

CTPR 438 - PRACTICUM IN PRODUCING
SYLLABUS
2 UNITS

USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS
Fall 2017

Pre-requisite: CTPR 310 - Intermediate Production or
CTPR 425 - Production Planning

MEETING TIMES: Tuesday 4-7pm

CLASSROOM: SCB 304

INSTRUCTOR: Dan Lupovitz
lupovitz@usc.edu
Office Hours: by appointment

STUDENT ASSISTANT: Melanie Lim
melanidl@usc.edu
Tel. 562-405-7272

NOTE: THIS CLASS MAY NOT BE AUDITED.

CLASS OVERVIEW:

This course will provide a comprehensive overview of the world of producing. It is designed to provide the skills for producing a CTPR 480 project and projects produced outside of USC.

We will look at how projects are conceived, developed, packaged, financed and marketed.

Who are you as a producer? What kind of projects do you want to make? How do you get them made?

We'll cover the nuts and bolts of short and long form projects. By the end of the semester, each student should have the practical skills to pitch a project, develop a script, package the talent, schedule and budget a screenplay and manage a production.

The course will consist of lecture, discussion, audiovisual presentations and if possible given schedules, guest speakers from within the industry.

PROJECTS:

1. Production Company Name and Logo: Each student will create a name and a logo for their production company.
2. Movie Release Report: Each student will report on a movie released during the term, presenting to the class it's box office, per screen average, and Rotten Tomatoes score.
3. Individual Project Pitch: Each student will pitch a feature idea to the class. The pitch should last no longer than 3 minutes. The class will respond and discuss. Using this input, students will adjust their pitch, and add the creative package of writer, director and cast.
4. Final Exam: "Production Slate" Pitch: Each student will create a slate of three projects. The centerpiece will be the project they've been pitching, but with a budget figure, a production plan, and a distribution plan with a poster and a tag line. The other two projects will be ideas for projects in a medium of your choice. The slate as a whole should have a cohesive "personality" that reflects the identity of the producer and their production company. Final projects should be handed in on a digital file as well as a hard copy.

GRADING:

Class Participation	15%
Production Company and Logo	5%
Movie Release Presentation	5%
Individual Project Pitch	25%
Exercise Schedule	10%
Exercise Budget	10%
Final Pitch	30%

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class.

Three unexcused absences will result in your grade being lowered by one full point (ex: A >B).

A third unexcused absence will result in your grade being lowered another full point (B>C).

Your grade will be lowered by a point for every subsequent absence.

Two late arrivals equals 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 you have an emergency and must miss class, please contact your professor prior to class (also please contact, and copy, the class Student Assistant).

Required Reading:

Producer to Producer by Maureen A. Ryan - Second edition (2017)
Available at USC Bookstore

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Note: This schedule is approximate. It may be adjusted as required.

Week 1 - Tuesday, January 8: COURSE OVERVIEW and WHAT IS A PRODUCER?

Introductions
Course overview
Review syllabus, projects and grading.

What is a producer?
Producer titles and definitions—various types of producers.
What is the work, the craft?
Who are you as a producer?

Assignment: Students will come up with a name of their production company and a logo. Email your logo to Melanie before next class.

Week 2 - Tuesday, January 15: WHAT DO I WANT TO PRODUCE?

Where do ideas come from?
What will work in the market place? How do you know?
What's the right medium for the idea?
What's source material?

Presentations: Production Companies and Logos

Assignment: Producer to Producer reading, "Development" pp. 1-17.

Week 3 - Tuesday, January 22: STEP ONE: THE ART OF THE PITCH

What makes a good pitch?
What's the story?
Who's the audience

Why should this be made now?

Who are you pitching to?

Pitching with a writer and/or director.

Length, characters, visual language, presentation, the art of the meeting.

Originals versus Adaptations

Log Line Game

Assignment: Bring an idea to pitch for your Pitch Project. Pitch must be for a feature film.

Week 4 - Tuesday January 29: PITCHING

Students will pitch their Pitch Projects ideas. The class will respond and give input.

Assignment: Adjust your pitch in ways you see it can be improved based on the input from the class.

