same discipline, and you can't take any class listed as counting for Gen Ed.

Again, it can be hard to get your head wrapped around the B.A. or B.S. requirements, so check with your advisor.

Some final graduation requirements that people tend to forget:

- You have to have 124 total hours of coursework.
- 40 of your total hours must be upper division (3000 or 4000 level classes).
- You need to complete a minor course of study
- Select a minor early so you can get started taking those courses as soon as possible
- A GPA of 2.0 or above is required for graduation, cumulatively (all your classes combined) and in the major and the minor individually

Secondly, filmmaking is storytelling. The best, and really the only reason to make a film is because you have a story to tell. Stories are about interesting characters doing interesting things in pursuit of an interesting goal. You'll hear variations on that thought again and again while you're here, but it's worth thinking about from day one. What stories do you have to tell? How can you tell them most effectively?

Don't wait for an assignment in class to come up with a story idea. You should always be working on a story - the good ones take some time. Bad ideas usually hit you when a deadline's approaching. Guess what - the story about students trying to come up with an idea? That's been done before. A LOT. When one of your professors ask who wants to pitch a story, your hand should be the first one up, because you've got one ready to go. Plus three more that aren't fleshed out yet...

That's our other goal, here: to help you tell creative, engaging stories. As a film major, you are now a storyteller. Welcome to it.

And finally, the best way to become a filmmaker is to make films. You should be crewing on as many films as you can, of course. You should also be constantly making films. Musicians practice their instruments every day so they don't get rusty (and hopefully get better). Painters do the same thing. And so should you. Cell phones can record video nowadays, so there's no excuse to not be constantly out there shooting and making films so you can get better and better at it. If you don't have an idea for a new film to shoot today, re-shoot yesterday's film, but *better*.

By the way - one way to get involved quickly is to join the UCA film club. Look for signs around Stanley Russ Hall telling you when the film club meets. They make short films as a group, and it's a great way to meet people in the film department beyond just whoever is in your classes.

Again, we're really excited to have you here at UCA - now *go make a film!*

## What you need

As a student at UCA, you'll need a couple of things.

First you'll need a FireWire portable Hard Drive. This drive will let you work on your projects in the computer lab. You may find that you can slide along without one for your earliest projects, but you'll also notice that for some reason, your projects are more error-prone than everyone else's. That's because you need a FireWire hard drive.

You'll also want to invest in a pair of headphones. The computer editing lab can be a noisy place, and you'll need headphones to be able to hear your project without disturbing others. We recommend a decent pair of over-the-ear " earmuff " headphones. You can find an OK pair for around \$20, usually. Ear buds just don't quite cut it.

And you'll need an SD flash memory card to store your video files. As our program becomes tapeless, your camera footage will be stored on SD cards as you record. You'll need a card that's at least Speed Class 4 or higher (higher is faster, and better), and the our camera manuals suggests using Panasonic, Toshiba, or SanDisk brand SD card. Not that other brands won't work, but it's been successfully tested using those brands. Currently (January 2010), compatible 4GB cards on Amazon.com are running less than \$20, and will hold about 30minutes of high quality HD video.

But most of all, you need a desire and passion to make films. The students who do well in this program and the ones who eat, breathe and sleep film. If that's you, then you're well on your way!

The UCA Digital Filmmaking Electives are:

FILM 3316: Film Theory Since 1960  
FILM 3363: Audio Production  
FILM 3373: Documentary Production  
FILM 4392: Topics in Digital Production  
FILM 4380: Seminar in Film Studies  
MCOM 3307: Media Theory and Research  
MCOM 3374: Broadcast Journalism Production II  
MCOM 3321: Internship  
MCOM 4313: Writing for Electronic Media  
MCOM 4323 Seminar in Mass Communication  
WRTG 3300: Creative Writing: Scriptwriting  
WRTG 3320: Forms of Scriptwriting

Some notes about the electives:

- You need to take 12 hours of electives (four classes). Naturally, you can take more, but they won't count toward your graduation.
- Some of the electives have pre-requisites. The Topics class, Audio Production, and the Documentary all have Digital Film 1 as a pre-req.
- The Internship class has a pre-req of Digital Film 2 and a minimum GPA of 3.0.
- The Topics class and the Seminar in Mass Comm are for special subjects that a our program offers. Past courses have included: Micro Cinema, Visual Storytelling, Advanced Editing, Digital Visual Effects, Animation, Feature Filmmaking, Digital Media, Filmmaking in the Creative Economy, Set Design, and Advanced Screenwriting.

