

USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR 492 Producing Theatre

Units: 4.0

Spring 2017—Mondays—2:00-4:50pm

Location: PED (Physical Education Bldg.) – 114E

Instructor: Michael Bateman

Office Hours: by appointment, directly before or after class
if in person

Contact Info: mbateman@usc.edu; 415-613-2914

Can also email me at michaeljamesbateman@gmail.com if it's
an emergency

Course Description

Examination of theatrical management practice building on THTR 491 with a focus on the process of producing and the design and production team's role within nonprofit theater institutions. Course will address producing models, new work development, leadership strategy and tactics, negotiation skills, career trajectories, getting hired, budgeting and planning, and current field issues.

Learning Objectives

To build upon understanding and appreciation for the organizational context in which prospective theater administration and production professionals function in a theater. Students will hone understanding of working in a professional institutional context and will develop tools to determine a fit between their career goals and the job/production at hand.

Assignments and projects are intended to engage students critical thinking and analysis skills in case study-based exercises that require applying classroom learning to real-world scenarios.

Theatrical professionals will serve as guest speakers to expand students' professional networks and to complicate the often straightforward examples of best practices found in textbooks.

Prerequisite(s): THTR 491

Co-Requisite (s): N/A

Concurrent Enrollment: N/A

Recommended Preparation: N/A

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Integrating Mission and Strategy for Nonprofit Organizations

By James A. Phills, Jr; Oxford University Press, 2005

Stage Writers Handbook

By Dana Singer; Theatre Communications Group, Inc., 1997

CTI Guide to Producing Plays and Musicals

Edited by Frederic B. Vogel and Ben Hodges; Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, 2006

Course Reader and occasional articles assigned in class.

Copies of play scripts with show-specific cuts will be made available.

News outlets: LA Times Culture Monster and Arts and Books, The New York Times, TCG's American Theatre (magazine or online), scan Playbill.com, esp. the weekly grosses, HowlRound

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	
Assignments (5 pts. each)	15	
Class participation	15	
Midterm Report and Presentation	30	
Final Report and Presentation	40	
TOTAL	100	

Grading 90-100% = A
 80-84% = B; 85-89% = B+
 70-74% = C; 75-79% = C+
 60-64% = D; 65-79% = D+

Assignment Submission Policy

Reading must be completed prior to class. Be prepared to discuss the reading and any interesting/relevant theater or non-theater news of the week. Assignments are to be submitted in Microsoft Word Document format no later than midnight on the Saturday prior to our Monday class. Title your assignment with your last name followed by the due date and submit via email to the address on the syllabus with your name and "Theatre 492." For example, an assignment for the first class would have the subject line "Bateman – Theatre 492" and would be titled "Bateman-01.09.17.docx" and would be submitted by midnight on January 7th.

Successful class participation includes arriving on time, please be respectful of the instructor and your fellow classmates' time by being prepared to begin by 2pm. Please conduct thorough proofreading before submitting any assignment.

Additional Policies

- Late assignments and projects will not be accepted.
- Unexcused absences are unacceptable and excused absences will be granted at the discretion of the instructor only with a minimum of one weeks' notice excepting personal health emergencies.
- In order to participate fully in class, please refrain from using electronic devices for social media or any other activities that are outside the scope of the class during class time.
- Emails to the instructor will be answered during business hours when possible.

Privileged Materials

As an essential element of the course, students will have access to proprietary documents relating to the function and future of A Noise Within. These documents, when provided, must be kept confidential and must be shared with no one outside of the course. Access to these documents will heighten and make more concrete the concepts discussed in class. Please help maintain the integrity of the class by treating these materials with appropriate respect.

Arranging Comps

Each member of the class may request 2 complimentary tickets for ONE production in ANW's Spring season. Please contact ANW's box office at boxoffice@anoisewithin.org and identify yourself as a member of Michael's USC class to arrange tickets. Students who reserve tickets but do not attend may be barred from making further reservations. All comp requests are subject to availability. Additional student rush tickets are available for \$18 each or \$20 on the weekend.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

All guest speakers subject to change.

Always come to class having read at least one theater-related news article (not review) for the week we will discuss a round-up at the beginning of class.

Week 1 **Introduction and Overview**

Jan 9 Reading for Discussion: Mission and Strategy (pp 20-47; 48-70), ANW's Annual Report (found on ANW website under Our Story -> Financial Documents)

Assignment: N/A

Guest Speaker: N/A

Week 2 **No Class – MLK Jr. Day**

Jan 16

Week 3 **Going Pro**

Jan 23 Reading for Discussion: Going Pro: A Study of Professionalization in Theater Management (course reader); Stage Writers Handbook (pp 18-47; 62-95)

Assignment: Case study provided.

