

**University of Southern California
School of Cinematic Arts**

CTPR 410: The Movie Business: From Story Concept to Exhibition
Spring 2017
Class #18525

Professor: Peter Exline
Location: SCA 110
Time: 6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m., Monday
Email: exline@usc.edu
Office: SCA room 410
Hours: By appointment Monday 4-6PM or after class. Confirm on Friday before class

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Movie Business from A - Z, from the screenwriter's original story conception through production, marketing and exhibition in theaters. The class will analyze the movie business from story idea to development and production, as well as the marketing of movies and their distribution with attention to different business philosophies and financing.

The class will be divided into groups which will work together and:

1. Decide upon an idea (original or a remake) which could conceivably be turned into a successful contemporary picture. If it's a remake, present a synopsis of the original movie, its 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 it further.
2. Assemble the required elements for an imaginary motion picture including writer, director and cast.
3. Determine the appropriate marketplaces for the proposed project: Major Studios or Independents.
4. Discuss possible "ball park" budgets and locations for the physical production of the movie: NYC, LA, North Carolina, Texas, Toronto, Australia, England, etc.
5. Devise an overall marketing strategy with a target audience in mind and a campaign for attracting an audience, the group will prepare an ad campaign complete with poster and tagline, and a suggested release pattern for the finished imaginary movie.

REQUIRED READING

The Movie Business Book Fourth Edition/Squire

COURSE EVALUATION

2 Pop Quizzes	16% --- 8 points each
Midterm Exam:	40% --- 40 points
Final Project:	30% --- 30 points
Participation:	9% ---- 9 points for participation
Group Evals:	5% --- 5 points from other group members

Participation will be graded on a combination of class attendance and class discussion, questions asked and questions answered.

USC ATTENDANCE POLICY

Please be on time and prepared for each class. Two unexcused absences will result in a lower grade, by one full grade (A to A-). A third unexcused absence will result in another full grade deduction, and so on. Two late arrivals equals one full absence.

Only medical absences will be excused. Bring documentation from a doctor or hospital to the next class. If you have an emergency and must miss class, please contact your professor prior to class or contact the Writing Division at 213-740-3303.

LAPTOP COMPUTER/CELL PHONE POLICY

Students may not use laptops or cellphones during class. One point will be deducted for each reminder of the policy.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are 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 Student Industry Relations 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.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Please be familiar with the GRADING policy and Academic Standards section of the USC [Catalogue](#) and the information on University Governance in the [SCAMPUS](#), particularly Appendix A: Academic Dishonesty Sanction Guidelines.

The use of unauthorized material, communication with fellow students during an in-class examination, attempting to benefit from the work of another student, and similar behavior defeats the intent of an examination or other class work is unacceptable to the University. It is often difficult to distinguish between a culpable act and inadvertent behavior resulting from the nervous tensions accompanying examinations. Where a clear violation has occurred, however, the instructor may disqualify the student's work as unacceptable and assign a failing mark on the paper.

For the take-home midterm, do not meet, discuss or compare your work with that of other students.

ABOUT THE PROFESSOR

Peter Exline graduated from N.Y.U. Graduate Film and Television in 1978 and worked on “The Warriors” while reading and evaluating novels for motion pictures and television at Warner Bros. He joined Warner Bros. as Associate Story Editor, East Coast, in Sept. 1978 and has subsequently worked for Mace Neufeld as Vice-President of Motion Pictures and Television, and Michael Douglas as Vice-President of Creative Affairs. He has taught at U.S.C. School of Cinema-Television since 1992.

COURSE SCHEDULE

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Students will examine the Motion Picture Industry from story conception through script development, casting, production and exhibition. Students will evaluate and understand the roles played by writers, agents, studio executives, directors, as well as those involved with people marketing and distributing a movie. One fundamental which the class will address is how to reduce the financial risk.

- Jan. 9 Introduction: The Movie Business
Assignment-----Jason Squire's Introduction in The
Movie Business Book Chapter 1 Pages 1-15
- Jan. 16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday: No Class
- Jan. 23 Selling the Concept: Rights, Options, Specs
Groups will present preliminary story ideas.
Assignment----- Movie Business Book Chapter 4 Page 43
- Jan. 30 Screening
Assignment----- Movie Business Book Chapter 5 Page 55
- Feb. 6 Guest Speaker: Writer
The Agent: Representation and Talent:
Assignment----- Movie Business Book Chapter 9 Page 99
- Feb. 13 Groups will present story ideas and/or screenwriters.
Assignment----- Movie Business Book: Chapter 6 Pages 67
- Feb. 20 No Class: President's Day
- Feb. 27 Guest: Agent
Negotiation Exercise if possible:
Assignment----- Movie Business Book: Chapter 19 Page 211
Mid-Term (Take-Home)
- March 6 Groups will present ideas screenwriters and directors
Assignment----- Movie Business Book: Chapter 2 Page 19
- March 13 Spring Break

- March 20 The Studio: Making Deals, Making Movies
Group Presentations of screenwriters, directors and cast.
Assignment----- Movie Business Book Chapter 16 Page 175
- March 27 Guest Speaker: Producer
Assignment----- Movie Business Book: Chapter 12 Page 139
- April 3 Marketing: Selling the Movie
Group presentation of the class project with all elements.
Assignment.....Movie Business Book: Chapter 22 Page 277
- April 10 Guest: Marketing Executive
Distribution/Marketing: Selling the idea to the public
Assignment----- The Movie Business Book Chapter 27 Page 371
- April 17 Guest: Distribution
Production: Limiting Risk
Class Exercise
Assignment:.....The Movie Business Book Chapter 28
- April 24 Final Student Presentation: Marketing and Distribution Plans for class projects.

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 papers/assignments/exams will be lowered 1 point for each day.

One Day Late:----Lowered 1/2 (A becomes A-)

Two Days Late:-----Lowered 1 (A becomes B)

- * Students may unanimously vote a member out of their group for not participating in the group project. That student must work alone to accomplish the course work.

MISCELLANEOUS

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.

Please activate your course in Blackboard with access to the course syllabus. Whether or not you use Blackboard regularly, these preparations will be crucial in an emergency. USC's Blackboard learning management system and support information is available at blackboard.usc.edu.

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.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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 of the 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 <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 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.