UCA also requires that you select a minor course of study. There are lists of minors offered on the UCA web site, and minors can be anywhere from 18 - 27 units, depending on which minor you select. The Mass Comm and Theatre office has lists of all the minors that you can take.

Selecting a minor is a pretty big deal - first off, make sure you do it early. If you wait until your Senior year to select a minor, there's a good chance you won't have time to finish the minor before you're supposed to graduate!

## Course Listings & Major Requirements

The UCA Digital Filmmaking Program has a number of required classes, and quite a few electives. You also must complete your general education and minor requirements. Make sure you talk with an advisor to keep on the right track.

The UCA Digital Filmmaking Core classes (required before taking any other classes)

MCOM 1300: Media and Society  
FILM 1305: Introduction to Film

The UCA Digital Filmmaking Requirements are:

FILM 2310: Script Analysis  
FILM 2466: Digital Filmmaking 1  
FILM 3456: Digital Filmmaking 2  
FILM 4356: Digital Filmmaking 3  
FILM 4357: Digital Filmmaking 4  
FILM 3315: Classical Film Theory  
FILM 3350: Cinema History 1  
FILM 3351: Cinema History 2

Some notes about the required courses:

- Cinema History 1 and 2 must be taken in order.
- Script Analysis must be taken before or concurrently with Digital Filmmaking 1.
- Digital Filmmaking 1 is a basic filmmaking course. Students will learn camera work, editing, and will create short music video and narrative projects. It is usually taken in the sophomore year.
- Digital Filmmaking 2 is an advanced filmmaking course, centering around directing the camera. Students will make a few projects, including a short (7-10 minute) narrative film. It is usually taken in the junior year.
- Digital Filmmaking 3 & 4 must be taken in the same school year, with DF 3 taken in the Fall and DF 4 in the Spring. DF 3 centers around pre-production, where students write and prepare an advanced 10 minute short film. In DF 4, students produce the film and follow it through post-production. Digital Film 3 & 4 are usually taken during the senior year.

## Digital Filmmaking Faculty and Staff

The faculty and staff of the Digital Filmmaking program are all located in Stanley Russ Hall and all keep office hours, posted on their syllabi and office doors.

Most of the faculty offices are in the SRH 216 complex, though a few are around the corner in SRH 202. There is often a student worker posted at the front desk of SRH 216 who can help you with anything you need from the department.

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Eric Yang	ericyang@uca.edu
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## UCA Digital Filmmaking Facilities

Stanley Russ Hall houses the entire Digital Filmmaking program and is open to film students 24 hours a day. It's one of the few film buildings at a university built specifically for a film and television program. Film programs tend to think about their building last, but SRH was built for us, as you can tell from the many rooms that are specifically designed for our needs.

You can get into the building and into any rooms that you need for a film production class with the access codes that are given to you in class at the beginning of the semester. The codes get you in 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and will last until the end of the semester.

Your access code will be a five-digit number sequence, which you can key into the pad, followed by the "\*" to gain entrance. The only exception to that is the 112 Computer Lab, which requires you to swipe your student ID.

Your code will get you into whichever rooms you need for your specific classes, and will get you in the back outside door of SRH (the door that faces away from the campus, back by the TV studio and Channel 6). If you need access to another room for a specific project (that isn't already coded for you), see Bryan Allen, who's in charge of the facilities.

There are two studios in Stanley Russ Hall: the TV Studio (SRH 118) and the Teaching Studio (SRH 125). Both are available to students when classes or productions are not already scheduled in those rooms. See Mike Gunter to reserve the teaching space, and Chris Churchill (at Channel 6) to reserve the TV Studio.

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## Digital Filmmaking Screenings and Events

The Digital Filmmaking Dept regularly holds screenings and events, usually in SRH 103, our classroom / theater. Take advantage of those events! There are a lot of interesting films and filmmakers appearing in that space, ready to share their knowledge with you.

### PAST UCA VISITING ARTISTS INCLUDE:

Neil Gaiman, Writer: Beowulf, Mirrormask, Princess Mononoke  
David Gordon Greene, Writer/Director: All the Real Girls,  
Snow Angels, Pineapple Express  
Michael Moore, Director: Fahrenheit 9/11, Bowling for Columbine  
Bruce Campbell, Actor: Army of Darkness, Bubba Ho-tep  
Jing Tao, Sound Designer: House of Flying Daggers, Hero  
Eric Begosian, Actor/Writer: Talk Radio, SubUrbia, Law & Order  
Harry Cheney, Sound Editor: Bram Stoker's Dracula, Bottle Rocket

One big event, the UCA Film Festival, is held at the end of the school year. Usually on "Dead Day" (the Friday night before finals) in the Spring, it's a competition / celebration of films made by UCA students in the last year. The deadline for submission is usually a week before the festival (which is often earlier than the due date for your classes), so keep that in mind as you're finishing your films. You can submit your film(s) in the Mass Comm office in SRH 216 - the necessary paperwork will be there, too. Following the festival is a reception at a local restaurant, where the festival winners are announced.

Most of the film classes have some sort of screening at the end of the semester – find out when they are and check 'em out to support your fellow filmmakers! Plus, who knows, you may even find the collaborators for your next film.

And keep an eye out for announcements about future events!

# Copyright and You

You should be aware of what copyright means when making films. Copyright is a very complex and sometimes tedious topic that is very important if you plan to show your films to anyone.

The two key things to know about copyright are that you can't use clips from other films or TV shows without the original creator's written permission and you can't use other people's music without their written permission. This may come as a surprise to some people, who are used to using the latest song from American Idol in their film, but that is not legal. And at UCA, for any projects you're creating for classes, you cannot use copyrighted materials without the permission of the copyright owner (usually the artist).

There are rare exceptions to this when making documentaries, if the copyrighted material happens to be in the background while you're recording something else. But even that isn't always cut-and-dried.

Simply put, in most circumstances, adding any copyrighted materials during production or editing without the permission of the owner is illegal.

By the way, there are two ways to approach this: you can be upset at the inability to use yet another Carrie Underwood masterpiece in your film, or be the 100,000<sup>th</sup> person to realize that Peter Gabriel's "In Your Eyes" is a wonderful, dramatic love ballad, *or* you can look at this as an opportunity to discover new music that no one else has heard yet. Little Rock and Memphis have excellent music scenes, and are aching for filmmakers to use their music and get it heard by people. Get out there and talk to people. Start digging around on MySpace. There is music all over, waiting to be discovered!

The 1800 sq foot TV studio has a number of standing sets for the many shows produced here, as well as a permanent 36 foot Blue Screen, for creating digital effects. The 900 sq foot teaching studio has a removable "living room" set with breakaway walls, and a permanent 15 foot Green Screen.

The 112 Computer Lab has 19 Apple Mac computers. The front computer is the teaching system and is connected to the video projector for instructors. It also has a scanner hooked up. All the computers have built-in SD cards, so you can drop your footage in from the camera easily at any system. The 112 lab is available 24 hours, except when there is a class being held in it. The class schedule is listed in the hallway, by the door.

Every system in 112 has Firewire, USB, and headphone cables attached to the desk, so you can easily hook up your external drives and headphones. And remember to bring your headphones so you can listen to your project without disturbing the people sitting next to you.

Student workers are in the Computer Lab most week nights, so if you're having trouble, you might try stopping by then when there's someone there to help you. Their hours change from semester to semester, so check out their posted times.

There are also five computers in the 202 complex upstairs. Those systems are designed for pre-production and writing, and have screenwriting, budgeting and scheduling software loaded up.

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SRH 202G and 202H are the Audio Recording Studio and connected Sound Booth. The Recording Studio has a computer with all the same software as the 112 Lab, and is set up for mixing your projects. There's also a second, small monitor for playing back video with your audio projects. That monitor is mirrored to the big video monitor in the Sound Booth, so that anyone in the booth can see the video from the computer. That way, you can record in sync to video.

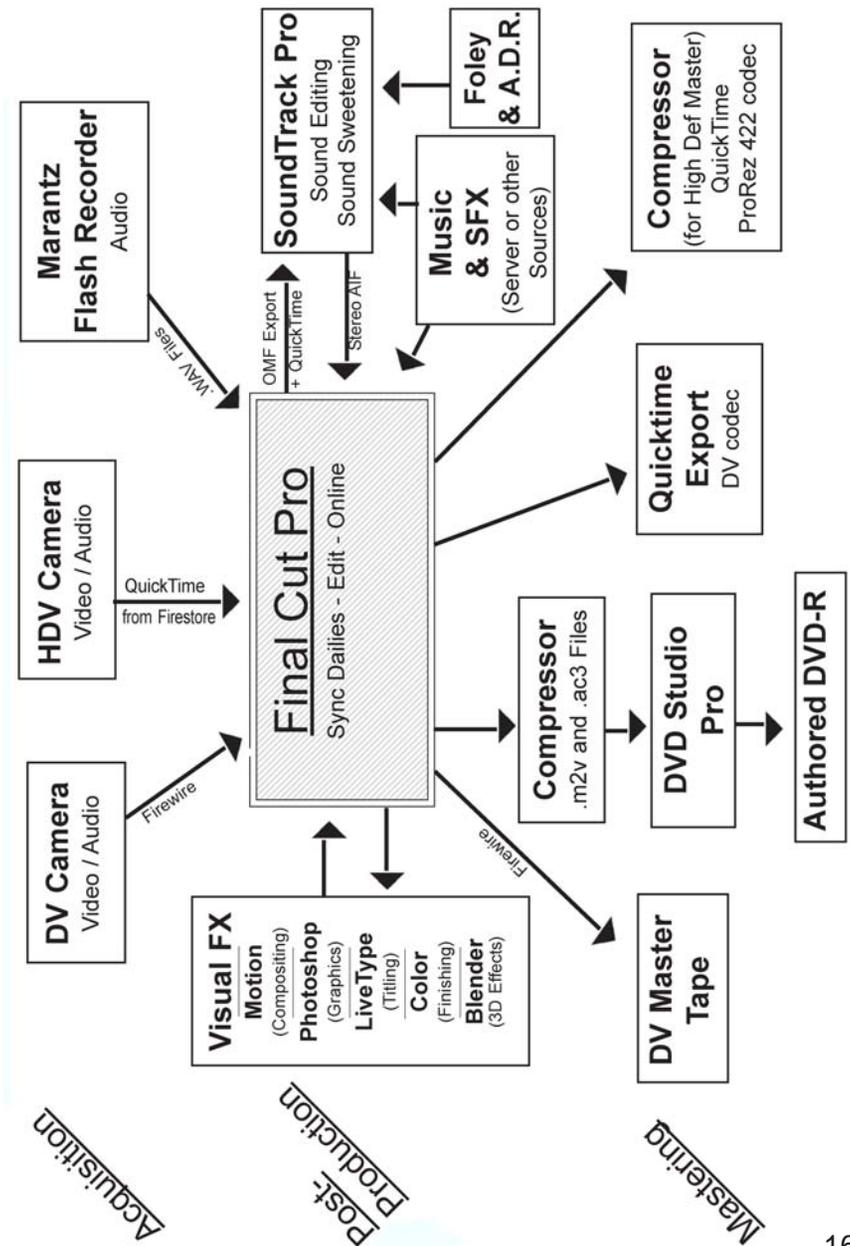
The Sound Booth is designed for voice-overs, ADR, Foley Sound Effects, or any other audio you might need to record. You'll find some foley props in the booth, ready to be used.

You can get into the 202 hallway after hours through the back door, which has a keycode lock on it. The 202 back door is further down the hall, around past the bathrooms

Finally, there are a couple of groups that we work with in the building. The first is Channel 6. The Channel 6 offices are located in SRH 124. Channel 6 is UCA's television station, and puts out regular programming on our dedicated cable channel, as well as broadcast stations.

And right next door to all of our space are the offices and studios of AETN - the Arkansas Educational Television Network. That's a great place to get an internship and meet people in the industry who work locally.

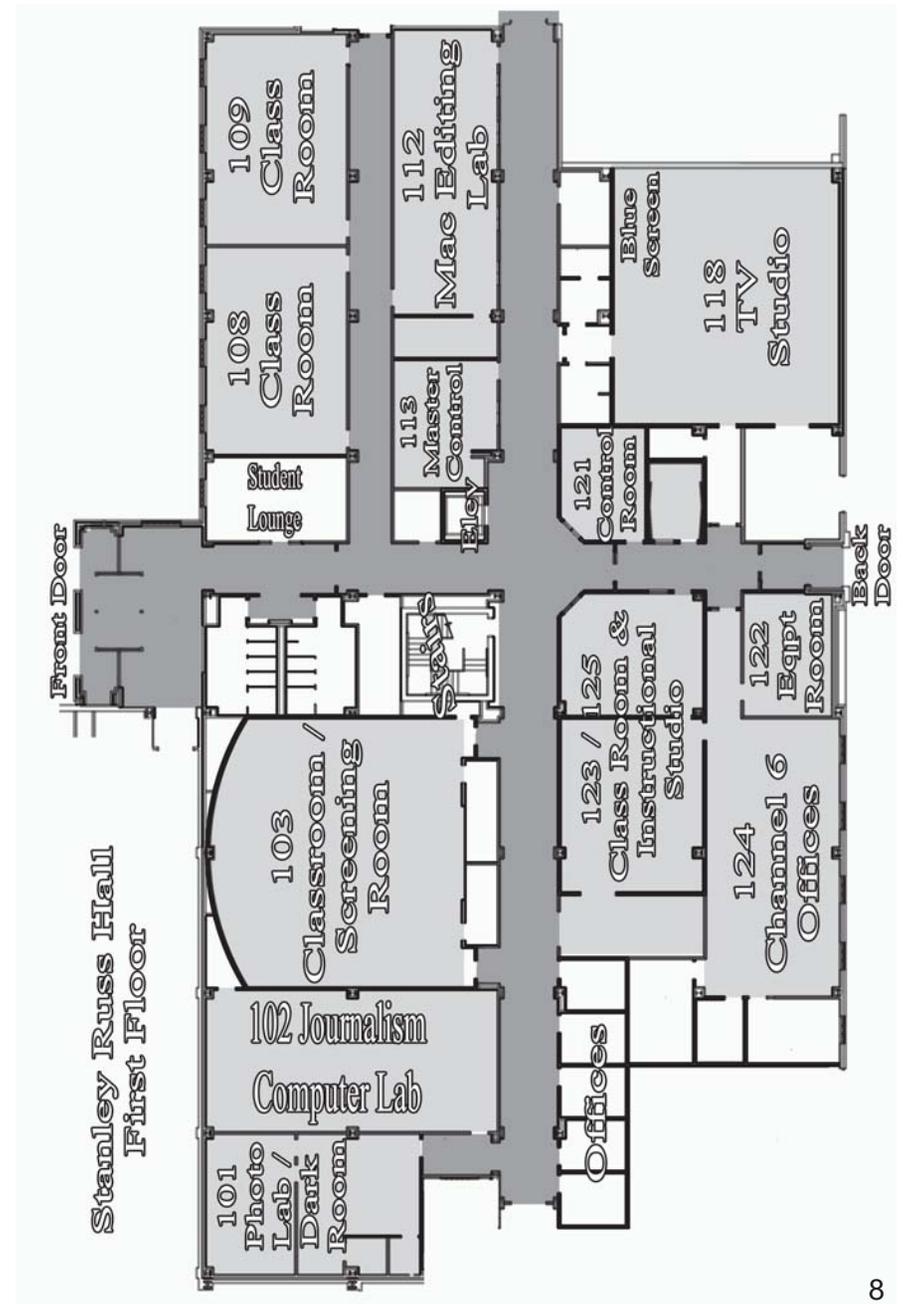
## UCA Digital Filmmaking Advanced Workflow



