



CTPR 410 THE MOVIE BUSINESS: FROM STORY CONCEPT THRU EXHIBITION

Section: 18523

Units: 2

Fall 2018 Syllabus

Thursday, 6pm-9pm

Location: SCB 104

Instructor: Dan Lupovitz

Office Hours: Thursday 4-6pm, By Appointment

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Student Assistant: Juliette Beneich

Office Hours: By Appointment

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Course Description

Students will examine the Motion Picture Industry from story conception through script development, talent packaging, production, distribution and marketing. Students will evaluate and understand the roles played by the participants involved in creating a movie, such as writers, agents, studio executives, directors as well as those people involved with marketing and distributing a movie.

Learning Objectives

To better understand the functions of the various players that are required to make a movie, and how they interface with the producer.

Required Reading

The Movie Business Book, by Jason Squire Edition 4, available at USC bookstore.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Each week, students will be assigned reading from The Movie Business Book, for discussion the following week.

Term Project: The class will be divided into groups who will work as a team to:

1. Decide upon a name and a logo for their production company, which will, over the course of the term, invent a movie.
2. Decide upon an idea (original, adaptation or remake), which could conceivably be turned into a successful contemporary movie. If it's a remake, present a synopsis of the original movie, it's history, and reasons why it would work with a contemporary audience. If it's an original or adaptation, prepare a strategy to sell the idea and develop its storyline further.
3. Choose a writer, director and principal cast.
4. Discuss strategy for financing the project: Studio, Independent or International.
5. Discuss possible budgets and locations of the physical production of the movie: NYC, LA, Georgia, New Mexico, Australia, UK.
6. Devise an overall marketing strategy to target an audience, attract an audience, prepare an ad campaign complete with poster and tagline, and possible release pattern for the finished movie.
7. Present to the class a final package that reflects the creative elements, the financing and production strategy, and the overall marketing strategy, with the poster and any visual elements devised for marketing.

Fall Release Report

Students will choose one movie from the fall release schedule. The week it's scheduled to be released, they will report to the class on what they know about it from it's marketing campaign pre-release. The following week, they will report on it's opening weekend box office, the number of theaters it was released in, and it's score on Rotten Tomatoes.

Grading Breakdown

Students will be graded on the following criteria:

1. Take-home midterm exam (25%)
2. Pop quiz (8%)
3. Fall release report (7%)
4. Term Project (40%)
5. Evaluation by their group peers (5%)
6. Class participation, maximum (15%)

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class participation will be evaluated on the basis of students actively participating in class discussion, asking questions, providing feedback to other students in their presentations.

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.

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Production Division Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Two unexcused absences will result in a student's grade being lowered one full letter (IE: B becomes C). A student's grade will be lowered by one full letter for each additional unexcused absence. Two late class arrivals equate to one full absence.

In order for an absence to be excused, the student must have approval from the professor and provide documentation at the next attended class session.

If a student misses class due to an emergency, the student must contact the professor prior to class or contact the Production Office at 213-740-3317.

Assignment Submission Policy

Class presentations are due per the course schedule. Fall release report is due when the movie being reported on is released.

Grading Timeline

Pop quiz and midterm will be returned the following week with grade. Fall release report grade will be available the week following report. Term Project grade and final grade will be available 2 weeks from final class.

Electronic Devices

Use of electronic devices is permitted for note taking and access of information pertinent to class discussion. No personal use of devices is permitted.

COURSE SCHEDULE

AUGUST 23: INTRODUCTIONS

The Movie Business defined by the three types of movies: Studio, Independent, International
Discussion of Term Project.

Class will divide into groups for term project.

Assignment: The Movie Business Book: Introduction, pages 1-15
Groups to decide on a name for their production company and create logo. The first step: Creating your identity.

AUGUST 30: The Concept

Discussion of assignment pages, and how to think about your idea in relation to the marketplace: is it strong enough to stand out?

Groups Present: Production Company names and logos.

Guest Speaker: Producer

Assignment: The Movie Business Book: The Entrepreneurial Producer, pages 16-29

Groups work on Project ideas, taking into account today's class discussion and great speaker.

- SEPTEMBER 6: The Producer**
 Discussion of pages from assignment. How the Producer chooses/finds/evaluate their projects
Groups Present: Story ideas
Assignment: The Movie Business Book, The Screenwriter pages 55-66
 Groups continue to refine Production Company names and logos, and prepare story ideas to be presented.
- SEPTEMBER 13: The Screenwriter**
 Discussion of pages from assignment. How the screenwriter works with the Producer and Director.
Guest Speaker: Casting Director
Assignment: The Movie Business Book: The Literary Agent, pages 66-77
 Groups work on Screenwriters for term project.
- SEPTEMBER 20: Writing Deals and Literary Agents**
 Discussion of pages from assignment, and Originals vs. Adaptations, Options vs. Commissions
Groups Present: Screenwriters
Assignment: The Movie Business Book, The Director, pages 30-42
 Groups work on Directors for Project.
- SEPTEMBER 27: The Director**
 Discussion of pages from assignment, and how the Director works with the Producer and Screenwriter
Guest Speaker: Director
Assignment: The Movie Business Book, The Talent Agent, pages 67-77
 Groups refine ideas and screenwriters for Project, and continue to work on Directors
- OCTOBER 4: Talent Packaging**
 Discussion of pages from assignment, plus how the Producer works with the Casting Director and Talent Agents to package a project
Groups Present: Directors
Assignment: Take Home Mid-term Exam
- OCTOBER 11: How Should You Fund Your Movie?**
 Discussion of assignment pages and identifying your movie as studio versus independent and the difference between how the two sectors function.
Turn in completed Mid-term Exam
Guest Speaker: Studio Executive or Indie Financier
Assignment: The Movie Business Book, A Chairman's Perspective, pages 139-147
 Groups work on cast ideas for their Project.
- OCTOBER 18: International Productions and Co-Productions**
 How do they work, how does an American Producer produce internationally and how do they differ from studio and indie productions.
Groups Present: Cast
Assignment: The Movie Business Book, Production Management, pages 223-243
 Groups work on how their movie will be financed: studio, independent or international.
- OCTOBER 25: How Much Should Your Movie Cost And How To Decide On A Production Plan**
 Discussion of assignment pages and how to figure out the correct budget for your movie and where to shoot it.
Guest Speaker: A Journalist talks about how she's

introduced to movies when they're ready to hit the marketplace with a particular emphasis on festivals and the awards season. What stands out in a crowded distribution field?

Assignment: The Movie Business Book, Film Festivals and Markets, pages 312-326
Groups work on a production plan for their Project.

NOVEMBER 1: How To Find The Audience For Your Movie

Discuss assignment pages, and how festivals can help find a distributor or launch a movie with a distributor in place.

Groups Present: Method of Financing

Assignment: The Movie Business Book, Studio Distribution/Independent Distribution, pages 371-397

Groups continue to work on production plan and start thinking about what form distribution and marketing they want for their Project

NOVEMBER 8: How to find the right distributor for your Project

Discuss assignment pages and how to identify the right kind of distribution for your Project

Guest Speaker: Marketing or Distribution Executive

Assignment: The Movie Business Book, Motion Picture Marketing, pages 277-296

Groups work on distribution plan

NOVEMBER 15: How should the distributor market to the right audience?

Discuss how distribution and marketing work together to target the audience for your Project.

Groups Present: Full creative package, finance plan and production plan

Assignment: Groups work on marketing and distribution plan in preparation for final presentation.

NOVEMBER 22: THANKSGIVING

NOVEMBER 29: Final Student Presentations: All creative elements, Financing and Production plans, Distribution and Marketing plans, including, but not limited to your strategy to target and attract your audience, a poster and a tag line.

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/>.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call.

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicide crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - 213-740-4900 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://enemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting, options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/ Title IX Compliance - (213) 740 5086

Works with Faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class / *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/>

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and micro-aggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentsaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. <http://dsp.usc.edu>

Student Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student. EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. <https://diversity.usc.edu/>

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus unfeasible, <http://emergency.usc.edu/>

USC Department of Public Safety - 213-740-4321 (UPC) and 323-442-1000 (HSC) for 24-hour emergency assistance to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. <http://dps.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.

<p style="text-align: center;">PLEASE NOTE: FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX</p>
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