



**CTPR 410 THE MOVIE BUSINESS: FROM  
STORY CONCEPT THRU EXHIBITION**

**Section:** 18523

**Units:** 2

**Fall 2017 Syllabus**

**Thursday, 6pm-9pm**

**Location:** SCB 104

**Instructor:** Dan Lupovitz

**Office Hours:** Thursday 4-6pm, By Appointment

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## Course Description

Students will examine the Motion Picture Industry from story conception through script development, talent packaging, production, distribution and marketing. Students will evaluate and understand the roles played by the participants involved in creating a movie, such as writers, agents, studio executives, directors as well as those people involved with marketing and distributing a movie.

## Learning Objectives

To better understand the functions of the various players that are required to make a movie, and how they interface with the producer.

## Required Reading

The Movie Business Book, by Jason Squire Edition 4, available at USC bookstore.

## Description and Assessment of Assignments

Each week, students will be assigned reading from The Movie Business Book, for discussion the following week.

Term Project: The class will be divided into groups who will work together and:

1. Decide upon a name and a logo for their production company, which will, over the course of the term, invent a movie.
2. Decide upon an idea (original or remake), which could conceivably be turned into a successful contemporary movie. If it's a remake, present a synopsis of the original movie, it's history, and reasons why it would work with a contemporary audience. If it's an original project, prepare a strategy to sell the idea and develop its storyline further.
3. Choose a writer, director and principal cast.
4. Discuss strategy for financing the project: Studio, Independent or International.
5. Discuss possible budgets and locations of the physical production of the movie: NYC, LA, Georgia, New Mexico, Australia, UK.
6. Devise an overall marketing strategy to target an audience, attract an audience, prepare an ad campaign complete with poster and tagline, and possible release pattern for the finished movie.

## Grading Breakdown

Students will be graded on the following criteria:

1. Take-home midterm exam, 30 points (30%)
2. Two pop quizzes, 8 points each (16%)
3. Final Group Presentation, 30 points (40%)
4. Evaluation by their group peers, 5 points (5%)
5. Class participation, maximum 9 points (9%)

## Evaluation Criteria

1. Evidence of growth and understanding of material throughout the semester.
2. Ability to translate general concepts to specific examples and execute the ideas on class project.
3. Innovative, thorough and creative use of different ideas discussed in class.
4. The ability to work with others in a collaborative effort.

\* Students who miss three classes will have their grade lowered one unit.

\* Late paper/assignments/exams will be lowed 1 point for each week. For example, one week late an "A" becomes a "B", two weeks late an "A" becomes a "C".

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### AUGUST 24: INTRODUCTIONS

The Movie Business defined by the three types of movies: Studio, Independent, International  
Discussion of Term Project.

Class will divide into groups for term project.

**Assignment:** The Movie Business Book: Introduction, pages 1-15

Groups to decide on a name for their production company and create logo. The first step: Creating your identity.

**AUGUST 31: The Concept**

Discussion of assignment pages, and how to think about your idea in relation to the marketplace: is it strong enough to stand out?

**Groups Present:** Production Company names and logos.

**Guest Speaker:** Producer

**Assignment:** The Movie Business Book: The Entrepreneurial Producer, pages 16-29

Groups work on Project ideas, taking into account today's class discussion and great speaker.

**SEPTEMBER 7: The Producer**

Discussion of pages from assignment. How the Producer chooses/finds/evaluate their projects

**Groups Present:** Story ideas

**Assignment:** The Movie Business Book, The Screenwriter pages 55-66

Groups continue to refine Production Company names and logos, and prepare story ideas to be presented.

**SEPTEMBER 14: The Screenwriter**

Discussion of pages from assignment. How the screenwriter works with the Producer and Director.

**Guest Speaker:** Screenwriter

**Assignment:** The Movie Business Book: The Literary Agent, pages 66-77

Groups work on Screenwriters for term project.

**SEPTEMBER 21: Writing Deals and Literary Agents**

Discussion of pages from assignment, and Originals vs. Adaptations, Options vs. Commissions

**Groups Present:** Screenwriters

**Assignment:** The Movie Business Book, The Director, pages 30-42

Groups work on Directors for Project.

**SEPTEMBER 28: The Director**

Discussion of pages from assignment, and how the Director works with the Producer and Screenwriter

**Guest Speaker:** Casting Director

**Assignment:** The Movie Business Book, The Talent Agent, pages 67-77

Groups refine ideas and screenwriters for Project, and continue to work on Directors

**OCTOBER 5: Talent Packaging**

Discussion of pages from assignment, plus how the Producer works with the Casting Director and Talent Agents to package a project

**Groups Present:** Directors

**Assignment:** Take Home Mid-term Exam

**OCTOBER 12: How Should You Fund Your Movie?**

Discussion of assignment pages and identifying your movie as studio versus independent and the difference between how the two sectors function.

**Turn in completed Mid-term Exam**

**Guest Speaker:** Studio Executive or Indie Financier

**Assignment:** The Movie Business Book, A Chairman's Perspective, pages 139-147

Groups work on cast ideas for their Project.

- OCTOBER 19: International Productions and Co-Productions**  
 How do they work, how does an American Producer produce internationally and how do they differ from studio and indie productions.  
**Groups Present:** Cast  
**Assignment:** The Movie Business Book, Production Management, pages 223-243  
 Groups work on how their movie will be financed: studio, independent or international.
- OCTOBER 26: How Much Should Your Movie Cost And How To Decide On A Production Plan**  
 Discussion of assignment pages and how to figure out the correct budget for your movie and where to shoot it.  
**Guest Speaker:** A Journalist talks about how she's introduced to movies when they're ready to hit the marketplace with a particular emphasis on festivals and the awards season. What stands out in a crowded distribution field?  
**Assignment:** The Movie Business Book, Film Festivals and Markets, pages 312-326  
 Groups work on a production plan for their Project.
- NOVEMBER 2: How To Find The Audience For Your Movie**  
 Discuss assignment pages, and how festivals can help find a distributor or launch a movie with a distributor in place.  
**Groups Present:** Method of Financing  
**Assignment:** The Movie Business Book, Studio Distribution/Independent Distribution, pages 371-397  
 Groups continue to work on production plan and start thinking about what form distribution and marketing they want for their Project
- NOVEMBER 9: How to find the right distributor for your Project**  
 Discuss assignment pages and how to identify the right kind of distribution for your Project  
**Guest Speaker:** Marketing or Distribution Executive  
**Assignment:** The Movie Business Book, Motion Picture Marketing, pages 277-296  
 Groups work on distribution plan
- NOVEMBER 16: How should the distributor market to the right audience?**  
 Discuss how distribution and marketing work together to target the audience for your Project.  
**Groups Present:** Full creative package, finance plan and production plan  
**Assignment:** Groups work on marketing and distribution plan in preparation for final presentation.
- NOVEMBER 23: THANKSGIVING**
- NOVEMBER 30: Final Student Presentations: All creative elements, Financing and Production plans, Distribution and Marketing plans, including, but not limited to your strategy to target and attract your audience, a poster and a tag line.**

## 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/departments/departments-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](http://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.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html) provides 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.

### Disruptive Student Behavior:

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.

**PLEASE NOTE:**  
**FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX**