

CMGT 552: Visual Storytelling Fall 2019

Professor David Craig

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Office Hours: 5pm before class; by appointment only; send an email in advance, include the reason for the appointment, and reconfirm the appointment on the day.

DESCRIPTION: We identify the creative media management strategies required for the making of scripted entertainment, e.g., feature films, television series, and web series. Creative media management strategies progress from conception to development, financing, packaging, production, programming, marketing, distribution to reception. Creative management refers to communication management strategies designed to better foster creativity, including problem-solving, articulating a vision, providing leadership, building a team, delegating responsibility, operating collaboratively, crisis management, resource development, securing support, effective time management, etc. For assignments, students will blog and discuss their reading, conduct a “making of” case studies of a US film or TV series, write and produce an original scripted web series, and generate reflective creative media management case studies.

PRODUCTION: Prior screenwriting or production experience is NOT required HOWEVER minimal production skills will be taught. If your pitch is selected, you should pursue choose teammates with production experience; take outside or online classes in the Annenberg Digital Lab or CreatorUp.com, and are encouraged to recruit outside experts.

OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the creative media management strategies of visual storytelling;
- Conduct creative media management through original web series production; and,
- Develop transferrable skills, e.g., crafting visual presentations and conducting research.

COURSE READINGS (Some books are available in the bookstores; others are online)

- Brown, R. (2014). [Create your own TV series. \(2nd edition\)](#)
- Christian, A.J. (2018). [Open TV. NYU Press](#)
- Wasko, J. (2008). [How Hollywood Works](#)
- Marich, R. (2013). [Marketing to moviegoers \(3rd Edition\)](#)
- Levy, B. (2019). [Levy - Television Development](#)
- Additional reading may be posted on Blackboard or sent in Announcements.

SYLLABUS (Subject to Change)

DATE	Topics	Reading (pre-class)	Assignments
8/29	YouTube Silent Film; Intro		
9/5	Visual Storytelling; Blogging; Coverage; Prezi	Brown/ 1-10	Write and post 1 st blog in class
9/12	P2P; Pitching; Sample pitching	Open TV – Intro-3	
9/19	PitchFest; Choose teams; prompt for case studies	Open TV/ 4-epilogue	Prepare pitch; Wait for instructions to post in class
9/26	Case Studies; Interviews; choose projects; approve targets	TV Development/ 1 st half	Email your choices for case study projects by 5pm
10/3	Guest: BOB LEVY	TV Development/ 2 nd half	Email Outlines by 5pm
10/10	Making TV: Review drafts	How Hollywood Works/Intro-2	Email 1 st Draft by 5pm
10/17	FALL BREAK: NO CLASS; email drafts	How Hollywood Works/3-6	Email 2 nd Draft by 5pm
10/24	MAKING MOVIES; review drafts	Media Marketing/ 1-6	Email 3 rd Draft/Call Sheet by 5pm
10/31	Review prezis; assign order	Media marketing/ 7-12	Email case study prezi links by 5pm
11/7	Making of Case Studies	NO READING	
11/14	Making of Case Studies	NO READING	Presentation Blog
11/21	Review Rough Cuts in class	NO READING	
11/28	NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)	NO READING	Email link to Rough Cut by 5pm
12/5	WEBFEST	NO READING	Web series and case studies due
12/12	Final	Final blog post due	

GRADING: Grading is on a point system. You will have points deducted based on these criteria: not following directions, e.g., missing blogs, failure to turn in outlines, etc.; weak research, including missing data, failure to conduct analysis, etc.; and, poor presentation design and performance.

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	90%-100%
B	80%-89%
C	70%-79%
D	60%-69%
F	0%-59%

COURSE GRADING (based on points)

30	Blogging (10 x 3 points each)
10	Series Pitch
30	Making of Case Study (Group)
30	Web Series Case Study (Group)

BLOGS: READING, PRESENTATIONS, FINAL

- **READING:** Complete and write a 3 line summary of that week's reading. Find a related news item from the past week and, in 3 sentences, describe the relationship. Post on schedule each week before 6pm. Use reputable sources, e.g., Deadline, Variety, New York Times, Wired, ReCode, Mashable, Vox, etc.
- **PRESENTATION:** compare at least 3 case studies regarding their creative media management strategies. These are due after presentations before next week's class.
- **FINAL** blog posts will require completing an argument essay based on a question I provide that synthesizes the readings, lectures, speakers, and projects.
- Grading will be based on following directions, including posting on time.

SERIES PITCH

- Every student must post their own 1-minute original web series pitch. These will be posted online and voted for anonymously. The winning pitches will be made into web series.
- This pitch must be an edited video, including onscreen graphics, and rehearsed. No reading.
- Everyone must be able to successfully upload on their own YouTube account, however, wait until instructed to post online during class on the night of Pitchfest.
- Pitches should include title, setting, 3 main characters, their relationship, and 3-episode arc.
- Your web series must either foreground how you will P2P, including narratives that foreground or background questions of power and identity, as well as blind casting.
- Grading will be based on following instructions and not your creativity or voting outcomes.

MAKING OF FILM/SERIES CASE STUDY (Group):

- Students will conduct a media management case study of the making of a US scripted feature film or TV series that includes the conception, development, financing, production, marketing, distribution, and reception.
- Your topic must be approved in advance. I will prompt you to provide:
 - Two US, non-animated, scripted feature films released in the US in the past year
 - Two scripted US scripted, non-animated TV series currently on the air in the US.
- You must conduct exhaustive research. Seek out trade and reputable sources. Avoid infotainment and gossip. Wikipedia is a good start but rarely includes information on financing, script development, or marketing strategies.
- You must conduct two interviews: one in production and one in marketing. Production includes a Producer or a production or programming executive in the Production company, Studio or Network; marketing may include executives in the studio or the network or outside creative agencies. All interview candidates must be approved in advance and cited in your case study. Each interview counts as 3 points.

- You must present in prezi, without notes, and professionally. Length is TBD.
- Grading will be based on your research, design, performance, and interviews.

ORIGINAL WEB SERIES (GROUP):

- During pitchfest, winning web series pitches will be selected and 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 call sheets listing details about your crew, resources, casting, and production schedule. I will post samples.
- FOLLOW the schedule in the syllabus very carefully.
- During webfest, we will screen all the projects and each group will present a creative media management case study of producing their web series, including challenges and mistakes.
- You grade will depend on completion of the web series and case study analysis.

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.
- Be creative, persistent, clever, and ethical.
- 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.
- 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:

- email me before class the day the assignment is due to notify me of your emergency,
- you may be asked to provide official proof (doctor's note or other evidence), and
- arrange to email the assignment at a time to be determined.

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 Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. 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. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling
- *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline* – 1 (800) 273-8255 Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 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. engemannshc.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: 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. equity.usc.edu
- *Bias Assessment Response and Support* Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support
- *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. 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. 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. 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 infeasible. emergency.usc.edu
- *USC Department of Public Safety – UPC*: (213) 740-4321 – *HSC*: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu