



Equity  
Diversity &  
Inclusion in  
Teaching  
Media

## INTRODUCING INTIMACY COORDINATION IN THE MEDIA CLASSROOM

This publication is a classroom guide on a new and emerging area of film and media production, which also happens to be a highly charged and complicated topic: choreographing and recording scenes or moments of physical or emotional intimacy.

This guide aims to support film and media faculty in introducing Intimacy Coordination (IC) practices into their classrooms. Practices and approaches outlined here are based on research and training in the current, evolving field of intimacy coordination for film, television, and theater. You will find a bibliography and additional resources at the end of this document.

What is most important about this guide is that it is focused on developing a consent-based production culture. It looks at how film, television, and media production courses can address consent in university and college production. Although the specific role of ICs on professional sets is in filming intimate scenes, the consent-based tenets of IC work can apply to the production of many types of content. Courses teaching IC work should teach emerging producers and directors how to prioritize consent-based practices and create a desirable, safe, and fulfilling production film culture.

EDIT Media and the authors of this guide strongly suggest that faculty who include IC practices into their courses review the additional resources. This guide is not meant to be prescriptive or offer an official protocol. Rather, it is descriptive and presents recommendations and resources for taking the first steps in adding IC practices to film, television, and media production courses. It is meant to generate improvements in classroom pedagogy. We have included many additional resources for learning more about this area of study and professional work at the end of the document to support the advancement of this field of study.

As an introduction to teaching students about intimacy coordination, this guide provides entry points for a wide range of class levels. Some approaches are more suitable for introducing IC work to undergraduates, while others are more appropriate for graduate students in masters or MFA programs. These range from one or two class lectures to extensive verbal and written lessons, which provide opportunities for students to practice the concepts in introductory steps. Advanced programs might include guest lectures with professional ICs, and advanced students might hire professional ICs for their film and media productions.

The recommendations in this guide are informed by evidence from a variety of sources. These include: 1) Publications by industry organizations such as the Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA); 2) a growing body of mainstream media articles about intimacy coordinators on professional film and television sets; 3) several publications by organizations created to support the field of intimacy coordination and direction; 4) the classroom experiences of professors and instructors who have already started incorporating some of these practices; and 5) presentations to the field by intimacy coordinators.

Campus conversations about consent and programs to educate students about their actions regarding consent have become a national standard. Similarly, in recent years, professional film and television sets have started to change their practices following the values of the #MeToo movement. This guide aims to support film and media instructors to take the initial steps of bringing these two cultural shifts together into film and media classrooms: discussion of consent and the evolution of production culture.

**EDIT Media and the authors strongly recommend that instructors coordinate with all relevant campus resources to develop your IC lessons and coursework.** Typical campus resources include sexual harassment awareness, diversity and equity, Title IX, and LGBTQ programs. Your campus might also have initiatives through your dean or provost's offices, residential halls, and student activity organizations. The standards in this guide aim to adapt the practices of professional ICs to campus life and help students align their film productions with the standards of their broader campus experience. Faculty must consult with their college or university about their particular circumstances and integrate these suggestions into their courses and campus culture using their best judgment.

Finally, a few practical notes about the purpose and audience for this guide:

- It is intended for all instructors teaching college-level film, media, and television production courses, from full professors to adjunct instructors and junior faculty. The terms "instructors" and "faculty" are used throughout to include all of these levels.
- It is also intended for any type of media production course. This guide focuses on actors because that is where the professional resources have developed. However, the same concepts can apply to on-camera talent in broadcast, commercial, documentary, and other types of media production, as well as to all crew roles.
- This guide also provides insight into production culture for film and media scholars and contributes to ongoing conversations and academic studies about the culture of creating films, television programs, and media.

## DEFINITION(S) OF "INTIMACY"

What is an "intimate" scene? Is it only nudity, or can it be kissing, hugging, groping/petting, or even holding hands? What about having a child sit on an adult's lap? What about a scene mixing sex with violence? Answering this question is an excellent classroom exercise.

While this definition will likely continue to evolve, officially, two of the primary professional and educational organizations fostering IC and ID work define intimate scenes in similar ways with one significant difference:

- Intimacy Directors and Coordinators (IDC) defines it as "An intimacy professional is a choreographer, an advocate for actors, and a liaison between actors and production for scenes that involve nudity/hyper exposed work, simulated sex acts, and intimate physical contact."<sup>1</sup> and
- Theatrical Intimacy Education (TIE) states a similar mission, to "empower artists with the tools to ethically, efficiently, and effectively stage intimacy, nudity, and sexual violence."<sup>2</sup>
- Intimacy Coordinators Canada also include "high emotional content" along with nudity and simulated sex in their definition of the scenes that merit an IC.<sup>3</sup>
- ACTRA Toronto published a guide, "Best Practices for Scenes Involving Nudity, Intimacy, Simulated Sex and Sexual Violence," which includes checklists and "questions to consider from auditions through to the editing of scenes that involve nudity, intimacy, simulated sex and sexual violence."<sup>4</sup>

Including sexually violent scenes as part of the discussion of IC work allows students to integrate other conversations on their campus, about informed consent, with an open and healthy discussion about how to film scenes portraying this on screen.

