

# CMGT 574

## TELE-MEDIA: STRATEGIC AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

FALL 2015

*Updated 8/25/2015*

Room: ANN L116  
Day: Wednesdays  
Time: 6:30-9:20pm

Professors: Lisa Vebber  
Contact: [vebber@usc.edu](mailto:vebber@usc.edu)  
Phone: (213) 604-5819  
Office Hrs: Wed, 5-6:30pm (alternate times may be arranged via e-mail)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Better, affordable technology that is accessible to the masses has created a seismic shift in the entertainment industry, and it will never be the same. The business of television, even the very definition of what is considered television, has changed more in the last five years than in the previous 50. The biggest shift: Power and control moving from the big media companies to the consumer.

It seems like a great thing for consumers, right? Unfortunately, it's not so black and white. Every action has a consequence, and the decisions being made in television today will impact the business and the consumer for a long time.

To predict the future, we must understand the past. The first part of the semester will look at how the business worked for the last 50 years. We will learn how each sector makes money – broadcast and cable networks, cable companies and studios. Then we will learn about the issues facing the industry today, their impact on each sector, and use that knowledge to make predictions on how it will all shake out.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Students will be able to:

- analyze current and future entertainment industry issues using historical entertainment business models to generate strategies and programming (position paper)
- research and compare business models for various entertainment industries such as how a cable operator and a network make money (new media case studies)
- identify key issues and argue a position regarding current issues in the entertainment industry, such as net neutrality, bundling, etc that will impact the industry and their implications on the industry (position paper)
- develop an entertainment series concept to fit business models, including the concept, marketing, and distribution (group programming and distribution project)
- stay current on industry news in order to learn names, trends, and relevant vocabulary in preparation for interviews and the work world (blogs)
- conduct informational interviews with industry professionals/guest speakers to incorporate data into course papers and presentations (guest speakers/participation grade/group project source)

## PREVIOUS GUEST SPEAKERS

This course will expose the students to high-level professionals from many relevant areas of the entertainment industry. This provides an intimate setting for students to interact with these executives and is an invaluable networking opportunity. Previous classes have featured the following speakers:

- Kevin Reilly, President of TBS & TNT, Chief Creative Officer, Turner Networks
- Jeff Gaspin, Former Chairman, NBCUniversal
- Kelly Kahl, Senior Executive Vice President, Primetime, CBS
- Marc Graboff, President of West Coast Operations, NBC Universal (now President of Global Legal and Business Affairs, Production Management and Studios. Discovery)
- John Landgraf, President, FX Network
- Katie O'Connell, CEO, Gaumont International Television
- Cindy Holland, Vice President, Content Acquisition for Netflix
- Vivi Zigler, President, Digital Entertainment, NBC (now Head of Digital for Shine America)
- Andrea Hartman, General Counsel, NBCUniversal
- Liz Huszarik, Executive Vice President, Warner Bros Media Research
- Jeff Wachtel, President & Chief Content Officer, NBCU Cable Entertainment
- Bob Broder, Vice Chairman, ICM
- Nahnatchka Khan, Creator, *Don't Trust the B in Apartment 23* and *Fresh off the Boat*
- Bridget Baker, President NBCUniversal Television Networks Distribution
- Michael Schneider, Executive Editor, TV Guide Magazine

## ABOUT THE PROFESSOR:

I run my own consulting practice, Reboot Television. My primary clients are International Networks and Distributors. I help them acquire US programming and map out programming strategies for their channels around the globe. In my previous corporate life, I served as Senior Vice President of Primetime Scheduling and Strategic Analysis at the NBC television network, in charge of programming strategy for NBC primetime. During my 10 years at NBC, I led the day-to-day scheduling operations, handled program acquisitions, and cross-platform strategy for all NBCUniversal cable channels among other duties. Prior to NBC, I held positions in programming, planning and research at G4, Disney Channel US, Disney Channel International, Sony, and Warner Brothers. I did my undergraduate studies at Pepperdine University, and hold an MA in Communications Management from the Annenberg School at USC.

