



USC **ANNENBERG**
School for Communication & Journalism

CMGT 547

Distribution of Recordings: Media, Retail and Online Channels

Fall 2013

Instructor: Keyvan Peymani and David Craig Section:
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Telephone: 310-266-1553 (cell) Days/Times: Tuesdays 6:30 - 9:20
Office hours: By appointment; email your request and please include topic.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will take you on a journey through the modern music industry. From the titanic changes in the basis of business models to the rise of participatory media culture and the increasing expectations of the consumers, there has never been a time in the history of the industry when so many forces have collided at once. Today, anyone can create and distribute content through myriad means. Likewise, consumers have multiple options available to them for accessing what they want, when they want it. The underlying scarcity of supply and unmet demand that the industry has depended upon for generations has shifted, and with it, the fundamental ways in which the companies behind the music we love earn revenue has been altered irrevocably.

This course will give you the basic understanding of the core business models that have driven the industry. Then, we will build on this understanding by exploring how these models have been altered along with the implications and the realities moving forward. We will have a particular focus on the internet and social media as well as on what new businesses are launching to take advantage of the changes. The fundamental exploration in this class is much broader than one industry. We will use the examples of what has happened in the music industry to imagine the future of content businesses and the core underpinnings of knowledge based economies.

This course requires commitment and curiosity. You will be asked to be diligent in your readings and proactive in your explorations of the news of the day. As such, a major component of this course will be your participation and your own exploration of materials, periodicals and sites to broaden your understanding of the key issues facing the music industry.

The course will culminate in a presentation of a topic of your choice that dives deeply into some aspect of the industry.

Career relevance

With the rapid changes occurring in the music industry, having a basic understanding of the landscape and monetization strategies is critical. Whether you choose to pursue a career at a major music company, a start-up, an independent label or as an artist, you will need to evaluate ideas and understand how they fit into the broader ecosystem that is the industry. This course will prepare you to think through and understand the key issues facing executives today. You will learn how companies function and the major ways in which revenues are generated. In addition, you will learn a framework for how senior executives and board members make decisions on new initiatives and many of the key questions you will need to answer when making a recommendation. It will prepare you to take roles on the business side of the industry or to approach the creative side with a perspective of economic underpinnings. This course intends to give you a basic foundation for your career in what is one of the most dynamic and rapidly changing industries.

COURSE GOALS

- To understand the basic landscape of the music industry
- To understand the key business models
- To become familiar with the disruptions that are occurring and the disruptive companies that are impacting the industry
- To learn how to develop, communicate and evaluate a recommended course of action
- To learn to work in a team environment and contribute to a final product
- To develop core competencies and work skills, including conducting research, writing professional papers, making state of the art presentations and developing networking skills

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Saul J. Berman, *Not for Free*, Harvard Business Review Press (2011)
- Jon Steel, *Perfect Pitch*, Wiley (2006)
- M. William Krasilovsky, Sidney Shemel, John Gross, *The Business of Music: The Definitive Guide to the Music Industry 10th Edition* (2007)
- Geoffrey Hull, Thomas Hutchinson, Richard Strasser, *The Music Business and Recording industry 3rd edition* (2011)
- Additional reading will be assigned throughout the course

COURSE GRADING and ASSIGNMENTS

5%	Class Participation
40%	Weekly Thought Pieces
55%	Final Paper and Presentation

Class Participation

Each student is expected to contribute to the learning environment. This can only be accomplished through your curiosity and your dialogue. I will note both the quantity, but much more importantly, the quality of your comments and questions in each class. We will also have a series of guest speakers. As such, you will be required to submit questions for our guest

speaker to me 1 day prior to class. I will go into detail to outline expectations for class participation.

Weekly Thought Pieces

Each week (please see schedule), in addition to the assigned readings, you are required to read industry and trade publications or websites and comment on the issues, experiments, or activities dominating that week's conversation. You will think through these real-time, real-world examples and write a two-page thought piece exploring and responding to them. We will begin every class session with a discussion of some of these. What this means is I will call on 2-3 people randomly every week to describe their thought piece and we will explore the topic together. This is a core part of the class as we will use the themes we see in the week's news to dive into the broader topics affecting the music industry. As such, please take these very seriously and spend time critically thinking about the issue.