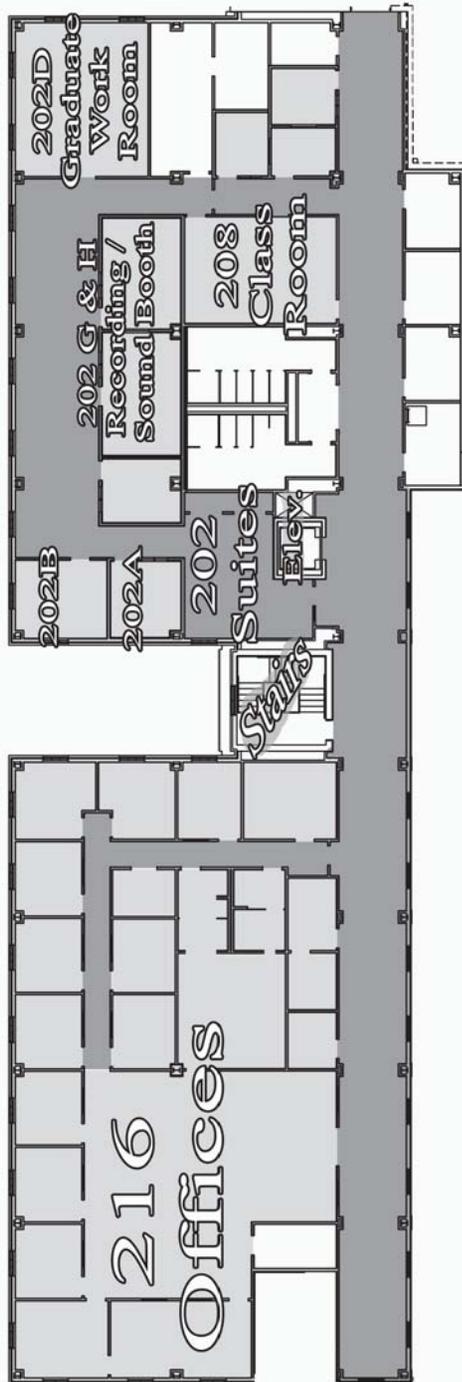
The SRH 112 Computer Lab has 19 Macs, and the five systems in SHR 202 are set up exactly the same. The programs on those systems are:

- Final Cut Studio
  - Final Cut Pro
  - Cinema Tools
  - Color
  - Compressor
  - DVD Studio Pro
  - Livetype
  - Motion
  - Soundtrack Pro
- Adobe Creative Suite
  - Premiere
  - After Effects
  - Dreamweaver
  - Illustrator
  - InDesign
  - Photoshop
- Blender
- Celtx Screenwriting & Production
- Microsoft Office
- Mpg Streamclip
- Final Draft Screenwriting
- Movie Magic Budgeting
- Movie Magic Scheduling

## Map of Stanley Russ Hall



## Second Floor



But be careful storing files on the network! Once you fill up your allotted space on the network server, you're full and can't save any more. If you start running out of space, the computer won't have space to save your settings when you run programs, and all sorts of errors can arise from that. You can see how much space you have left by opening your username folder in the Finder. If the amount of space is listed in KBs (or even in low MBs), you should try to delete some files. And "xxx KB" means you have no space left – you're all full!

It's a pretty regular occurrence that people who are getting strange errors and problems working on the computers are also people who keep their space on the network very full.

The server has a number of folders on it, including a "Courses" folder, where professors can drop files you need for assignments, a "Dropbox" for turning in assignments over the server, and a "Media Library" with sound and video libraries.

The "Media Library" has four folders: "BBC," "Jump Backs," "Sound Ideas" and "The Mix Library." Starting with the video files, "Jump Backs" has a series of video backgrounds, often used for titles or anywhere else you might need an animated background.

"The Mix Library" is a library of rights-free music that you can use in your projects. "BBC" and "Sound Ideas" are two series of sound effects CDs (the Sound Ideas library has 70 CDs – that's a lot of sounds!). Instructions for using these libraries are in the SoundTrack Pro handbook.

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## Digital Filmmaking Computers

All of the computers in the Digital Filmmaking department are Apple Mac based, so if you're not familiar with Macs, now would be a good time to learn about them. There are many good books available, including "Macs for Dummies" which is usually less than \$20. We use Final Cut Studio for our basic post-production editing and sound design, and all of the computers are networked and connected to dedicated Digital Film servers.

