Mics:

- Know your mics and when to use them. Know its transduction method, its pickup pattern, and be cognizant of when and where to use a certain type of mic (lav, shotgun, etc.)
- Always reduce vibration (remember sound is vibration and pressure) on mic. Shockmount is a must!
- Reduce pressure to the mic using a windscreen, windshield, windsock, blimp, etc. This will cut out wind or other movement in air pressure picked up by the mic.
- With a shotgun mic point it directly at the sound source, but, because it has some rear sensitivity, don’t point it away from the noise (it will pick it up if its source is directly behind the mic). In most instances, have talent face the noise and angle the mic to try and not pick it up from behind. Shotguns mimic the perspective of the camera so use them to create the most natural dialog sound. These should be 18”-36” away from talent.
- Avoid tension wherever connections are made. If you have a cable pulling on the back of the mic that’s bad. Leave some slack. With a lav make a loop to keep the cable from pulling at the back of the mic.
- Rain: Use a blimp with hogs hair on the outside of the blimp. Wrap the mic itself inside a non-lubricated condom; make sure to include the connection to the cable before you tie it off. Avoid pointing at the ground as you will pick up rain drops in the puddles. See me for clarification here but note that the Senn 416 is a great mic in adverse conditions.

Booming:

- **Boom Op tips:**
  - Wear quiet clothes
  - Take off rings
  - Avoid hard soled shoes or squeaky ones. Work in your socks if you have to or lay a sound blanket down to walk on.
  - Handle the pole gently. Don’t grip tightly.
  - Make sure that connection are tight. Sometimes XLRs get loose over time. A temporary fix is to use gaffing tape to secure them; let us know if a cable connection is loose.
- **Boom Positions:** The front hand is the “fulcrum” point and the back hand steers and moves the pole.
  - H
  - Lazy H
  - Crucifix
  - One-Handed
- **Scooping:** If you have overhead obstructions like a ceiling or camera angles the prohibit overhead booming, hold the mic from below pointing up at the actor (must be from the knees upwards). Because you cannot get as close the mouth, you will get a muddier tone of the voice, so it’s not as ideal as overhead booming.
- **Cueing:** Get the mic as close the sound source as possible without dipping into the
frame line. Aim the mic between the upper chest and mouth of the actor (lobing) not at the mouth or at the ground. To establish the frame line, working with the DP/AC dip the mic into the frame and pull it out until the DP/AC tells you it's out of frame. Note this height using any reference in the room or use gaffers/blue paper tape. HUG the FRAME! It may help to put white gaffers tape at the end of the windscreen to help keep it out of frame (Note that if you're shooting for cinemascope if you keep the mic out of the frame and maybe it slightly dips in the cropmarks will cover this in post).

- If there is rehearsal, be there. Pay attention during blocking. If there are floor marks for actors to hit, be aware of them.

- **Boom moves:**
  - Cue, Raise, Swing, Follow, Pivot
  - Avoid pointing the Shotgun directly away from the noise if possible. Angle at 30 degrees and angle that reduces background noise behind the talent (they effectively block much of it).
  - If you can, rest as much as possible. If you have a 90 degree XLR connected to the bottom of your boom pole you can rest (let me stress rest) it on your foot (not on the ground). Do NOT lean on this!!!
  - Look for shadows you cast before filming. Try to boom from the opposite side of the key light! If you cannot avoid overhead shadows, try scooping. Also, does your boom reflect into glasses on the talent or other glass on set?
  - If talent has lines and they turn away from the camera and thus the mic, consider using two mics. If not, you may be fine as it will keep the perspective.
  - In some cases you may boom from behind the talent with the mic pointing at them (i.e. they are looking out over a cliff or deck with their back to the camera delivering dialog).

**Recording:**

- Always keep an eye on your levels (briefly). If necessary, temporarily hold the boom with one hand an manipulate the gain with the other.
- You can also move the mic further or closer to deal with different levels between actors. If you have two actors and one is much louder, move the mic closer to the softer speaking actor to balance the signal. You want to use your eyes to monitor the position of the mic!
- Allow for headroom. On your field mixer keep your average dialog peak levels around -10dB or in that area. This will allow for sounds almost 200% louder before clipping.
- Avoid gain staging when using the field mixer to a recording device. You want to have the highest level downstream (field mixer). Compensating upstream will cause additional noise in the recording.
- **Monitors:** Headphones isolate the recordist from all the other sounds in the environment. Use your headphones ONLY to listen to the signal: is it balanced and is it clean? You set signal levels and monitor them with the VU meters; the headphones are not about how much sound but how good it sounds.
- Get a **wild track** if you can. These are lines of dialog recorded without the camera rolling on set. This will give you clean line of dialog to edit in during post. If you have time, grab some. The boom should also pick up sounds like doors closing and some prop manipulation, but if you can try and record any SFX while on location (make sure to slate them using the mixer).
Planting:
- Lavs, shotguns, and cardioids can all be used as plant mics.
- Use gaffing tape to secure cables and to hide them
- Could be hidden behind props on set, taped to a visor in the car or shifter, doorways, closets, in cabinets, etc.

Some basic rules on Set:

1. Get 30 seconds of room tone on any location. Do this as first shot on set if possible. (Write TONE in the “take” section on the slate.)
2. Be careful with the boom pole. You can hurt people and yourself. Never rest it against a wall unless you retract it. When you’re coming through the set with the pole say “boom coming through.”
3. Check your levels all the time and listen for unwanted noise!
4. Check all your equipment before you leave Room 18. Bring fresh AA batteries; I would buy a 12 pack and just keep it with you in case, but grab extra AA rechargables from Room 18.