Week 5 - February 5: WORKING WITH THE WRITER

Adaptations versus Originals

Writing steps: drafts and polishes

How does the producer work with the writer? With and without a director.

How to give script notes.

How and when should you replace the writer?

WGA versus non-WGA

Assignment: Choose a writer for your Pitch Project
Producer to Producer, "Casting," pp. 120-129

Week 6 - February 12: TALENT PACKAGING

Directors

How do you choose a director?

How does the producer work with the director? In development, in preproduction, in production, in post-post-production.

Writer/directors and Director/Producers

How a director brands your project

Actors

Working with the casting director

Character breakdowns

How to get actors to do your movie

Marquee value versus Creative Concerns: do they always have to be in conflict

How actors brand your project

Assignment: Choose a director and lead cast for your Pitch Project

Producer to Producer, "Legal," pp. 199-209

Week 7 - February 19: DEALS

Writer Deals: Deal memos, shopping agreements, option purchase agreements, chain of title

Director deals

Actor deals

Production deals: crew, cast, E&O Insurance

Producer deals

Personal attorneys versus Production attorneys

Negotiation Exercise: Are you a buyer or a seller?

Assignment: Prepare Second Pitch of Pitch Project with creative elements of Writer, Director and key cast.

Producer to Producer, "Funding," pp. 108-119

Week 8 - February 26: STUDIO v INDEPENDENT v INTERNATIONAL

How do you know what kind of project you have and how to best get it made. Identifying and distinguishing between projects that are right for the studio system, the independent marketplace or the international production or co-production structure.

Sales agents and Pre-sales

Second Pitches, first half

Assignment: Producer to Producer, "Script Breakdown" pp. 52-68 and "Scheduling," pp. 224-252

Begin to invent ideas for your 2nd and 3rd projects for your slate

Week 9 - March 9: SCHEDULING

How to schedule

Lining a script
Breakdown pages
Cast and elements management
Cost and Creative factors

Second Pitches, second half

Assignment: Create breakdown pages for a script
Producer to Producer pages 69-107

Week 10 - March 5: BUDGETING, BUDGET SIZE AND PRODUCTION PLAN

The Role of the Producer during Production

Budgeting

Above and Below the line
Fringes
Departmental Categories
Impact on budget of scheduling, and vice versa

How to determine what size project you have based on your idea and your creative elements.

How to figure out where and how to shoot.

Tax credits, subsidies and rebates...and does the location have the crew? What you save versus what you spend

Assignment: Budget a 480 script

Start to determine if your Pitch Project is a Studio, Independent or International production or co-production, what budget level it will be and where you'll shoot it.

Continue working on your second and third project for your slate

March 12: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS

Week 11 - March 19: NEW MEDIA AND TELEVISION

How the Producer works in television

How the Producer works in New Media
Web-based entertainment
Interactive
VR

Assignment: Producer to Producer, “Marketing/Publicity” pp, 347-359

Week 12 - March 26: MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION

Marketing campaigns

Advertising versus Publicity

What works and what doesn't?

How does the producer work with the marketing team?

What make a good poster and trailer

Distribution models: platform, limited, wide

VOD, Day and Date

The Collapsing Window

Streamers: Netflix, Amazon, Apple, Hulu

Assignment: Choose a distribution plan and a first choice distributor for your Pitch Project. Create a poster and a tag line for your marketing campaign.

Continue working on idea for your second and third project for your slate

of its marketing campaign.

Producer to Producer, “Film Festivals,” 361-368

Week 13 - April 2: FILM FESTIVALS, FILM MARKETS AND FINDING YOUR DISTRIBUTOR

The difference between Festivals and Markets

How do use festivals to find distribution

How to use festivals to launch your film if you have already have distribution

The pros and cons of festivals

How to choose the right festival

How to use a film market

Assignment: Prepare to pitch your final version of your Pitch Project, complete with writer, director, lead cast, budget level, production plan, distribution plan and ideal distributor, a movie poster and a tag line.

Week 14 - April 9: FINAL PITCH PROJECTS, PART ONE

Week 15 - April 16th: FINAL PITCH PROJECTS, PART TWO

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 Standard*- <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.

**PLEASE NOTE:
FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY
INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX**