USC SCA CTPR 538 INTERMEDIATE PRODUCING SPRING 2015
Section: 18650 (2 Units)

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Day/Time: Mondays 7pm-10pm Room: SCA 255 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.
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 SCHEDULE

All classes will be on Monday evening – 7-10pm.

Class dates Spring 2015:
1/12, 1/26, 2/2, 2/9, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/23, 3/30, 4/6, 4/13, 4/20, 4/27

There will be NO class on:
1/19/15 - MLK holiday, 2/16/15 – President’s Day, 3/16/15 – Spring Recess.

COURSE TOPICS TO BE COVERED

Producing Skills

Concepts of leadership
Earning respect
Do your homework to know as much as possible about what your colleagues need to get the job done
Working in an ETHICAL fashion with consistency
List making and prioritization of tasks
Understand production is a series of never ending problems to solve
Be consistent, fair and kind
Hold your ground when appropriate
Authority is taken, not given.

Interpersonal relationships
It’s all “who you know”
Collect people – they are the foundation of your life and work
Follow up with everyone and be open to new relationships
You will be judged on the passion and drive and commitment you bring
Be memorable - Never be boring

Special Project Development

Short description/ pitch – your elevator moment
Statement of why project is viable in today’s market
Potential buyers
Potential Brand partners
Who is the audience?
Option agreement elements
Production plan
  Creative partners
  Where will you produce this
  Budget and schedule for entire project - development thru delivery
Marketing plan
  References for your information that you can call upon in a pitch meeting
  Most important – bring your personality and passion to the project

Scheduling – using Movie Magic Scheduling
  Script breakdown procedures
  Scheduling concepts – prioritizing time allowed
  Balancing pages of work per day while considering what each scene requires
  Location, cast, sets and other considerations when scheduling
  Day out of Days forms
  Strip design, report design
  Knowing the script in all its details to activate your producer decision making powers

Budgeting – using Movie Magic Budgeting
  Work hours versus pay hours
  Working with the templates
  Setting up and inserting Globals
  Setting up and using Groups
  Setting up and applying Fringes
  Assigning tax credit/incentives to various line items
  Using the budget as a checklist for all your producer responsibilities
  Cost reporting – using the cost report to massage money from one category to another
  Using Globals and Groups to aide in figuring out “what if” scenarios
  For budgeting of series – prep, wrap, all series and amortization budgets

Options
  Getting an agreement in writing
    Option Period – amount of time
    Option Price – with extensions
    Extending the Option
    Pre negotiated purchase price
    Credits
    Sequels, remakes, other platforms covered
    What markets are covered
    Figuring out amounts and percentages to pay based on platform
    Force majeure, where adjudicated, warranties, indemnifications, assignment

Tax incentives / Tax Credits / Tax rebates
  Deciding where to shoot your production
    Comparing offers from competing locations
    What is a “qualified spend?”
    Procedure for receiving consideration – lottery, applications, etc
    Selling your credit – what are they worth?