

INTERMEDIATE PRODUCING

Section: (18650) 2 Units

Instructor: Stephen Gibler

SA: Patrick Michael

Day/Time: **Mondays 7pm-10pm** Room: **SCB 101** Office Hours: **By Appointment**

COURSE DESCRIPTION and OUTLINE

OVERVIEW

Intermediate Producing (CTPR 538 – 18650) is an in-depth examination of the role of the Producer in motion pictures, television and new media. The course will create the foundation for a successful Producer through teaching the practical skills which define the vocation, as well as through analyzing the lives and careers of Producers. The course will cover the Producer's role in each stage of production (from development through post), and detail the processes of casting, staffing, scheduling, budgeting and marketing. The course will incorporate the use of real-time industry practices and a broad base of working professional guests who will breakdown how to they, and therefore the student, can find personal and professional success.

COURSE GOALS

- Develop an understanding of the fundamental responsibilities of the Producer from the inception of the project through release.
- Examine the Producer's role in the creative process and in building the many and varied relationships with the community of collaborators necessary for success: writers, directors, senior creative craftsmen, technical crew, marketing professionals, and the studio executives and independent financiers that back the project.
- Create a personal, social and philosophical approach to your life which will serve as the infrastructure to facilitate a successful career.
- Analyze industry data, trends and pathways to find employment in the career of a Producer.

- Achieve fundamental knowledge and skills in the areas of concept presentation, leadership techniques, mediation and negotiating skills, line producing and creative oversight.
- Establish standards of quality and ethical conduct to guide job and career choices.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Below is the weekly breakdown for the semester. This schedule however is not set in stone, as this course will ebb and flow to fit the needs of the students and the logistics of the faculty.

| | Topics/Daily Activities | Readings and Homework |
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| Week 1 (01/13) | Course Overview. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand out syllabus. • Establish class arc and learning outcomes. • Introduce final project and class news report (schedule of due dates). | HANDOUT: What does a Producer do? Definitions of the different types of Producer. Review and discuss. How many of these qualities do you have? How many do you need? |
| Introduction and Course Overview | INTRODUCTIONS: Teacher & Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Taste: 1 movie you like, 1 movie you want to produce. • What it means to be be a Producer? • “A Producer is the person who causes the film to be made. A good Producer causes it to be made well.” • Skills: How to get things done. Establishing priorities, making lists, following through. • Intro of independent feature scripts - that will be the basis of creative, scheduling/budgeting exercises. • Talk about the establishment of a journal as a record of your mental and physical progress. | Hand out LOGLINE GUIDES. Hand out Special Project Assignment Paperwork |
| | CREATIVE: Loglines, Project Creation, Audiences Why do you need to be able to do a logline? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating the guide to the screenplay. • Synthesizing the idea to make it work. • Using the logline to market the project and communicate with the audience. | 1. Read feature script - Logline & blurb exercise. Due next class 2. Write a journal entry |

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| <p>Week 2 (01/27)</p> | <p><u>Student news topic presentation.</u></p> <p>Go over Loglines.</p> <p>Class discussion of feature script.</p> <p>Discussion: Life, Career, Cultural and Moral Vision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the life of a Producer using the readings of “SHOOTING TO KILL” by Christine Vachon to create a baseline of what the life is like of a producer. • Give a look at the different cultural ways a Producer can make an impact. How can we influence audiences and the world through all forms of media? • Talk about the various moral quandaries and questions a Producer may ask as they build a project in a dynamic and multi-cultural world. • Talk about the different career paths a Producer can take. Show how each path can be influenced and amplified by the life, moral and cultural concerns. | <p>“SHOOTING TO KILL” by Christine Vachon PDF</p> <p>Handouts of top Goal Setting books and articles.</p> |
| <p>Life & Goals of the Producer</p> | <p>Goal Setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With these things in mind, how do we set goals and work from there? • Go through handouts. • Analyze different goal systems to actualize these career plans. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will work from the packets to set 3 month, 6th month, 2 Year and 5 Year goals. 2. Write journal entry about your long term vision as a filmmaker. 3. Read 2nd feature script, Write and submit a logline for feature script. |
| <p>Week 3 (02/03)</p> | <p><u>Student news topic presentation.</u></p> <p>Go over feature script loglines.</p> <p>Go over Goal Systems. Review how a Producer organizes, builds lists, strategizes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A discussion on how this relates to the film work of a Producer and as such, students’ future careers. | <p>More Goal System Packets and paperwork.</p> <p>Organizational Guides and strategies.</p> |