For students, deciding exactly what "intimacy" means might be much broader than these professional definitions. Engaging students in this discussion would be a meaningful step towards helping emerging filmmakers create a culture of informed consent. They might also include content far beyond nudity. For example, if TIE defines a rape scene as something that is considered an intimate scene, then it makes sense for a student-level production also to follow that definition. However, what about other fraught scenes? For example, would filming a scene about suicide, extreme drug addiction, or an expression of violent racial hatred benefit from the core concepts of IC work? These scenes all reflect the kind of contemporary realities students might want to explore in film, but might be challenging subjects for young filmmakers and actors to navigate.

IC concepts foster a "consent culture" on film sets. In classrooms, a consent-based culture can support greater participation from women, people of color, non-binary and LGBTQ students, and other groups historically excluded. In addition, students who wish to film emotionally challenging scenes might also consider how IC concepts help them create safe sets.

With that said, it is important to remember that IC work in film, and the theater corollary of ID work, both evolved to protect actors from "old approaches" to filming nudity and sex scenes, which were awkward at a minimum and harmful at maximum. These approaches also overwhelmingly affected young women. In "Staging Sex: Best Practices Tools, and Techniques for Theatrical Intimacy," TIE co-founder Chelsea Pace describes one "old approach" that did not work: "Just Kiss Each Other!—When a director wants the actors to kiss, tell them to just kiss each other!.... This seems like the most obvious, quickest, least awkward approach for many directors. And if the actors weren't okay with it, they would speak up. Right?"<sup>5</sup> The author then describes why this approach actually does not work, from how the power dynamics in the room inhibited actors giving valid consent to differences in a creative vision of how scenes like this should look and feel. Furthermore, for faculty and instructors, this would be an extremely inappropriate way to conduct a classroom lesson. Without an effective pedagogy to teach the filming of intimate scenes, we cannot provide as full of an education as they might in a course including IC principles.

## BEYOND INTIMATE SCENES: SAFETY IN MANY SETTINGS

Teaching the basic pillars of IC prepares students to navigate filming many challenging scenes that could be considered traumatic, emotionally difficult or revealing, or merely awkward. Students routinely plan productions that explore physical violence, racism, sexism, domestic abuse, murder, addiction, other extreme emotional vulnerability, and many potentially traumatizing behaviors. All stand to benefit from the Five Pillars and a consent-based culture on film sets. All might also benefit from practical techniques like a closed or minimal film set, communication prior to filming, detailed choreography of the scene, and "opening" and "closing" the scene.

Understanding the basics of IC work can support student filmmakers to work more effectively with actors to represent various challenging or taboo subjects and complicated emotions and characters.

## WHAT IS INTIMACY COORDINATION?

Intimacy Coordination (IC) is an emerging practice in television, film, and theater. Theater and live performances have a parallel emerging practice of Intimacy Direction (ID), which has very similar standards of consent-based work, although a different set of practices. For this guide, the focus is on IC work in film, television, and media production.

The goal of IC work is to create a work environment where the actor(s) feels safe performing intimate actions or scenes. As detailed above, the definition of an "intimate action or scene" can vary. It might have an even broader definition in a college classroom than on professional sets. Typically, intimate actions and scenes might include hugging, kissing, simulated sex, and nudity, for example. Many organizations also include scenes that involve sexual violence. In addition to nudity and simulated sex, IDC published a flowchart, "Do We Need an Intimacy Director?" which walks directors and producers step-by-step through a decision-making process. The flowchart asks if the scene contains: "heightened sexually charged moments, such as intense kissing" or "scenes in which the actors are physically and emotionally uncomfortable." It also includes scenes involving "special choreography, like a striptease" and scenes "when power dynamics or pre-existing relationships might necessitate the use of an outside eye" as content that would require hiring an IC.

