

CTPR 522
SCA 245
REALITY TV - FROM PITCH TO PILOT
Scott A. Stone

Tuesday, 6:00pm - 8:50pm

Units: 2

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Scott's Office: (323) 860-8435 (see Scott for cell info)

Office Hours: 5:00 - 6:00pm Tuesday - before class booked in advance (or after class)

Course Description:

This course provides a comprehensive overview of the world of non-scripted or so called “reality” television. We will closely follow the real process of show development from creation and production to delivery of video presentations and sales material. IT is project-based, consisting of multiple pitches of original ideas from students, in class development of those ideas, class discussion with prominent guest speakers currently working in the industry, and production of “sizzle reels” for the projects.

Course Requirement:

Students create, develop and pitch original concepts for non-scripted TV shows. Each student must pitch multiple projects until one is chosen to present as their mid-term to a panel of reality packaging agents. The agents, along with the professor, identify the most viable projects. Those projects are further developed, “sizzle reels” and written treatments produced, and then pitched to a major network buyer as the final. Learning how to properly pitch is a big part of the final. For the final, students may work independently or in tandem with other students in the class but **all students are required to work on one or more final projects in come capacity.** Example will be shown in the first class.

Grading:

- Attendance 15%: Attendance will be taken every week. You may miss up to 2 classes over the semester. Showing up is key!
- Participation 15%: **Abundant** class participation is required from all students. Your grade will be affected accordingly.
- Mid-Term 30%: The mid-term consists of a verbal pitch of your idea to a panel of non-scripted packaging agents, along with a “sizzle reel” script and a show treatment.
- Final Project 40%: The final will be a pitch of your show to a network buyer. The presentation will include a verbal pitch, sizzle reel and a written treatment (ppt or otherwise). It will take place on the last regularly scheduled class (April 25th).

WEEK ONE - HOW DID WE GET HERE?

- The history of non-scripted - from radio's *Candid Microphone* to PBS's *An American Family*, and from *The Real World* to *Survivor*, *American Idol* and *The Real Housewives...The Voice* and *The Kardashians*.
- The current reality/docu landscape
 - Docu-Soap (*The Housewives*, *Keeping Up With The Kardashians*)
 - Ocu-Series (*Deadliest Catch*, *Restaurant Impossible*, *No Boundaries*)
 - Adventure Competition (*Survivor*, *Amazing Race*, *Naked and Afraid*, *Hunted*)
 - Process (*Project Runway*, *Master Chef*, *Face Off*)
 - Performance (*The Voice*, *Dancing with the Stars*)
 - Game (*Wheel of Fortune*, *Jeopardy*, *Family Feud*, *Match Game*)
 - Relationship (*The Bachelor*, *Married at First Sight*, *Are You The One?*)
 - Make Over/Lifestyle (*Millionaire Matchmaker*, *Say Yes to the Dress*)
 - Re-enactment (*Cops*, *Locked Up Abroad*, *Swamp Murders*, *Drunk History*)
 - Hidden Camera/Comedy (*Impractical Jokers*, *Billy on the Street*)
- Drawing the line - the moral compass of non-scripted TV

SHOW PITCHED - your version of the Sunday NY Times

WEEK TWO

- Show Pitches: your ideas

WEEK THREE - CASTING (plus a guest lecture)

- What does a reality casting director do? How to find your cast?
- What makes a good reality TV personality? Putting together an ensemble cast.
- Show Pitches: your ideas

Assignment - Interview someone VERY interesting that has to do with one of your show ideas.

WEEK FOUR - FORMAT BREAKDOWN

- Show Pitches: your ideas
- Share your interview
- Break down a show - act structure, creative flow, commercial breaks, cliff hangers

Assignment - beat out your show idea act-by-act

WEEK FIVE - WRITING A SIZZLE SCRIPT & TREATMENT/"LEAVE BEHIND": PART 1

- Show Pitches: your ideas
- Present your project and act breakdown to the class
- Writing a sizzle script and treatment

Assignment - write your script and treatment

WEEK SIX - WRITING A SIZZLE SCRIPT & TREATMENT/"LEAVE BEHIND": PART 2

- Practice Pitch

Assignment - Practice for the mid-term

WEEK SEVEN - MIDTERM: PITCH FEST (long class - we go until it's done)

- Each student pitched their best idea to a panel of agents
 - The agents review the ideas while the class waits for the results
 - Projects are chosen for further development

WEEK EIGHT

- Breakdown show concepts, review sizzle scripts, work on re-writes and production plan

Assignment - Gather "found video", record and cut VO, shoot material

WEEK NINE

- Review any material shot or 1st rough cuts
- “Leave Behind” Overview

Assignment - Write “Leave Behind” draft: rough cut

WEEK TEN - REVIEW MATERIAL

- Review leave behind draft
- Review shot material

WEEK ELEVEN - THE PITCH

- How does a pitch work?
- Practice Pitch

WEEK TWELVE - ROUGH CUTS

- Screen rough cuts and get notes

WEEK THIRTEEN - FINE CUT

- Screen fine cuts
- Guest showrunner gives notes

WEEK FOURTEEN - NO CLASS: FINALIZE PITCHES

WEEK FIFTEEN - FINAL PITCH

- Screen final projects for network executive(s): **Final**

Students with Disabilities:

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on 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 that the letter is delivered to the instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and open from 8:30AM - 5:00PM, Monday through Friday. You may contact DSP at (213) 740-0776.

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *Scampus*, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A:

<http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Communication Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

Attendance Policy

Attendance for ALL classes is mandatory. Students are expected to attend all classes. Students who are absent for more than twice the number of hours a class meets in one week (maximum absence limit), will normally receive a grade of "No Credit". For example, if a class meets four hours per week, a student who has more than 8 hours of total absences during the semester would receive a grade of "No Credit".

A student may be marked as absent for that hour at the discretion of a teacher if he or she arrived 15 minutes or later after the beginning of a class.

Students who go over the maximum absence limit may appeal their case to the Student Advisor. Such students should be prepared to show evidence of a legitimate excuse for every time they missed class (court documents, doctor's notes, etc.). Legitimate excuses include: medical emergencies, personal emergencies, family emergencies and required courtroom appearances. Picking up a relative at the airport or not being able to find a parking space are not considered emergencies.

Although students may receive "No Credit" for a course due to absences, they may still be released from their ALI class at the end of the semester if they have been able to demonstrate that they can fulfill the objectives of the course.

Any student who receives a grade of "No Credit" in to ALI courses will not be permitted to enroll in ALI classes in the future. This usually means that the student will have to leave USC due to the fact that he/she cannot fulfill the English requirement which is a condition of admission.