The general guide is outlined below:

- Find an article about the music industry in the trades or websites covering the industry that you find interesting.
- The article must be from the week prior to the next class.
- Write a brief description (2-3 lines) of the central issue in the article.
- Make certain to cite where this article came from.
- Discuss why you find the issue interesting and what your opinion of the issue is.
- Be prepared to discuss your thought piece in class.
- These papers will be graded for both the quality of the writing and your analysis.
- If you will miss class, you are still required to submit a thought piece for the week or will have a 0 noted for that week's assignment.
- Here are a few sites you can explore each week, but you may choose from many others
 - digitalmusicnews.com
 - variety.com
 - hollywoodreporter.com
 - allthingsd.com
 - paidcontent.org
 - latimes.org

Final Paper and Presentation

The course will culminate in a final term paper and presentation on the topic of your choice. This will be broken down into several parts.

- 1) A written proposal for the topic you choose is due at the beginning of class on the fourth week. You will receive comments back on the fifth week and a final proposal is due at the beginning of class on the sixth week. Do not fall behind at this stage as students who do end up with unfocused or incomplete projects. This section is worth 5% of your final grade and will be judged on completeness and timeliness.
- 2) A presentation in PowerPoint or Prezi will be due the penultimate or the last week of class depending on whether you are in group A or group B. This presentation should contain the major points of your term paper and must be no longer than 15 minutes in length followed by a 5 minute question and answer period from me and your fellow classmates. The presentation should have the following parts
 - a. Introduction of the core topic
 - b. Your analysis of the industry as it relates to that topic
 - c. Your recommendations for what should be done
 - d. Q/A period

This presentation will be worth 20% of your final grade and will be judged in three areas - your ability to present clearly and stay within the 15 minute time limit (5% - face us, speak clearly, be prepared, practice your presentation and do not run over time), the organization and quality of the thoughts in the slides (10%) and how you handle the question and answer session (5%). You are not expected to become the ultimate expert of your topic, however, you should anticipate some of the questions that may arise and be prepared. A good tactic is to practice the presentation with a friend and at the end, let them ask you questions. Be prepared and create a few slides in the appendix that address the questions.

- 3) The final paper will be a roughly 20-page in depth exploration of the topic you choose with detailed and well-research recommendations and will be due the penultimate or the last week of class depending on whether you are in group A or group B. Again, I will describe what this means in class.
 - a. The paper will be worth 25% of your final grade
 - b. Suggested sections for your paper
 - i. Introduction of 4-7 pages covering the literature you have read, the topic itself and a framework for your explorations of the major issues
 - ii. 2-3 pages covering your major recommendations and findings
 - iii. 6-10 pages supporting and elaborating on your ideas
 - iv. 2-4 pages of concluding comments
 - v. Pages for your bibliography
 - c. As a rule of thumb, if you cannot fill 15-20 pages, you probably are not diving deeply enough into your topic. If you find you need more pages, you will not be penalized for going beyond 20 pages, however if you are finding yourself running

to 30 pages or beyond, you are probably not focusing your arguments tightly enough.

d. Grading

- i. Will be based on the quality of the writing, the strength of the analysis of the issue and the thoughtfulness of the recommendation.
- ii. All papers must conform to APA style and have properly cited sources. You are expected to conduct interviews with industry executives to inform your understanding of the issues and the recommendation you make.

YOUR BIO: (This will not be graded.)

- Go to Prezi.com, sign up for a free educational account, take the tutorial and get started.
- Use Prezi to create a show-and-tell piece about yourself. Include things like where you are from, what you have done, where you hope to go, what industries you have worked in and anything else you want to share.
- Use images, pictures, logos, video and limit your text as much as possible.
- This should be a fun way to introduce yourself to the class.
- Post the link to your Prezi on the class blog.
- This is due by Week 2 and you will present them to the class.

A Note on Term Papers and this class:

- Do not rely on just one or two sources. Part of the idea with this paper is to learn how to find out new things and enhance your learning experience. If you only site one or two sources, your grade will suffer for it.
- If you rely on only web sources, particularly Wikipedia, I will give you a mediocre grade at best. You are strongly encouraged to do real research and use multiple sources of information from the web, interviews, academic books, journals, popular books on your topic and other sources. Often times, students will express difficulty in finding a text on the topic they are exploring. This is almost always is due to framing your research improperly. Even the newest of ideas and trends could look like something that came before. You are encouraged to be creative and to use sources like Lexis/Nexis or the reference libraries.
- Do not delay on deadlines and do not procrastinate on your research.
- Do not try to minimize your involvement in class or the amount of work you put into this class. I realize that most of you are also working, but you should be seeking to get the most out of the program as well. In this class, as in life, you will get what you put into it.
- For topics for your final project, I am fairly flexible in what you can cover. The topic should be broad enough to allow good research, real thinking and in depth analysis, but narrow enough so that you can properly address it. Also, please make sure that your topic focuses in on the music industry and some aspect of how production, distribution, or business models are changing.