IC professionals follow core concepts of consent and communication, formalized into the Five Pillars by one of the first organizations in the field, Intimacy Directors International (IDI), a non-profit organization. Formed in 2016, IDI created a foundational document describing the five key components of IC work. They shared this core pillar document in the public domain as a way to support artists everywhere, and it has been widely adopted.<sup>6</sup> While IDI disbanded in 2020, IDC Professionals, another non-profit organization, expanded on this foundation by creating the IDC Resource Guide. Compiled by Marie Percy, this clear and helpful online guide frames IC/ID work, provides background articles, and many other resources. These core pillars yield volumes of insight for students pursuing careers as film directors, producers, showrunners, cinematographers, editors, and other roles for film students.

The IC's primary role is to serve as a liaison between the actor, director, and crew in the professional world. IC work begins at casting, continues through pre-production, and often involves the IC on set during production. ICs also are part of the post-production phase to verify that final versions of intimate scenes follow the agreements between the actor and the director.

It is essential to say that IC work is sex-positive. The role was designed to facilitate nude and intimate scenes, not ban or cancel them. In fact, the growing field of intimacy coordination would not exist if these scenes were cut. The goal of an IC is to support the production of films, television series, and other media in a way that celebrates the human experience, realizes the director's vision, and ensures the safety and confidence of everyone.

Highlights from the background of IC and ID training are:

- **Actor-created.** The open conversation generated by #MeToo included actors revealing how intimate scenes were filmed in ways that ranged from awkward and uncomfortable to non-consensual. In this wake, several actors created guidelines outlining safe and consensual practices for filming intimacy on set. The first IC organizations were formed and IDI published the Five Pillars. The Pillars are: 1) Context; 2) Consent; 3) Communication; 4) Choreography; and 5) Closure. Each of these pillars offers opportunities to teach students about better and safer sets, how to work more effectively with actors, and how to be a better director.

- **Industry Standard.** IC standards are swiftly becoming a requisite part of professional film and television sets. In 2019 and 2020, SAG-AFTRA introduced guidelines and protocols for ICs. HBO and other major production studios took strong, positive positions, and committed to using ICs on all productions that involve sexually intimate scenes. In addition, in 2021 SAG-AFTRA introduced sexual harassment reporting tools and an industry-wide accreditation program for ICs.
- **The Future of Filmmaking.** Just as we prepare students for a wide range of technical and creative aspects of filmmaking, film schools play a critical role in introducing standards of safety and professionalism. Introducing the Five Pillars and other core concepts teaches film students to be as skillful in navigating intimate scenes as they would be filming any other type of scene, including murder scenes, action and fight sequences, and a scene involving weapons wranglers and stunt coordinators. Just as we teach new and evolving standards in writing, cinematography, directing, and other creative and technical areas, this guide introduces professional IC standards. Students who learn IC standards before they graduate and seek jobs will be ready to participate fully and continually improve the culture of film sets and creative productions.
- **A New Professional Job.** Intimacy Coordination is a growing job in filmmaking. Becoming an IC is a viable career path that students might consider. By preparing them now, they will be ready to seek advanced training and accreditation. Some universities are beginning to hold workshops on IC work and even to create courses focused on it. Others help interested students find appropriate training outside of class.

## RATIONALE — WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT IN OUR CLASSROOMS?

This guide aims to develop professional ways to discuss filming intimate scenes. If a film course prepares students to create fight, dialog, observational, procedural, and murder scenes, why would it not also prepare students for scenes of intimacy between characters?

As film and media faculty, we teach students production culture as well as how to make films, television programs, and other media. We communicate many values about conduct on sets, from showing up on time and developing high artistic standards to treating equipment with respect and care. IC work expands these values to include practices that provide safety and respect for actors and crew. It attaches to the same concept and practice of safety we already accord to situations like filming scenes with guns, flames, explosives, animals, cars, underwater scenes, physical violence, and many others that are physically intimate in various ways.

While most faculty (and students) expect that student productions are at a "PG" level of physical interaction, such as kissing and groping, "intimacy" can mean far more than the kind of R-rated content that was the first to have ICs on sets, such as the HBO shows *The Deuce* and *Game of Thrones*.

Most student casting fits into a few scenarios. Students cast their friends, who will not know how to navigate these scenes on their own. Alternatively, students cast professional actors, who will expect professional standards. Another common scenario is student filmmakers casting student actors, which means students with limited directorial experience work with similarly inexperienced actors. In any scenario, this guide introduces IC concepts and practices. These practices begin at a classroom discussion level, for example, by guiding students to think about how they approach intimacy in their creative work. This guide introduces many options to work on intimate scenes in classrooms, from beginning steps like discussing the concepts and reviewing scripts to drafting mock (or real) "intimacy riders." It suggests some classroom lessons on setting boundaries, workshoping scenes from student films or existing movies, and resources to learn more classroom lessons and gain advanced training. It suggests techniques ranging from involving third-party observers to rewrites, using correct props and choreography, and developing transparent communication at all stages. Most important — it introduces the core concept of consent.

The basis of this guide are practices that are rapidly becoming norms in professional productions. By including them in classrooms, faculty can better prepare students to have contemporary and professional standards in their first jobs. In addition, these standards will help our students create inclusive and equitable film culture and foster improved work experience for actors, crew, and directors.

For example, film and media faculty might consider how their program addresses these questions:

1. What role do faculty have in reviewing students' scripts before filming?
2. What role can faculty play in fostering the development of film culture that is consent-based and inclusive?
3. How can faculty suggest writing scripts and production plans to be consent-based, follow IC practices, and guide students to practice the most contemporary standards?



Finally, introducing IC work is about supporting students, not creating a means to police them. It is also a way a film, television, and media programs can align with widespread college and university priorities about consent, inclusion, and equity. A department or even the entire institution can make a public commitment to the evolving norms of the film and television industry.

## HOW SHOULD FACULTY USE THIS GUIDE?

**This guide introduces the pillars of IC work.** It is ideal for Directing, Senior Project, or Capstone seminars. It is also appropriate for intro courses such as Intro to Media Production, Producing, Cinematography, and Field Production. Students preparing or seeking internships on professional sets and in graduate film programs also will benefit from understanding the role of ICs.

The background training for an IC is rigorous. It involves education in areas from movement pedagogy and acting theory to sexual harassment training, Title IX, mental health first aid, bystander intervention, allyship and advocacy, gender identity and sexual orientation training and current best practices. These guidelines are not a replacement for hiring a professional IC.

**EDIT Media and the authors of this guide do not recommend that film students serve as ICs without proper training.** The IC's role focuses on actor consent. The IC advocates for the actor if and when their level of consent changes, which can be day by day, depending on the role. The IC is present in an advocacy role. They are there to create a positive experience for everyone, from the director to the actor to crew members. It is important that inexperienced students work within appropriate limits regarding the IC role and retain a professional IC when merited, just as it would be necessary for inexperienced and untrained students to not serve as pyrotechnicians or animal wranglers. Proper training and experience in those roles is a well-understood safety protocol — IC work is similar.

In addition to equity and the rigor of the special IC training, there are several reasons not to have a student who is already part of the crew serve as IC. An IC, by definition, is an outsider to the crew. Their role is solely about advocating for actors. If they are part of the crew with their classmates or friends, they are not well-positioned to advocate for actors. They might feel intimidated to speak up and afraid to challenge or disappoint other film students or even film instructors. For example, IC work can be as nuanced as ensuring that a kiss only lasts five seconds, if that was the agreed-upon duration, and if it begins to extend for longer than those five seconds, the IC needs to stop the shot. Having a student from the class, who may have made several productions with the same crew, puts that student in an uncomfortable role and undermines their ability to serve as an IC. It sets up a chance of coercion, divides loyalties, creates an incentive to cut corners on agreed-upon scenes, and generally diminishes the advocacy for the actor.

**Introduce in Small and Appropriate Steps.** To know an appropriate level for introducing IC work to classrooms, faculty should consider the same factors they would look for in preparing for any course: their students' current level of knowledge and experience. It is extremely valuable to introduce appropriate IC lessons at the "101" level (ideally, across all introductory production courses in a program) as it sets beginning students up to develop consent-based values and culture from the moment they make their first student films. Faculty might introduce IC work in varying steps, such as:

- Introductory undergraduate courses might start with a discussion and some of the boundary-setting lessons described below.
- Senior student productions, thesis/capstone films might go much further, with script reviews, workshopping scenes, possibly drafting intimacy riders, and working with professional ICs.
- MFA courses also should use script reviews and workshop scenes, and definitely should draft intimacy riders, just as they would use a contract for their actor or location. They also should hire professional ICs and otherwise bring their productions in line with industry practices.
- Students whose films depict more graphic or advanced intimate and nude scenes are encouraged to hire a professional IC, just as they would hire a professional pyrotechnics expert, stunt performer, or animator if that level of expertise is required.

If students do not have resources for hiring professionals, this guide sketches out other recommendations to support actor safety and consent below.

**Do Not Gender The Job.** It is also vital to not "gender" the role, that is, to expect that this role is best suited for women-identifying students or to primarily serve women-identifying actors. Many in this growing field advocate that IC roles and creating a consent-based culture are the responsibility of everyone on set. The same principles described in other EDIT Media materials, about switching crew roles during film and media classes to ensure maximum participation and equity, also apply to IC work. While the role of directors and producers is apparent, cinematographers, gaffers, PAs, and all other crew also have a role to play. Broad participation is important to improving set culture.

## LIMITATIONS

While the professional IC field has finally started to become established, this field is just starting to materialize into classes, certificate programs, and other types of institutional education in higher education. This guide is a starting point to foster that development for film and media courses. There can be contradictions in practices, and instructors should use their best judgment in integrating these concepts.

The most appropriate use of this guide is to lead to an ongoing discussion among film and media faculty and staff about how to apply safety concepts to our classrooms. Faculty who wish to go further than the limits of this guide are encouraged to seek out the most current information, training programs, resources, and articles. The authors encourage instructors to work with their University's office in charge of sexual harassment prevention and student life and coordinate with broader campus protocols and guidelines around sexual harassment.

## CLASSROOM GUIDE TO TEACHING INTIMACY COORDINATION

Intimacy coordination work is grounded in the Five Pillars, which we have applied to film and media pedagogy in this guide. They are:

### 1. CONTEXT — Why does the Scene Require Intimacy or Nudity?

The first act of an IC is to review the script, and the first question is to ask how nudity or intimacy advances the story. How is the creative goal of the scene achieved through a nude or intimate scene? It is essential to say that the IC's goal is not to judge or remove the nudity but to help everyone fully understand its role in the scene. The goal is to create genuine human experience on screen, in a sex-positive and body-positive way, which is comfortable and within personal boundaries for the actor and achieves the emotional content of the director's vision.

Particularly in a student setting, it is worth considering several options to achieve the creative goals. An actor may be perfectly comfortable filming a scene in a bathing suit or their underwear. They also may not feel the scene merits much disrobing or prefer to wear a robe over a bathing suit. Or, they might prefer to put the robe on and take it off for dramatic impact at various points in the scene. Context is critical so that actors in the scene understand the nudity or intimacy as part of a larger story and carry out their roles appropriately.

It is also critical that conversations around context occur prior to casting so the production can cast actors who are comfortable with what the role requires without coercion. With the understanding of the intimate scene(s) established from the moment of casting, the actor, director, and IC can work together to establish the context for the nudity or intimacy. The IC helps establish what happens before and after the intimate scene. The actor, director, and IC stage the scene, so the nudity or intimacy is in proportion and lasts an agreed-upon duration. It is important to note that actors can revoke consent at any time, based on various factors, and part of the IC's role is to continually check in with the actor(s) as production proceeds. It should go without saying that if the production does not follow the agreed-upon limitations, the actor(s) can also revoke consent.

### Potential Class Lessons:

1. Have students do a close review of a script of a nude or intimate scene. It could be an original script from a student in the class or an industry script from a well-known film or television show. Ask them to state clearly how the nudity or intimacy advances the scene. If they were going to rewrite it, how would they do that, and why?
2. Verbalizing the goal of nudity or intimacy is important for directors. For example, is it a first date scene, and shows a growing sense of connection? Is the goal to show vulnerability? To celebrate the body? Students can practice describing the scene's motivations, considering options, and verbalizing their choices.
3. What happens before and after the intimate scene? How do these other sequences establish the creative goal of the scene? For example, in a film about body acceptance, if the actor wears heavy clothes at the beginning of the film, it makes sense to have a scene where they disrobe in front of a mirror. The creative goals and staging of this scene are very different from the first date scene.
4. There are many options other than complete disrobing. For example, some actors might want to limit the scene to showing an arm, shoulder, leg, or back. Discuss the levels of nudity and how the scene feels different if the actor fully disrobes in front of the mirror, compared to the actor just taking their shirt off. How much room does the script or set design allow for experimenting with different levels of nudity, touching, and choreography of the scene, and with varied types of lighting, such as silhouettes, low lights, or indirect lighting?

## 2. COMMUNICATION — Transparency at All Stages of Production.

Pre-production discussions set a tone for open, honest, and regular communication about all aspects of the intimate scene(s). This communication includes dedicated rehearsal of the scene, a detailed discussion of choreography and staging, agreements about props that will be provided, such as pillows to put between actors, clothing options, and how clothes or blankets will be arranged. Other things that need to be part of these conversations are the IC's role on set, the number of crew in the room, the number of rehearsals. In *Staging Sex*<sup>7</sup>, the authors discuss having "fences," or physical boundaries where they do not want to be touched, and "gates," which are circumstances in which they might consent to be touched in those particular areas given the scene's context. Pre-production discussions should include talking about these boundaries.