Guest Speaker: N/A

Week 4 **Field Issue: 99-Seat Code**

Jan 30 Reading for Discussion: Announcement by Mary McColl
An End in Sight (1988): http://articles.latimes.com/1988-11-17/entertainment/ca-37_1_theater-program
99-seat – the debate: <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/culture/la-et-cm-99-seat-theater-actors-equity-los-angeles-explainer-20150422-htmstory.html>
AEA members file lawsuit: <http://deadline.com/2015/10/actors-equity-la-99-seat-waiver-los-angeles-1201587087/>
Lawsuit undermines bargaining power: <http://deadline.com/2015/10/actors-equity-lawsuit-responds-bargaining-power-1201587983/>
Supply and demand in theater: <http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/01/28/landesman-comments-on-theater/>
The suit progresses: <http://www.americantheatre.org/2016/06/28/equity-to-la-99-seat-plaintiffs-the-deals-off/>
The agreement goes into effect: <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-ca-cm-yearahead-99-seat-theaters-20161219-story.html>
Additional articles to be assigned.

Assignment: prepare for in-class debate on issue.

	Guest Speaker: N/A
Week 5 Feb 6	Leadership Tactics Reading for Discussion: Dignity in the Workplace (course reader) Assignment: N/A Guest Speaker: N/A
Week 6 Feb 13	Building & Facilities Reading for Discussion: Set in Stone (course reader); Ahmanson grant application (emailed by Michael) Assignment: Case study provided. Guest Speaker: Julia Rodriguez-Elliott, Producing Artistic Director at ANW
Week 7 Feb 20	No Class – Presidents’ Day
Week 8 Feb 27	Producing Reading for Discussion: CTI Book <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roche Shulfer p115: commercial producer-resident theater collaborations - Michael David p51: collaborations between not-for-profit and commercial theaters - Neil Mazzella p150: the center of tension – the physical production - Steve Baruch p179: financing commercial theater - Susan Quint Gallin p67: other people’s money - Daryl Roth p96: for the love of theater Assignment: Write a one-page pitch letter to a prospective producer inviting him/her to your backers’ audition. Guest Speaker: TBD
Week 9 Mar 6	Midterm Presentation: Transfer Investment Reading for Discussion: Reading the script for the play you will pitch is strongly encouraged Either (a) see <i>King Lear</i> , (b) visit an <i>Ah, Wilderness!</i> tech day, or (c) visit a <i>Man of La Mancha</i> rehearsal at ANW; prepare, rehearse, and present a 15-20-minute pitch on transferring the show to another venue (of your choice). Each of your classmates will be given \$20,000 per project to “invest” in potential projects, the distribution of their investment will constitute 20% of your midterm grade. Email your pitch-related materials to Michael by midnight the day before the presentation. Guest Speaker: N/A
Week 10 Mar 13	No Class – Spring Break
Week 11 Mar 20	Negotiation & Persuasion Reading for Discussion: TBD

Assignment: Prepare for in-class negotiation exercise.

Guest Speaker: N/A

Week 12
Mar 27

Contracts & Rights

Reading for Discussion: Author?Author! by Joan Channick (course reader); additional TBD

Assignment: Review Equity contracts, decide on contract to follow for final exam, and notify Michael.

Guest Speaker: N/A

Week 13
Apr 3

Managing Teams

Reading for Discussion: ANW's SM handbook; ANW's artist handbook (copies to be emailed to the class by Michael)

Assignment: N/A

Guest Speaker: N/A

Week 14
Apr 10

Production Disasters

Reading for Discussion: Production narratives (provided by Michael).

Assignment: N/A

Guest Speaker: N/A

Week 15
Apr 17

Equity & Inclusion

Reading for Discussion: ANW's Diversity Commitment v1; ANW's Vision for Community, Equity & Inclusion v3; East/West Players 51% plan (emailed by Michael)

Assignment: N/A

Guest Speaker: Snehal Desai, Artistic Director of East/West Players

Week 16
Apr 24

Getting Hired

Reading for Discussion: N/A

Assignment: N/A

Guest Speaker: Geoff Elliott, Co-Producing Artistic Director at ANW

FINAL
May 8
2-4pm

Producer Pitch

Assignment: Identify a play or musical that you would be interested in producing; read the play and research past productions for potential approaches to a production. In a detailed and rehearsed presentation (to be emailed to Michael no later than midnight the night before the final date), review the history of the production; explain a notional initial production and weekly run budget (using contract guidelines previously selected) against potential GWBOR; and use all available opportunities to sell target funder on participating in your production.

Guest: Terry Kay, Former ANW Board Chair and venture capital investor.

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://adminopsnet.usc.edu/departments/departments-public-safety>. 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.