Final Cut Studio includes Final Cut Pro video editing, SoundTrack Pro audio editing, and other support programs for color correction, effects, compositing and DVD creation. It's a very powerful suite of programs. Even if you have some other software at home, You need to learn Final Cut, so that you can work on your projects with other students.

Simple illustrated guides to using Final Cut Pro and SoundTrack Pro, written specifically for using them on the UCA network, are available in your classes, or on the server.

When you sit down at any of our computers, you'll need to log on to use it. Your log-on name is usually your first initial, followed by your last name, and your password is your student ID number (make sure to put the "B" and all the "0"s at the beginning). Your log-in gives you a roaming "profile" that's stored on the network that can remember your particular settings on every computer. You can also save files on your desktop or your username or documents folders, and those files will be stored on the network so they can be accessed from any system in the building.

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## Equipment Checkout

UCA has an equipment room with cameras, lights, sound equipment, and everything you need to make your film. The equipment room is in SRH 122 (which is located in the hallway to Channel 6). Check out the posted hours on the equipment room door, because they change from semester to semester, based on the needs of the classes. Generally, check-out time is in the afternoon, and check-in time is earlier (to make sure the equipment is in and prepped before it goes back out).

Digital Filmmaking classes can normally take out equipment for two days (or over the weekend) and you can reserve equipment by putting your initials on the white board hanging across from the equipment room. The board is a grid, with the days listed across the top and the equipment along the left edge. Put your initials in the square on the day you want to check out.

To actually take out equipment, you need a check-out ticket, which your professor will give you when you have a project. You can't take out equipment without a ticket.

When checking out your equipment, it is VERY IMPORTANT that you see that all the equipment you need is there and that it all works. There's an electrical outlet around the corner from checkout (behind the conference table) where you can plug in anything you need to test.

The two reasons to check your equipment are to make sure that you have working equipment for your shoot and to make sure that you don't get blamed and fined for returning broken equipment.

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Obviously, you want to check your equipment to make sure that it's all working before you leave. On the set is a lousy time to find out that your mic cable is busted. Check EVERYTHING. Bring a blank video tape with you and actually record something and play it back. Hook up all the mics with all the XLR cables and record something with each to make sure it all works. If it doesn't work, let the Equipment Room staff know so they can help to fix or replace it, so you can go to your shoot knowing that the equipment works.

You're financially responsible for the equipment while it's checked out to you. If you break or lose something, it's your responsibility to pay for it. You'll be required to sign a contract at checkout

You MUST take good care of the equipment. Obviously, when it breaks, that hurts everyone in the program. Don't leave the equipment anywhere unattended. Don't put it anywhere where people will be travelling and might knock it around (or steal it!). Always treat the equipment like it's very expensive and fragile, because it is, and if it breaks or gets lost, you'll find out just how expensive and fragile it is.

Also make certain that equipment is returned on time and in good shape. Wrap all the cables. Put the gear back properly in the correct cases. You won't be allowed to turn your equipment in unless it's acceptable to the equipment room staff. If you don't turn it in correctly, it'll be marked as late until you clean it up. Late fees will start to accrue and you'll end up owing a lot of money.

Some of the equipment is available only for advanced projects, to make sure that the equipment is available for the students who need it, but your professor will let you know what equipment is available to you depending on what class you're involved in. Following is a list of equipment available for check-out:

Digital Video Cameras:

- Canon 7D # 1-2
- Canon T2i # 1-5
- Canon 60D # 1-6
- Canon HF10 # 1-3
- Canon HFS100 # 1-2
- JVC HD 200 # 1-3

Audio:

- Marantz PMD 661 Recorder #1-6
- Marantz PMD 670 Recorder #1-3
- Zoom Recorder #1-2
- Field Mixer # 1-6
- Lapel Mics # 1-8
- Handheld Mics # 1-8
- Shotgun Mic / Boom # 1-10

Grip / Electric:

- DV Creator Light Kit # 1-3
- Arri Light Kit # 1-2
- Pro Light Kit (750W) A
- Omni / Tota Pro Light Kit (1500W) B
- D.P. Light Kit (1500W) C
- Flag Bag # 1-4
- C Stands
- Doorway Dolly
- Dolly Track
- Jib Arm
- Glide Cam
- Set Crate (with gels and grip) # 1-4
- Monitor # 1-2