GRADING:	POINTS	% OF GRADE
Weekly Blog Entry	145	10%
Blackboard Quizzes/Guest Speaker Prep	145	10%
In Class Exercises	70	5%
Media Autobiography	70	5%
Media Case Study & In Class Exercise	200	12.5%
Position Paper	200	12.5%
Group Presentation & Peer Assessments	450	30%
Take Home Final Exam	220	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>100%</b>

## ASSIGNMENTS:

**All assignments must be submitted via Turn-it-in on Blackboard by 6:30pm on the due date. This includes presentation materials (powerpoint, etc) for in class presentations.**

*Weekly Blog Entry:* Every student is required to post an entry on Blackboard about a recent news article related to the topics being discussed in class EVERY WEEK. These are short: 3-5 sentences describing the article and how it relates to the current week's topic. You must also include a link to the article. In addition, each student will sign up for one class date during the semester, in which he/she will lead a discussion of their article that week. You must summarize the key points, explain how it relates to the class, and pose two questions to the class. No student can post an article that has already been posted by someone else.

*Blackboard Quizzes and Guest Speaker Prep:* There will be weekly blackboard quizzes based on assigned readings (including student blog posts from the prior week, so you must read those). Students are expected to complete them by **TUESDAYS at 10pm** each week.

*In Class Exercises:* We will have a 1-2 graded in-class exercises. You will be given 1-2 weeks notice of any prep materials necessary, but the evaluation will be on what we are doing in the class session. It is important you attend these sessions or you can't be graded.

*Guest Speaker Prep:* We will be researching and formulating questions for every guest speaker. The week before each speaker, we will break up in groups, and each student will be assigned one of the following tasks: researching biography/ Linked-in profile and creating a company/business profile. Groups will then generate 15 questions for the speaker. I will compile them and assign students to ask the questions the following week in class.

*Media Autobiography:* Preferably in Prezi, Powerpoint or other visual format. To be presented to the class in week two. Tell the class how technology factored into your upbringing. Five minutes max.

*Media Case Study & In Class Exercise:* Each student will research and present a case study about a Media company. In class, you will assume the role of Head of your company, and we will role play scenarios from questions that will be provided ahead of time.

*Position Paper:* The professor will assign one of three topics to each student. You will research and write a position paper on your topic. You must choose a side and argue it effectively in 4-5 pages.

*Group Programming & Distribution Project:* You will need to use business, analytical and creative skills for this project. Each group will be assigned a distribution outlet (Netflix, CBS, etc). Based on their research of the company, they will pitch an original series idea and a Marketing and Distribution plan for that outlet and the life of the series to a panel of industry professionals. Peer Assessments and Panel feedback will be a percentage of the grade.

*Take Home Exam:* Students will have one week to complete a take home exam consisting of 1-2 essay questions provided by the Professor. Plan on 4-5 pages total.

## COURSE MATERIALS:

### Required Books (3):

Ulin, Jeff *The Business of Media Distribution: Monetizing Film, TV and Video Content in an Online World: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*

Curtin, Michael; Holt, Jennifer; Sanson, Kevin. *Distribution Revolution: Conversations about the Digital Future of Film and Television*

Elberse, Anita. *Blockbusters: Hit-Making, Risk-Taking and the Big Business of Entertainment*

I will also be assigning trade articles along the way.

### Other recommended reading:

Lotz, Amanda D. *The Television Will Be Revolutionized*

Vogel, Harold L. *Entertainment Industry Economics: A Guide For Financial Analysis, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition*

Blumenthal, Howard J. and Goodenough, Oliver R. *This Business of Television: The Standard Guide to the Television Industry 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (2006)*

Palmer, Shelly *Television Disrupted: The Transition from Network to Networked TV (2006)*

Carter, Bill *Desperate Networks (2006)*

Various media websites, current articles, etc. as discussed, recommended or assigned in class

**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.

## **Policies and Procedures**

### **Laptop Policy**

Effective fall 2014, all undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors will be required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the Annenberg [Virtual Commons](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website.

## **Plagiarism**

### **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. Please see the *SCampus* (<http://scampus.usc.edu/1300-academic-integrity-review/>) for the university's Student Conduct Code.

### **USC School of Communication Policy on Academic Integrity**

The following is the USC Annenberg School of Communication's policy on academic integrity and repeated in the syllabus for every course in the school:

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, ([www.usc.edu/scampus](http://www.usc.edu/scampus) or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as Communication school administrators.

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

### **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. Website and contact information for DSP:

[http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html), (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu).

**Stress Management**

Students are under a lot of pressure. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

**Sexual Assault Resource Center**

The Center for Women & Men and the Sexual Assault Resource Center are one and the same. Student Counseling Services is a separate place that also offers confidential counseling and support groups on a variety of other topics. To schedule an appointment with Student Counseling Services, call (213) 740-7711 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays or visit the Engemann Student Health Center on the University Park Campus.

**Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

## CLASS SCHEDULE:

Classes will consist of lectures, discussions and appearances by guest speakers. Because of the need for flexibility in scheduling of guest speakers, there will be some fluidity in the class schedule. The schedule provided below will provide you with an approximation of the layout of the weekly class topics. You will be notified ahead of time about any changes in reading, etc. **Assignment due dates are firm.**

	DATE	WEEKLY TOPICS	READING	ASSIGNMENTS
WEEK 1	8/26/15	Intro: Industry overview; who's who; media conglomerates distribution chain		
WEEK 2	9/2/15	TV Economics - how each sector makes money; Importance of Sports	ULIN Chapters 1 & 6; pp 93-98; pp127-143; Reading Pack- Traditional TV	<b>Autobiographies</b>
WEEK 3	9/9/15	Legal: Piracy, FCC, Net Neutrality, Mergers, Fin/syn	ULIN Chap 2; CURTIN pp 1-88; Reading Pack - Mergers	<b>Autobiographies Assign Groups</b>
WEEK 4	9/16/15	Content Development and creation process: <b><i>Guests: Matt Kunitz Lionsgate (Reality) and Erin Wehrenberg, WBTV (Scripted)</i></b>	CURTIN pp159-234	
WEEK 5	9/23/15	Programming, Acquisitions and International Strategy	ULIN pp 546-557; ELBERSE pp. 1-82	
WEEK 6	9/30/15	Student Presentations	ELBERSE pp. 83-149	<b>New Media Case Studies due</b>
WEEK 7	10/7/15	Student Presentations and In Class Role Play	ELBERSE pp. 150-219	<b>New Media Case Studies: In Class Role Play</b>
WEEK 8	10/14/15	SVOD & OTT, Internet TV <b><i>Guest: Simon Gallagher, formerly Netflix</i></b>	ULIN Chap 7; CURTIN pp87-158; Reading Pack - SVOD	
WEEK 9	10/21/15	Research: Measurement & Viewership Trends <b><i>Guest: Liz Huszarik, Warner Bros</i></b>	ELBERSE pp. 220-266	<b>Position Paper due</b>
WEEK 10	10/28/15	Cord Cutting Exercise	Reading Pack - Cord Cutting	<b>In Class Exercise</b>
WEEK 11	11/4/15	Cable Companies: Bundling <b><i>Guest: Bridget Baker, formerly Comcast/NBC Universal Distribution</i></b>	Reading Pack - Bundling	
WEEK 12	11/11/15	Distribution & Bundling		
WEEK 13	11/18/15	Student Presentations		<b>Group Project Presentations</b>
	11/25/15	<b>NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>		
WEEK 14	12/2/15	Last Class Meeting: Semester Wrap-Up		<b>Final Exam Paper Given</b>
FINAL EXAM	12/9/15			<b>Final Exam Paper Due</b>