**COMM 432:**

**American Media and Entertainment Industries**

**4 Units**

**Fall 2020 – Wednesday – 3:30 – 6:20pm**

**Instructor: Tom Kemper**

**“Office Hours:”** By email

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

Course Description:

This course explores the economic characteristics of American media and entertainment industries from historical and contemporary perspective. The goal is to understand the economic choices made in the peculiar case of producing entertainment products. How do players in these fields contribute to and navigate the unique questions and decisions posed by creative production.

There will be considerable time spent on media history and how the industries developed, and why they developed the way they did. Some of the answers will derive from economic theory and others from the historical contexts (policy decisions, cultural context, laws and regulations, monopoly law, and so forth). The course emphasizes innovation and technological convergence, regulatory structure, programming strategies, and the disruption of the traditional advertiser=driven business models.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

* Understand the organization of creative industries
* Understand the economic principles underlying creative industries
* Understand the history of and unique policies and structures of the film, music, and tv industries
* Understand the logic of contracts and industrial structures of media businesses
* Understand why deals and contracts in difference media industries are structured the way they are; why some creative activities occur in ongoing organizations (“firms”), and others in one-off deals (“the market”)

**Required Texts:**

Richard Caves, *Creative Industries: Contracts Between Art and Commerce*

Richard Caves, *Switching Channels: Organization and Change in TV Broadcasting*

David Passman,*All You Need to Know About the Music Business*

Timothy Wu, *The Curse of Bigness: Antitrust in the New Gilded Age*

**Grading**  
You will receive details about each assignment separately. **All assignments must be completed and handed in on time. Late assignments will be marked down three points per day (including weekends and holidays). If you are unable to turn in an assignment due to illness or a personal emergency, you must provide documentation that will allow you to be excused, or discuss your situation with the professor in a timely manner, before the paper is due. Do not wait until the end of the semester to sort things out. Remember: this is YOUR responsibility.**

| Evaluation | Points | % of Grade |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Participation |  | 15% |
| Midterm (5-7 pages) |  | 30% |
| Media Industry Report |  | 20% |
| Prospectus |  | 5% |
| Research Paper (Due Friday, May 8) |  | 30% |

**Grading Scale**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 95% to 100%: A | 80% to 83%: B- | 67% to 69%: D+ |
| 90% to 94%: A- | 77% to 79%: C+ | 64% to 66%: D |
| 87% to 89%: B+ | 74% to 76%: C | 60% to 63%: D- |
| 84% to 86%: B | 70% to 73%: C- | 0% to 59%: F |

All assignments are due on the dates specified via Turnitin (Blackboard).

**Grading Assessments & Standards:**

You are responsible for the material covered in class and in the reading. You will be evaluated on the following:

1. the level of your engagement with the class materials (as demonstrated in your written work
2. your capacity to explain your ideas and analysis in articulate and well-written forms
3. your ability to creatively explore those theories and methodologies

**All of your work will be graded on two primary evaluative scales:**

1. **how well it demonstrates an understanding of the theories and methodologies of the class**
2. **how well it articulates and structures its argument**

You must complete ALL of these assignments in order to pass the class. **Failure to complete one of them will result not only in an F for that assignment, but a failing grade in the course.**

**Course Grading Policy:**

Grades will be assigned as follows:

A outstanding, thoughtful and insightful work and analysis, showing an ability to think beyond the basic course material.

A grade of A+ (97-100) *may* be given to *individual* assignments in *rare* instances where expectations are exceeded.

A-/B+ above average work, demonstrating effort and keen understanding of

conceptual ideas

B/B- average work, needs improvement on ideas, execution, and argument

C+/C shows little effort, lacks clarity and/or argument

C- fulfilling the bare minimum and showing little understanding of the

material

D no understanding of the material and/or does not meet bare minimum

criteria

F failure to meet minimum criteria

Each assignment will be worth 100 points and will be converted to a percentage score depending upon the weight assigned to each. Your percentage scores on the assignments will be totaled and translated to a letter grade per the scale shown below:

A+ = 97-100 (only applicable to individual assignments, NOT course grade)

A = 96-94 C = 76-74

A- = 93-90 C- = 73-70

B+ = 89-87 D+ = 69-67

B = 86-84 D = 66-64

B- = 83-80 D- = 63-60

C+ = 79-77 F = 59-00

If you have concerns regarding a grade on a given assignment, you must wait 24 hours (‘cooling off’ period) before appealing it in writing, stating the reasons why you feel the grade is inaccurate. All concerns should be addressed within 10 days of receiving the graded assignment. After that, no appeals will be accepted for review and the grade will be considered final.

**Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown**

***Important note to students:*** *Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Topics/Daily Activities | Readings and Homework | Deliverable/Due Dates |
| Week 1  Aug 19 | Introduction to the course |  |  |
| Week 2  Aug 26 | Creative Economies | R. Caves, “Introduction” and Ch. 1 & 13 |  |
| Week 3  Sep 2 | The Toy Industry & the Publishing Business | R. Caves, Ch. 3, 11, and 12, in *Creative Industries* |  |
| Week 4  Sep 9 | The Film Industry | R. Caves, Ch. 5, 7, & 8 |  |
| Week 5  Sep 16 | The Film Industry | R. Caves, Ch. 10  Kemper on contracts  Passman, Ch. 3 & 6, in *All You Need to Know About the Music Business* |  |
| Week 6  Sep 23 | The Television Industry | Caves, Introduction, Ch. 1 & 2, in *Switching Channels* |  |
| Week 7  Sep 30 | The Television Industry | Caves, Ch. 6, 6, & 7 in *Switching Channels* |  |
| Week 8  Oct 7 | The Music Industry | Caves Ch. 9 & 18 in *Creative Industries*  Passman Ch. 7, 8, 9, & 13 in *All You Need to Know About the Music Business* |  |
| Week 9  Oct 14 | The Music Industry | Passman, Ch. 1, 2, 12, 15, 16, 23, & 24 |  |
| Week 10  Oct 21 | Contemporary Issues | Caves, *Switching Channels* Ch. 9 & Epilogue |  |
| Week 11  Oct 28 | Contemporary Issues | Timothy Wu, *The Curse of Bigness* (complete) |  |
| Week 11  Nov 4 | Class Presentations |  |  |
| Week 12  Nov 11 | Class Presentations |  |  |
| Study Days  Final Paper Due:  Nov 23 |  |  |  |

**Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

**a. Academic Conduct**

*Plagiarism*

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).

**b. Support Systems**

*Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](https://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling/)

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

*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 and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](https://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault/)

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

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298*

[equity.usc.edu](https://equity.usc.edu/), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by 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. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*

[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\_report](https://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report/)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, 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*

[uscsa.usc.edu](https://uscsa.usc.edu/)

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.

*Annenberg Student Success Fund*

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/additional-funding-resources>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

*Breaking Bread Program [undergraduate students only]*

<https://undergrad.usc.edu/faculty/bread/>

The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally “breaking bread” over a meal together and USC will pick up the tab! Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.