

**CTPR 410: The Movie Business: From Story Concept to Exhibition**

**Units: 2**

**Wednesday 6:30 – 9:30 PM**

**Location: Online**

**Instructor: Danny Sussman**

**Office: Online**

**Office Hours: Tuesday 5:50 – 6:25 PM**

**Instructional Assistant: Ally Brzezinski**

**Office Hours: Tuesday 5:50 – 6:25 PM**

**Contact Info: DannySussmanTA@gmail.com**

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**Course Description**

*To learn and understand the current business of bringing both film and TV projects to life. We will take a closer look at the inner workings of the entertainment industry. The roles of the agent, manager, attorneys, and financing entities will help us create a true business model in order to enable graduates of this class to have an opportunity to try to get a project made.*

*This class is going to provide an overview of deal-making, both in film and TV: pilot deals, overall deals, writer deals, director deals, and potentially an in-depth discussion of one of the largest deals ever made in the history of television.*

**Course Notes**

*In addition to the content outlined in the syllabus, we will frequently be covering some fundamental details concerning the entertainment business through guest speakers. The topics covered may include: the ratings, Weekend Top Ten, the Big Board, coverage, TV and Movie deals, Variety articles, vertical integration, the agencies, and the networks and studios.*

**Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

*-LA Times Calendar section, cover-to-cover every Sunday  
-NY Times Arts and Leisure, every Sunday  
-Deadline Hollywood*

**Online Class & Asynchronous Learning Policies:**

**Time Zones:***If you currently reside in a region where the time zone falls outside the 7am to 10pm during the time for our class, and you cannot attend class regularly, or need to miss a class for that reason, please contact dannysussmanta@gmail.com for accommodations.*

**Camera*:****Please have your camera equipped for our Zoom sessions. If you wish you can use an artificial background for privacy concerns. If this poses an issue for you in terms of connectivity or other concerns, please contact me directly for accommodations.*

**Recording*:****All classes will be recorded and transcribed which ensures not only ADA compliance, but also allows you to have access to the class irrespective of the region or time zone you are studying from.*

***During Zoom Lectures:*** *Keep yourself muted unless called on. If you have a question for the instructional assistant during the lecture, use the chat function. If you ask a question verbally, please use the “raise your hand” function on zoom.*

**Description and Assessment of Assignments**

***-Class Participation*** *is graded each class. It is based on each of the following:  
 1) Attendance  
 2) The number of questions you ask/comments you make  
 3) The quality of the questions you ask/comments you make  
  
-The* ***Midterm*** *will be an individual oral presentation in the form of a pitch. You will be required to pitch an original idea for one of the following options of your choosing: a TV series (comedy or drama), studio or independent film, documentary, non-scripted TV series, TV movie or mini-series, or book adaptation to film or TV. Details will follow. Students will take turns pitching over Zoom during class to everyone.   
  
-The* ***Final Exam*** *will consist solely of 100 multiple-choice questions. Please take DETAILED notes throughout the semester on important topics to ensure that you have the necessary study material. Students will login to Zoom and take the test on Blackboard.*

**Grading Breakdown**

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| **Assignment** | **% of Grade** |
| Participation | 20% |
| Midterm | 40% |
| Final Exam | 40% |
| **TOTAL** | 100% |

**Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown**

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|  | **Topics** | **Daily Activities and Classwork** |
| Week 1 Aug 19 | Introducing Networks and Production Companies | * Introduction to Professor Danny Sussman * Students will each introduce themselves to the class * Introduction to networks: link networks and production companies |
| Week 2 Aug 26 | Representatives | * Discussion of the agencies from A-Z * Discuss how representation can aid and abet a particular project going forward |
| Week 3 Sep 2 | Ratings | * This class primarily discusses how to read and analyze ratings * Understanding what Live +3 and Live +7 means * Analysis of box office results |
| Week 4 Sep 9 | Endorsements and Branding | * In this class, we will discuss the importance of Super Bowl commercials and ad-buying * A discussion of the importance of the big business generated through live events * Assign people to present Super Bowl commercials |
| Week 5 Sep 16 | Pitching | * Upon acquiring a property, a potential producer must learn the detailed aspects of how to pitch their products to a studio and or a network. We will do a very detailed A to Z section on pitches in the real world and entertainment business * Presentations of Super Bowl commercials/ presentations |
| Week 6 Sep 23 | Television Deals | * Covering pilot deals, writer deals, overall deals, recurring deals, etc. * A potential analysis of one of the largest deals made in television history * Script Breakdown |
| Week 7 Sep 30 | Feature Deals | * We will discuss the relationships and role differences between agents and managers. * How does a studio and producer go after directors? How is a production team chosen? How is material submitted to reps? This class covers how representation can aid a project going forward. |
| Week 8Oct 7 | *Midterm Exam begins* | *First half of class presentations* |
| Week 9 Oct 14 | *Continuation of Midterm Exam* | *Second half of class presentations* |
| Week 10 Oct 21 | The World of Digital | * A discussion of the various digital platforms. * How has the digital landscape affected business? |
| Week 12 Oct 28 | *Marketing and Promotion* | * This class will focus on marketing films and how cinemas get people in the seats in today’s world of home entertainment centers * How does a studio or network market its product? How do actors participate in promoting a movie or television show? Who are the marketing targets, audiences, downloads, TV shows, bus stops, billboards, etc. |
| Week 13 Nov 4 | Pounding the Boards - Theater and Books | * An in-depth discussion about how intellectual property from the literary and stage world become film and television * Discuss adapting material for the screen, trends, issues, etc. |
| Week 14 Nov 11 | FANG | * The world of streaming & digital. The impact on contracts, representation and the future of network television. |
| Week 15 Nov 18th | *FINAL EXAM* | FINAL EXAM |

**Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

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**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](https://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](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

**Support Systems:**

*Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

[engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](https://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](http://www.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](https://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](https://equity.usc.edu/), [titleix.usc.edu](http://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](https://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](http://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](https://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](https://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](http://dps.usc.edu/), [emergency.usc.edu](http://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](http://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](mailto: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.