The Five Pillars also state that pre-production conversations should detail avenues to report harassment. The SAG-AFTRA sexual harassment reporting guidelines back this up. On a student film set, departments should consider what avenues students have to report issues. Ideally, these should be people within and outside of the instructor's home department. (See the "Reporting" section below for more suggestions.)

### Potential Class Lessons:

- Create a variety of scenarios, again using scripts from students or a produced film or television series script. Have students talk through the choreography and staging. What kind of props were used? What could have been done to improve the scene?
- Refer to guides such as *Staging Sex* for detailed role-play exercises. One suggested group activity is to practice saying "no." In small groups, students ask each other where they can be touched. The goal is to say "no," create a boundary, then suggest an acceptable option. For example, one student asks "Can I touch your shoulder?" and another answers "No. But you can touch my elbow." Students do not need to actually do the touching — the goal is to become comfortable saying "no" and redirecting the other person to an acceptable place.
- Discuss "closed sets" options, which use the minimum possible crew. Who would be needed? Why? Ask students to discuss suitable communication methods between actors, directors, and IC and between directors, IC, and crew. How will the crew know the limits and plans?
- Find articles about current television shows that use ICs on set and discuss set dynamics and scene staging. One good example is actress Emilia Clarke's very open discussion in the press of how her co-star Jason Momoa advocated for her on the *Game of Thrones* set; for example, he insisted the production provide her a robe. What other real-life examples can students find?

## 3. CONSENT — Ensure Actors and Crew Understand Exactly What Will Happen.

One of the original writers of the Five Pillars stated that part of her motivation stemmed from seeing actors on stage "go rogue" by adding intimacy to scenes when it had not been rehearsed nor was in the script, and by going beyond pre-established boundaries. In a professional setting, an IC would go over every scene in the script, review it with the actors, and establish their personal boundaries for physical contact, touching, kissing, duration of contact, and every other scene detail. This would take place for all actors involved in the scene.

Another aspect of consent is the closed set. Quite common in the professional world, closed sets are a valuable and simple tool and limit the crew members to the absolute minimum needed to ensure the actor's comfort level. Limiting crew — or selecting crew members whom the actors feel most comfortable with — is an excellent option for students. Student directors and producers may often also have many options for people to operate cameras and work on productions. If they feel one particular person or group of people are the most appropriate crew members to work on a closed set, they can ask those students to serve on the closed set even if they are not the primary cinematographer or crew for the rest of the film.

**Create an intimacy rider.** Another tool to introduce to students is the "Intimacy Rider," which is becoming increasingly common for actors to have as part of their contracts. While in the professional world, these are specific agreements that detail the actors' limits and preferences as part of their contract, they simply are a written record of everything the actor and director agreed on and a simple and effective method for students to clarify their plans. An excellent prelude to having a conversation with the actual cast member is to do mock negotiations in class.

### Potential Class Lessons:

- Send students back to the scripts again. This time, either have them work with their intended actors or have one group of students take on the actor's side.
- Have the "actor" students discuss the scene and level of comfort and consent. If desired, the instructor can provide "character bios" with suggested limits, and the students can discuss each character's potential boundaries. For example, if one character sketch is for a 14-year old female cast in a role as a teen rock star, what kinds of boundaries should her contract delineate? How are those different from an adult cast as a rock star, for example, a 35- to 45-year old

experienced actor? What, if anything, should be different if an actor is male-identifying, female-identifying, or gender non-conforming?

- If the student has already cast their actors, consider breaking into small groups to discuss the production step-by-step.
- Provide students with a worksheet of questions and ask them to hand in detailed responses. For example, for the “first date” scene, will it be filmed in a car? A living room? A bedroom? Outdoors at a park? Will there be extras? Will they be alone? Who will make the first move? How will they touch each other, where (specifically), for how long? Who will take off what items of clothing? For how long will they kiss until the director calls “cut”? Does the actor get to review the scene at the final cut stage in post-production?
- Have students draft an intimacy rider that details the actors' comfort level, understanding of what will be performed on screen, which crew will be filming the scene, and the agreements on what will be in the final film.

#### 4. CHOREOGRAPHY — What Goes Where, with Whom, and How.

The rehearsals will help determine choreography that is comfortable for all actors. During choreography, the IC helps the actors discuss where to place hands: the small of the back versus the buttocks, the outside of the thigh, a shoulder, etc. They also can help stage by looking at the camera and suggesting close-ups and camera composition that allow actors to have all touch be within their comfort zone. This phase also introduces student-accessible props like skin-toned underwear, jockstraps, strapless bras, bathing suits, pillows or heavy blankets to place between actors and all other props that help actors feel comfortable and free in the scene, though actors are fully clothed during rehearsals.

