

USC SCA CTPR 538      INTERMEDIATE PRODUCING    FALL 2014  
 Section: 18650 (2 Units)

Adjunct Professor: **Tim Marx**

Email: tmarx@usc.edu

Phone: 818 399-0272 cell

SA: **Xavier Neal-Burgin**

Email: quethelights@gmail.com

Phone: 205 516-2552

Day/Time: <b>Mondays 7pm-10pm</b> Room: <b>SCA 255</b> Office Hours: By Appt
--

### COURSE DESCRIPTION and OUTLINE

#### OVERVIEW

Intermediate Producing (CTPR 538 – 18650) is an in depth examination of the role of the producer in motion picture, television and new media production. The course will examine the creative producing process behind the initiation and selling of a concept, funding the production, and the practical processes of casting, staffing, scheduling, budgeting, overseeing the shoot, post production and marketing. It will explore the differences between a Producer, Executive Producer, Line Producer, and Co-Producer. The emphasis will be on current real world practices, focusing on developing skill sets that are essential for successful producers.

#### COURSE GOALS

- Develop an understanding of the fundamental relationships between the Producer and the myriad other collaborators necessary for success: studio, network and web executives, independent funders, writers, directors, senior creative craftsmen, technical crew and marketing professionals.
- Develop fundamental knowledge and skills in the areas of line producing: scheduling and budgeting, leadership techniques, mediation and negotiating skills, and developing proper creative sensitivity.
- Establish standards of quality and ethical conduct to guide career choices.

#### PROJECTS and ASSIGNMENTS:

- Each week one student will present an in depth report on interesting and relevant news from a variety of entertainment news sources.
- Each week one student will present our guest speaker to the class, having done the proper research on our guest and talking with him/her beforehand.
- Each student will schedule and budget a half hour and a one hour television production.
- Final Project: Each student will develop a final project for development and presentation. These projects will range from full development of a viable, real world production to a full in-depth breakdown and analysis of an existing production.

- Each student will keep an ongoing journal and/or lists of ideas/concepts they have learned and developed throughout the course.

### RESEARCH AND READING MATERIALS

It is fully expected and required that each student maintain an ongoing effort to stay current with industry news. These sources are constantly changing and the class as a whole will develop an up to date list of resources..

**Each student must have their own copy of Movie Magic (or EP) Budgeting and Scheduling programs.** These were either provided to the student during their first year at SCA or will be made available for purchase at a steep student discount.

### GRADES:

CTPR 538 is graded on a letter grade basis. Grades will be based on both subjective and objective judgments. Intelligence, participation, clarity, generosity and effort are all looked for traits indicative of a growing mastery of the producer's role. Success is predicated on an energetic and ongoing interaction between all members of the class. Tardiness and unexcused absences will have a negative impact on your grade. If you must miss class, call your SA as soon as possible and always before class begins.

Grade weighting:

Class Participation: 20%

Class Presentations: 15%

Budgets & Schedules: 25%

Journal: 20%

Final Project: 20%

### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or the TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301, and is open 8:30am-5:00pm Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

## COURSE OUTLINE:

### **GUEST SPEAKERS:**

Throughout the course we will have guest speakers visit the class to share their knowledge and experiences. Each of them is a professional producer, writer, director, executive, designer, AD, or UPM - in other words a senior creative member of a production team. The exact speaker schedule will be announced during class, subject to change based on the guests' own production schedules.

One student will be assigned to each speaker as their "ambassador", responsible for making their travel and parking arrangements, researching their career, and introducing them to the class. Even though the ambassador has the primary responsibility to research our guest's career, each and every student is expected to have done the same research before that week's class.

#### **Class #1      Monday Aug 25**

Course Overview. Review syllabus. Establish class protocols.

What it really means to be a producer in the entertainment world of 2014. Who are the real producers? What does it require, both professionally and personally, to be successful at all the required producer tasks.

Skills: How to get things done. Establishing priorities, making lists, following through.

Intro of television script that will be the basis of scheduling/budgeting exercises.

Review scheduling breakdown and scheduling tasks.

#### **Holiday      Monday Sept 1 – NO CLASS – LABOR DAY HOLIDAY**

Students are expected to use this week off to complete scheduling breakdown of script.

#### **Class #2      Monday Sept 8**

Topics: How to select your class project: intention and goals, defining your markets, the juggling act, creating substance from nothing, planning the pitch.

Scheduling and breakdown review of script.

#### **Class #3      Monday Sept 15**

Financing the production – 2014 realities, where to shoot? = tax incentives/rebates, choosing which path to pursue, investor packages. The all-important Option Agreement. With guest speaker: **TBA**

#### **Class #4      Monday Sept 22**

Working with the casting director, assembling the production team, what does the producer do during prep.

Scheduling/Budgeting focus– using the shooting schedule to build the budget.

Inside the numbers – how they relate to the flesh and blood cast and crew the producer has to lead through a complicated production. Budgeting tricks/shortcuts/pitfalls.

With guest speaker: **TBA**

**Class #5 Monday Sept 29**

Inside Line Producing: maintaining the overview, providing leadership, determining priorities, getting caught in the middle, taking the blame, delivering a hit. Working with the writer, the director relationship, maintaining creative influence during the shooting period.  
With guest speaker: **TBA**

**Class #6 Monday Oct 6**

Scheduling and Budgeting – applying finishing structure to the budget based on schedule and all budget parameters. Learning how to create and read a fully realized professional budget – no matter what the size of the production. It's all the same at all levels of productions.  
With guest speaker **UPM - tba**

**Class #7 Monday Oct 13**

Running the set, working with the ADs and other producers, taking care of the actors. Making the day and adjusting when things go wrong.  
With guest speaker **AD - tba**

**Class #8 Monday Oct 20**

Producing for multi-platforms: mobile, gaming, social media, next media  
With guest speaker **TBA**

**Class #9 Monday Oct 27**

The network perspective – producing for network and cable television – what do the executives look for in pitches, creative producers, writers, line producers.  
With guest speaker **TBA**

**Class #10 Monday Nov 3**

Marketing; getting through the hardest part – a disappointing distribution result. How can the producer influence how the product is sold. Knowing some of the obtuse accounting procedures that can disappoint even the most successful production.  
With guest speaker **TBA**

**Class #11 Monday Nov 10**

Class content TBD based on student's interest to dig deeper into previous subjects. Final meetings with Professor to review final project presentations.

**Class #12 Monday Nov 17**

Final project presentations Group 1

**Class #13 Monday Nov 24**

Final project presentations Group 2

**Class #14 Monday Dec 1**

Semester review, voting on final presentations, application of lessons learned to real world producing.