HOW I TEACH:

- I am a believer in the Socratic method of teaching and participatory learning. As such, I will guide you through this journey we will take through various issues facing the industry and will call on you to share your thoughts. I expect you to engage in the discussions in each class and to be curious. You will, in some respects, help lead part of the learning through your thought pieces and your questions of each other.
- This class is a real-world dive into the industry, and as such, the schedule and reading for this class may change depending on many factors including composition of the class, the current events driving the industry and the conversations we have.
- If there is a problem, please talk to me. If you need any help regarding this class or the topics we are covering, please talk to me. If anything is unclear, please talk to me. I cannot help you if you do not talk to me.

Late assignments/Emergencies: No late assignments will be accepted. If you have a legitimate and verifiable emergency that makes it impossible to turn in your assignment on time you must: (1) email me before the beginning of class the day the assignment is due to notify me of your emergency, (2) provide official proof (doctor's note or other evidence) and (3) arrange to email the assignment at a time to be determined.

Statement for 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 to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (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 Community 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/>.

All work you submit must be your own and you may not inappropriately assist other students in their work beyond the confines of a particular assignment. There is a no-tolerance policy for academic misconduct in this course! The minimum penalty for academic misconduct will be a failing grade (F) for the course - further academic and disciplinary penalties may be assessed.

SYLLABUS (Subject to Change)

Guest Speakers to be announced

WEEK	TOPIC	Assignment Due	Readings Due
1 08/27/13	Introductions	None	None
2 09/03/13	Classmates I & The Wave	1) Weekly Thought Piece 1 2) Your Bio in Prezi	1) Hull Ch 1, 2 2) Krasilovsky Ch 1
3 09/10/13	Classmates II & The Introduction of Recordings	1) Weekly Thought Piece 2 2) Your Bio in Prezi	1) Hull Ch 1, 2 2) Krasilovsky Ch 1
4 09/17/13	Classmates III & Radio and Recordings: New Opportunities and Tensions	1) Weekly Thought Piece 3 2) Final Paper Topic Draft	1) Hull Ch, 3-5 2) Krasilovsky Ch 14, 15
5 09/24/13	Radio and Recordings New Opportunities and Tensions	Weekly Thought Piece 4	1) Hull Ch 6-8 2) Krasilovsky Ch 33, 38
6 10/01/13	Growth in Times of Economic Constraints	1) Weekly Thought Piece 5 2) Final Topic Revision	1) Hull Ch 9-12
7 10/08/13	The Rise of Rock and Roll and Niche Markets	Weekly Thought Piece 6	1) Hull Ch 9-12
8 10/15/13	Beyond the Anglo-American Axis - Recording Goes Global	Weekly Thought Piece 7	1) Hull Ch 13 2) Krasilovsky Ch 20, 21
9 10/22/13	Refining your research	Weekly Thought Piece 8	1) Steel 2) Krasilovsky Ch 41
10 10/29/13	Old New Technologies: A History of Innovation	Weekly Thought Piece 9	1) Berman 2) Krasilovsky Ch 23-26
11 11/05/13	New Technologies: Where are We Going	Weekly Thought Piece 10	1) Krasilovsky Ch 37, 42
12 11/12/13	The Rise of DIY	Weekly Thought Piece 11	1) Krasilovsky Ch 8, 12, 22 http://www.topspinmedia.com/help/
13 11/19/13	Breaking as an artist	Weekly Thought Piece 12	Various articles from Digital Music News as assigned

14 11/26/13	Independent Work Session	Please use this time to work independently on your final projects	Steel
15 12/03/13	Final Presentation Group A	1) Group A Presentations Due 2) Group B Final Papers Due	Steel
16 12/10/12	Final Presentation Group B	1) Group B Presentations Due 2) Group A Final Papers Due	Steel