

CMGT 552: Visual Storytelling
Professor David Craig
Fall 2018

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Office Hours: 5pm before class; by appointment only; send an email in advance, please state the reason for the appointment, and reconfirm your appointment by noon that day.

PURPOSE: This course maps the strategies for creative media management of scripted media, including feature films, television series, and web series. Creative media management includes the development, financing, packaging, production, programming, marketing, and distribution. Students will conduct making of case studies of a scripted US feature film or TV series as well as write and produce an original scripted web series.

PRODUCTION: Prior production experience is NOT required; however, only minimal production skills will be taught. If your series pitch is selected, you should pursue ALL of these strategies:

- choose teammates with production experience,
- find and recruit outside production experts; and
- take outside production classes, including...
 - [ANNENBERG digital lab](#)
 - [CreatorUp](#)
 - [Lynda Online Tutorials](#)

OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the strategies required for the management of scripted visual storytelling;
- Participate in collaborative original creative media production; and,
- Cultivate a broad range of skills for conducting media industries research, crafting state of the art academic presentations, and developing networking skills.

COURSE READINGS (some of these books are in the bookstore; others available online)

- Brown, R. (2014). [Create your own TV series. 2nd edition. Michael Weise Publications.](#)
- Christian, A.J. (2018). [Open TV. NYU Press](#)
- Lotz, A.D. (2014). [The Television will be Revolutionized \(TV\). 2nd edition. NYU Press.](#)
- Wasko, J. (2003). [How Hollywood Works. Sage.](#)
- Additional Reading (subject to change; will be posted on Blackboard)

SYLLABUS (Subject to Change)

Date	Topics	Reading (before class)	Assignments
8/23	Insta stories; syllabus		
8/30	Making Media; Blogs	Brown/ Prologue-7 Why Web TV Series	Start Blog (post 1st blog in class)
9/6	Sample Case Study; how to pitch; Choose projects	Brown/ 8-Epilogue Smith - Series pilot	Research 2 movies/series
9/13	Pitchfest; choose teams	Wasko/ Intro-2	Post pitch in class
9/20	Making Movies	Wasko/ 3-5	Bring in 5 interview targets
9/27	Making TV	Lotz/TV /Intro-3	Bring in Outline for Web Series
10/4	Making web series	Lotz/ TV /4-conclusion	Bring in 1st Draft
10/11	NO CLASS	Lotz/ Portals	Email 2nd draft
10/18	Guest Speaker	Open TV/Intro-2	Bring in Production Report
10/25	Guest speaker	Open TV/ 3-4	
11/1	Making of Case Studies		Post blog comparing case studies
11/8	Making of Case Studies		Post blog comparing case studies
11/15	Review Rough cuts	Open TV/ 5-epilogue	Bring in Rough Cut
11/22	NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)		
11/29	Web Series Prezitations		Post Final Video and Presentation
12/6	No Final		

COURSE GRADING (based on points)

- 30 Blog (3 points; there are 2 extra credit blog posts comparing case studies)
- 10 Series Pitch
- 30 Case Study (Group)
- 30 Web Series (Group)

BLOG

- Complete that week's reading and find a related media industry news article.
- Write a 2-line summary plus 2 lines relating the article to the reading. 5 lines MAX!
- The news item must be from the past week and a reputable source (not gossip).
- Post Blog before 6pm of each class and you cannot post from prior weeks.
- You must cite the reading according to APA format and provide a WORKING hyperlink.
- Reputable media industries sources include but are not limited to the following:
 - Deadline Hollywood/Hollywood Reporter/ Variety
 - LA Times/ New York Times/ Wall Street Journal/ Washington Post
 - Tubefilter/ ReCode/ Mashable/ Wired/ Digiday
- Grading will be based on following directions, including posting on time.

SERIES PITCH

- Every student must pitch an original web series in 1 minute.
- This pitch must be an edited video, including onscreen graphics, and rehearsed. No reading.
- Pitches should include title, setting, 3 main characters, their relationship, and 3-episode arc.
- You have an extra 15 seconds to list any relevant production skills and resources, e.g., screenwriting, production, editing, acting, locations, outside teammates, funding.
- I will provide more instructions in class, including where and how to post the video.
- The class will vote on the pitches. The winning pitches will be selected for production. The winning producers will select their production team. (Hint: Pay attention to the skills.)
- Grading will be based on following instructions and not your creativity or voting outcomes.
- More instructions will be provided in class.

MAKING OF FILM/SERIES CASE STUDY: (Group)

- You will be divided into groups and each group will conduct a case study of the making of a US scripted feature film or TV series. You should discuss development, financing, production, marketing, and distribution strategies.
- When instructed, every student will be asked to provide the following:
 - Two US, non-animated, scripted feature film released in the US in the past year
 - Two scripted US scripted, non-animated TV series currently on the air
- Your topic must be approved in advance, you may not get your first or second options, you may not change topics, and you may not change presentation dates.
- You must present without notes using a Prezi. Length is tbd.
- Every team must conduct two interviews choosing from this list:
 - The buyer (studio or network executive)
 - Producer or Production company executive

- Marketing executive in or outside of the studio or network.
- All interview candidates must be approved and cited in your case study.
- Grading will be based on your research, design, performance, and interviews.
- More instructions will be provided in class, including strategies for securing interviews.

ORIGINAL WEB SERIES (GROUP):

- In Week 4, the winning web series pitches will be selected and web series teams chosen.
- Each team will write, produce, and edit 3 episodes of an original scripted web series.
- This includes a series outline and multiple drafts to be reviewed and approved by Prof Craig.
- Once the script has been approved, each team must provide a pre-production report listing details about your crew, resources, casting, and production schedule. I will post samples.
- FOLLOW the schedule in the syllabus very carefully.
- On the last night, we will screen all the projects and each group will present a making of case study, describing the creative management process, including challenges and mistakes.
- GRADE: your grade will depend on the timely and satisfactory completion of each stage of development and production and a CRITICAL making of case study.
- More instructions will be provided in class.

HOW TO SECURE AN INTERVIEW:

- Identify the PROPER candidates and get approvals asap.
- Sign up for IMDB PRO for a free trial to locate their contact info and/or representatives.
- Call, write or email ...MANY TIMES...MANY WAYS...to request an interview.
- Ask for in person first, phone call second, email last.
- Find a USC alum working in the company to help (and join the MCM group on LinkedIn).
- Send coffee cards, deliver gift baskets, esp. to the assistants who are the gatekeepers.
- DO WHATEVER IT TAKES...as long as it's legal.
- YOU MAY NOT ASK PROFESSOR CRAIG or other Professors for assistance!

HOW TO PRESENT USING PREZI:

- PREZI is not POWERPOINT or an outline.
- You should do your research and have an outline prepared BEFORE starting your Prezi.
- Then search for logos, images, pictures, and short video.
- Produce your own charts and tables.
- Limit text AND bullet points; no full sentences. Do not read the screen.
- If you use charts or graphs, make sure they are simple and legible.
- Take advantage of the movement...try to make it fun, unusual, animated.
- Pay attention to design. Make your Prezi legible but also interesting. BE DARING!
- Show, Don't Tell. Avoid long breaks between Prezi points where you are just talking.
- Be professional and confident and well-rehearse with no note. PRACTICE!

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 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.

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://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.