This choreography is meticulously detailed, and all changes to the choreography need to be approved by the intimacy coordinator. Industry standards are that actors have the right to revoke consent if the choreography changes without their consent to those changes. The director must communicate this choreography to the cinematographer, ensure the camera crew is part of the planning, and that the actor is comfortable with the entire crew.

#### Potential Class Lessons:

- Return to workshopping scripts and scenes. How were camera angles and staging part of creating the mood and achieving the creative goals of the film? What options are there for different angles? How do they feel different? How would they help the actor and director?
- Camera composition can include close-ups versus wide shots, overhead or low-angle shots versus eyeline or medium shots, which can help maintain the creative vision and enhance the actor's comfort and safety. Experiment with a variety of angles to create unique images that keep the mood.
- Workshop one scene in class — ask students to develop three to five different potential ways to stage the scene.
- Conduct internet searches for relevant props and ways to stage scenes with the minimum physical touch.

#### 5. CLOSURE — Back to Reality.

Good actors bring their whole self to the job. Intimate scenes require a deep level of exposure emotionally as well as physically. The Five Pillars suggest that actors involved in rehearsing and performing intimate scenes develop a closing moment or ritual to help them end the work and transition back to being themselves. For students, this technique can help non-professional actors come out of character. Similarly, students might also find it valuable to create an “opening moment.”

#### Potential Class Lessons:

- What are some ways the cast can “open” the set and “close” the set? Is there a brief ritual or moment the cast can conduct to enter into the world of the show?
- How can they also involve the crew in this collective ritual?
- Should the director guide the entire group by reading a statement to open the door to their collective journey? Is it a poem? A commitment to working together? Should someone other than the director read this statement?
- Have students research acting theories like the Meisner Technique, Stanislavsky and Strasberg methods, and other techniques to learn some methods professional actors use to enter and exit characters. Very important, students should explore how actors de-role as well as how they get into character. What are some typical individual and collective activities to open and close scenes?



## IC WORK AND PRODUCTION PHASES

Evolving standards about intimacy and nudity on set are part of every stage of production. This section maps the stages of production to aspects of the IC role.

### Casting:

- Casting announcements should be very clear about nudity and intimacy and should specify whether the role includes a specific sexual act(s), kissing, sexual violence, nudity, or something else.
- Directors should never ask someone to take off their clothes during an audition.
- Introduce any requirements for an intimacy rider.
- IC and directors discuss boundaries in broad strokes, possibly with a shortlist of actors.
- If actors are auditioning together, boundaries should be established between the actors.

### Pre-production:

- Script review, negotiation and discussion of nudity and intimate scenes.
- Choreography of scenes with IC, actors, and director.
- Detailed establishment of boundaries, scenes to be filmed with closed sets, and crew members.
- Planning and acquiring props and wardrobe.
- Planning days the IC is on set.
- Planning the final cut review (if part of the contract).
- Communication of plans to intended crew members.

### Production:

- IC on set on planned days, checking in with actors and supervising scenes of intimacy.
- Using planned choreography, props, and crew.
- Filming scenes with closed sets, minimal crew, and supporting the actor on set.
- Intervening during filming if necessary.
- Documenting when anything does not go according to the agreed-upon plan. If this occurs, a report should be sent that evening to production detailing how the situation was addressed or resolved, including the plans for the following day's scenes.

### Post-production:

- ICs coordinate with actors, directors, and editors or post-production coordinators to check the final film to ensure it aligns with the agreement.

## CLASSROOM ACCOUNTABILITY

Once we have introduced these pillars and approaches and students are putting them into action, how do instructors ensure students follow these protocols? The simple answer is the same way we ensure that students use prop guns and not real guns - campus and community rules, and having confidence that no student would bring a real gun to a film shoot. However, that is not a complete answer, nor is it authentic to the reality and the far more complicated history and context of nudity and intimacy on screen.

## REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Part of building a consent-based film set and classroom is to establish responsibility to others. To support students to build this consent-based culture, classroom lessons that create peer accountability elevate communication, group work, and responsibility.

One option is to combine the IC core concept of consent with bystander intervention strategies, which foster an inclusive film set regardless of the content of the filmed scene. Bystander intervention training is a much broader approach to address conflict, harassment, and violence. There are many excellent resources to explore these principles, such as the training organization Hollaback!. In fact, some universities are already applying bystander intervention to film education.

Another approach is that students in group projects provide grades for each other. The average of this grade constitutes the participation, professionalism, or a portion of the assignment grade. The class can also create a student contract about consent and how to withdraw consent, which could be discussed and agreed-on by the class. This contract could include the consequences for students who do not maintain professional standards or who do not fulfill their responsibilities. While group projects are notoriously troubled by varying degrees of participation or professionalism, the sensitive nature of filming an intimate scene means that the consequences are even higher. Engaging students in feeling that they have set the terms of their community agreement is one way to encourage them to respect those boundaries and act in a community-minded way.

## REPORTING INCIDENTS

Violations of consent in filming intimacy and nudity have the potential to violate campus codes of conduct or even the law. Given that production classes take place within a campus environment and that students use cameras, lights, microphones, and other gear loaned from the department, how do film and media departments build accountability into this process? How do we ensure that production sets are an extension of campus culture and follow the same protocols?

The following suggestions to address this evolving area were compiled from typical practices at colleges and universities and from film and media instructors who are actively practicing and teaching IC in their classes.

1. Check with your campus Title IX officer. Know the rules are specific to your campus regarding Title IX and sexual harassment. Make sure that you are in communication with your Title IX officer and in compliance with the college or university policies
2. If the film is going to be shot in a residential hall, check with the campus authorities to discuss this with them. A Residential Hall Advisor might be an excellent ally for students.
3. Reporting in the professional world follows the hierarchy of a production set — the director, then the producer, then the executive producer, and so on. On a student film shoot, the producer might be the director's best friend. Students need other accountability structures, ideally a trusted faculty member and others outside of faculty members. The reporting guidelines should provide at least one faculty member who is not the instructor teaching their course. Talk to your department Chair, your Dean or Provost, and other instructors about who would be a neutral and trusted departmental contact, as well as someone students could contact outside of your department.
4. If your department has production or administrative staff, they might be excellent choices to include in the reporting hierarchy.
5. If students hire professional actors who are members of SAG-AFTRA (or another union), they are required to follow the rules of that union. For example, there is already a clear process for SAG Indie agreements. SAG-AFTRA and other unions have created incident reporting portals on their websites, which include legal resources, union contacts, mental health resources, and ways to report anonymously. Ensure that the entire cast and crew know this portal and have those numbers.
6. If your university or college maintains a similar portal for reporting campus incidents, contact the office managing those reports. Is that portal an option for students to use for reporting violations of consent during a film or media production?
7. Whichever reporting structure you choose, all actors, the IC, and all crew members need to have a one-sheet for reporting provided to them. It should include contact info for the director and producer, relevant faculty members, campus Title IX coordinators, and other campus authorities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON INSTITUTION SIZE AND RESOURCE

Many colleges and universities have limited resources and few faculty, staff members, grad students, or theater students with IC training. In these programs, students do not regularly hire outside people such as stunt coordinators or animal wranglers. Students might work on tiny or even one-person crews to make their productions.

For smaller programs, options are still available. Departments should create tiered suggestions for handling incidents related to consent issues, including contact information for campus resources, security, and Title IX officers. For schools with graduate programs or production-office staff, they might be good options for neutral third parties.

If students do not have the funding to hire a professional IC, the best alternative is for student directors to encourage the actor to recruit a neutral party to accompany them as an advocate. This should be a friend or ally of the actor, not another film student. As an advocate for the actor, it is essential that this person be an outside third party who has no risk of being intimidated by the situation or pressured by the production crew to ignore the established protocols.

Another choice for students who cannot afford professional ICs is to recruit someone from outside their film class to serve this role. Ideally, this is a graduate student, another faculty member, an RA or campus officer, or a staff member. It should be someone with no gain from the production, not a friend of the crew or directors, and no vested interest in the film department. Ideally, it would not be another undergraduate student.

## CONCLUSION

Award-winning filmmaker and Professor Marco Williams, in speaking about production culture, noted "I think this is a moment for media educators to accelerate transformation... After all, we are interacting with the educators, the creators of tomorrow. We have a responsibility to pay it forward, if you will."<sup>8</sup> He was speaking about the need to adopt anti-racist programs within film and media academic departments. This thoughtful and wise statement applies equally to many types of contemporary shifts, including the development of consent-based production sets.

Movements like #MeToo and #OscarsSoWhite have resulted in significant changes behind the scenes, including new members to the Academy, new production companies, and new production executives. It is no surprise that, following these changes, practices in the production of creating films, television programs, and other media are following suit and developing new standards. It is a perfect moment for media educators to accelerate transformation in all ways, including adding IC practices to the classes, syllabi, readings, and course protocols.

Williams asked: "How do we create a space for full participation? ...This is not one thing — it's about everything." As the field of intimacy coordination develops in the professional world, it yields many valuable lessons about consent-based practices and how instructors can foster the creation of safe spaces on film and media sets and the transforming the culture of film and media production.

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