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| <p>Idea Generation, Development, Pitching</p> | <p><u>Guest: Producer</u></p> <p>Idea Generation and Pitching</p> <p>Talk about how students will take into consideration their goals and their journal entry about their long term vision as a filmmaker to put together a logline for an idea in class, to then be expanded on to be pitched next class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do ideas come from? • How do they relate to us? • How do we turn ideas into productions? <p><u>“The 5 Minute Pitch” Discussion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logline • Story • Characters • Tone • Look • Casting Ideas | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will develop, prepare and pitch a project in 5-7 minutes for next class. 2. Write a journal entry about current thought process. |
| <p>Week 4 (02/10)</p> | <p><u>Student news topic presentation.</u></p> <p>Student pitches and critiques.</p> <p><u>Guest: Producer/Executive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest will cover pitching <p>Pitch Processing</p> <p>How to write Producer notes for a pitch? How do you respond to a pitch? What questions to ask and how?</p> | <p>Read excerpts from “HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE”, “NEVER EAT ALONE”, “THE 4-HOUR WORK WEEK.”</p> <p>Examples of Producer notes.</p> |
| <p>Pitch Processing, Producer Notes, The People Game</p> | <p>Relationships and Socialization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A breakdown of how personal relationships, social interactions and thought process go into the cultivation of a Producer’s influence and ability. • Why do people do what they do, and what can we learn about how social lives impact the development of ideas and career of a Producer? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write down pitches you love and want to produce and what pitches are a pass. 2. Journal entry. |
| <p>Week 5 (02/24)</p> | <p><u>Student news topic presentation.</u></p> <p>Homework review</p> <p>Producer Notes. How do we read scripts and break them down as a Producer. How do we use our taste, world view and industry understanding to give great notes.</p> | <p>Hand out/review: Producer notes for various projects.</p> <p>Hand out/email: Starting the schedule.</p> |

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| <p>Producer Notes, Scheduling</p> | <p>Scheduling and breakdown review of feature script. Overview of the process. Review scheduling principles. Begin the scheduling process.</p> <p>Show how feature script would be broken down scene wise.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assignment due next class, or in-class exercise: scene breakdown. "GOT" or "OTHER" pilot scenes. 2. Read third feature script and give Producer notes. 3. Journal entry. |
| <p>Week 6 (03/02)</p> | <p><u>Student news topic presentation.</u></p> <p>Homework review</p> <p><u>Guest: Financier</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest will cover how to finance the independent feature and other productions. <p>Financing the production: 2020 realities, where to shoot, tax incentives/rebates, choosing which path to pursue, investor packages, and what is a "qualified spend."</p> | <p>Hand out: Tax Incentive and Credit Guide, Budget Breakdowns, Related content</p> |
| <p>Scheduling, Budgeting</p> | <p>Scheduling and budgeting: using the shooting schedule to build the budget.</p> <p>Schedule Breakdown for feature scripts.</p> <p>Critical assumptions for the budget. Pick one or two accounts in the budget to do it in detail.</p> <p>Review. Top sheet discussion.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assignment due next class: budget critical assumptions and top sheet. 2. Schedule for feature scripts. 3. Journal entry. |
| <p>Week 7 (03/09)</p> | <p><u>Student news topic presentation.</u></p> <p>Homework review</p> <p><u>Guest: Writer</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does a Producer work with a Writer <p>Discuss idea creation, how a Producer works with a writer, Writer/Producers and best practices.</p> | |
| <p>Working with the Writer, Budgeting</p> | <p>Budgeting</p> <p>Using feature scripts as examples, we break down the budgeting process and talk about all elements of the project.</p> <p>Each student chooses a project of their own development goals to serve as their assignment for the semester</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Budget out feature scripts. 2. Journal Entry 3. Set up meeting times with instructor for individual workshopping and troubleshooting. |

