USC SCA CTPR 538 INTERMEDIATE PRODUCING SPRING 2016
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.

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: 25%
Class Presentations: 20%
Budgets & Schedules: 30%
Final Project: 25%

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 SA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301, and is open 8:30am5:00pm 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 2016:
1/11, 1/25, 2/1, 2/8, 2/22, 2/29, 3/7, 3/21, 3/28, 4/4, 4/11, 4/18, 4/25, 5/2*tbd
There will be NO CLASS on: 1/18-MLK Holiday, 2/15-President's Day, 3/14-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
Budget and schedule for entire project - development through 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?

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct
Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards*https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* http://equity.usc.edu/ or to the *Department of Public Safety* http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems
A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.htmlprovides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* *http://emergency.usc.edu/*will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.