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| <p>Week 8 (03/23)</p> | <p><u>Student news topic presentation.</u></p> <p>Homework review</p> <p><u>Guest: Casting Director</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does a Producer work with a Casting Director? • What to look for in cast? • How does this relate to the production? | <p>Cast lists, project comparisons docs.</p> |
| <p>Casting, Development</p> | <p>In depth analysis of project ideas and such developed in class. Individuals then decide on what projects they want to develop for the rest of the semester</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Budget and schedule project of student's choosing. 2. Figure out cast options for final project. 3. Journal entry. |
| <p>Week 9 (03/30)</p> | <p><u>Student news topic presentation.</u></p> <p>Homework review.</p> <p><u>Guest: Director</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does a Producer work with a Director in production? • TV and Film: what is the relationship between TV and film? How do they work with, and against, each other?. | |
| <p>Working with the Director</p> | <p><u>Guest: New Media Filmmaker</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does a Producer work with a Filmmaker in New Media? • How is new media production different from traditional TV/film? Do the roles of the Producer and Filmmaker change in this medium? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Second draft of budget and schedule for final project. 2. Director list for final project. 3. Journal entry. |
| <p>Week 10 (04/06)</p> | <p><u>Student news topic presentation.</u></p> <p>Homework review.</p> <p><u>Guest: Entertainment Attorney</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does a Producer work with a lawyer? • Legal questions discussed and answered in class. • Contracts, Deal Points, Etc. | <p>Contracts, packets for feature projects in development and shot.</p> |
| <p>Development, Industry Standardization</p> | <p>Project Development:</p> <p>Developing the pitch packet. Analyzing the industry at large, different pitch packets, what the contemporary market is doing and what are people doing in various areas of expertise.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a rough draft pitch packet for final project. 2. Create contractual paperwork. 3. Journal entry. |

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| <p>Week 11 (4/13)</p> | <p><u>Student news topic presentation.</u></p> <p>Assembling the production team, what does the producer do during prep.</p> <p>Guest: <u>AD/Cinematographer/Production Designer/Editor/Composer</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relationship with a Producer. • How careers are made. | <p>Paperwork on union rules for hiring crew.</p> |
| <p>Crewing Up, Development Part II</p> | <p>Continue developing the pitch packet.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Second draft pitch packet for final project. 2. Figure out potential crew for final project. 3. Journal entry. |
| <p>Week 12 04/20)</p> | <p><u>Individual meetings for Final Projects before class</u></p> <p><u>Student news topic presentation.</u></p> <p>Analyzing the Industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze projects produced and in development. • Track costs, analyze attachments, and project how the project will do. • How do we develop career and Producing choices based off of this information? | <p>Information for IMDBPro, Studio System, BoxOfficeMojo, The Numbers, Etc.</p> |
| <p>Industry Analysis and Goal Calibration</p> | <p>Goal Review:</p> <p>Analyze 3 month, 6 month, 2 year and 5 year goal points.</p> <p>Write waypoints, lists, to-dos and elements that need to be done to work toward those goals.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a third draft pitch packet for final project. 2. Review cast, director and crew attachments. 3. Journal entry. |
| <p>Week 13 (04/27)</p> | <p><u>Individual meetings for Final Projects</u></p> <p><u>Student news topic presentation.</u></p> <p>Project Defense: Students will present their projects in class and will be graded in how well they analyze the project, evaluate strengths & weaknesses and decide on the overall viability of the project.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a fourth draft pitch packet for final project. 2. Create 3rd draft schedule and budget. 3. Journal entry. |
| <p>Final</p> | <p>Project will be pitched to Instructor in a 15-minute span and will have to defend the project, budget, schedule and logistical concerns.</p> | |

PROJECTS and ASSIGNMENTS

- Each week one student will present a 15-minute in-depth report on interesting and relevant news from a variety of entertainment news sources.
- Each student will schedule and budget an independent feature production.
- Each student will be placed in a group that will choose a final project after consultation with the Instructor. These group projects will range from full

development of a viable, real world production to a full in-depth breakdown and analysis of an existing production.

- Additional homework on breakdowns, readings, and viewings will be assigned.

RESEARCH AND READING MATERIALS

It is fully expected and required that each student maintain an ongoing effort to stay current with industry news. These sources are constantly changing and the class as a whole will develop an up-to-date list of resources.

Each student must have their own copy of Movie Magic Budgeting and Scheduling programs. These were either provided to the student during their first year at SCA or will be made available for purchase at a student discount.

CLASS SCHEDULE

All classes will be on Monday evening – 7-10pm.

Class dates Spring 2020: 01/13, 01/20 MLK Day NO CLASS, 01/27, 02/03, 02/10, 02/17 President’s Day NO CLASS, 02/24, 03/02, 03/09, 03/16 Spring Break NO CLASS, 03/23, 03/30, 04/06, 04/13, 04/20, 04/27.

NO CLASS on: 01/20 (Martin Luther King Day), 02/17 (President’s Day), 03/16 (Spring Break).

GRADES

CTPR 538 is graded on a letter grade basis. Grades will be based on both subjective and objective judgments. Attentiveness, participation, clarity, generosity and effort are looked-for traits indicative of a growing mastery of the producer’s role. Success is predicated on an energetic and ongoing interaction between all members of the class. Tardiness and unexcused absences will have a negative impact on your grade. If you must miss class, call our SA as soon as possible and always before class begins.

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| Grade weighting: | Class Participation: 15%* | Homework/Journals: 10% |
| Class Presentations/ Pitches: 20% | Budgets & Schedules: 30% | Final Project: 25% |

*Class participation means contributing to the discussion, good questions for class and guests, feedback to cohort, etc.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Throughout the course we will have guest speakers visit the class to share their knowledge and experiences. Each of them is a professional producer, writer, director, executive, designer, AD, or UPM - in other words a senior creative member of a production team. The exact speaker schedule will be announced during class, subject to change based on the guests' own production schedules.

One student will be assigned to each speaker as their "ambassador," responsible for making their travel and parking arrangements, researching their career, and introducing them to the class.

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 by one full letter (IE: A becomes B). A third unexcused absence will result in a student's grade being lowered by one, additional 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 Instructor and provide documentation at the next attended class session. If a student misses class due to an emergency, the student must contact the Instructor prior to class or contact the Production Office at 213-740-3317.

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, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

Student Health Leave Coordinator – 213-821-4710

Located in the USC Support and Advocacy office, the Health Leave Coordinator processes requests for health leaves of absence and advocates for students taking such leaves when needed. <https://policy.usc.edu/student-health-leave-absence/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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

engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

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

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421

studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and Inclusion are foundational to the SCA community. We are committed to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment where students of all identities and backgrounds can flourish. The classroom should be a space for open discussion of ideas and self-expression; however, SCA will not tolerate verbal or written abuse, threats, harassment, intimidation or violence against person or property. If students are concerned about these matters in the classroom setting they are encouraged to contact their SCA Diversity and Inclusion Liaison, <http://cinema.usc.edu/about/diversity.cfm>; e-mail diversity@cinema.usc.edu. You can also report discrimination based on a protected class here <https://equity.usc.edu/harassment-or-discrimination/>

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