



CTPR 562: The Business of the Motion Picture Studio
Units: 4.0

1/25/21–4/26/21, Mondays 6-9 PM

Location: On Line class via Zoom

Instructor: Professor Bob Osher

Office Hours: Set an appointment with Professor's office.

Contact Info: roscher@usc.edu, 310 702-1212 cell

Always reachable by email.

Student Worker: Ihsanul Huq

Contact Info: huq@usc.edu

Please send ALL EMAILS to Professor Osher, and cc huq@usc.edu

Blackboard Support: blackboard@usc.edu, 213-740-5555

Course Description

What happens in a motion picture studio? How are decisions made, which pictures and TV series get made? How are the pictures and TV shows marketed and distributed, how are they financed? Where are they made and why? How do technologies impact current distribution strategies and production decisions? How do major studios differ from so-called independents? How do "Streamers" differ from Studios? How has the definition of "Studio" evolved with the advent of the Streaming revolution.

Throughout the semester senior industry guest executives/creatives will join the Class to discuss their areas of expertise.

This course will delve into the theatrical motion picture and television businesses from the studio's perspective with an emphasis on filmed content. Guest speakers will discuss their areas of expertise covering creative development, production, post-production, marketing, distribution, business affairs, deal analysis, film finance, tax-based incentive deals, etc., as well as other areas that the studios are substantial market leaders including: animation, home entertainment, sports broadcasting, content acquisitions, TV sales, and recent distribution models revolutionizing the industry such as digital downloads and **SVOD/TVOD/AVOD** platforms.

Weekly Group projects will inform and reinforce the weekly class discussions. Students will be randomly assigned to a Group. During the third hour of most classes these "Groups" will present to their classmates based on question(s) posed in a weekly project fact pattern that will be posted on Blackboard a few days before Class. The Groups will have time during class period during break out sessions to prepare for their presentations. Each Class member will be expected to participate in the Group presentations.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes

This is a survey course of the "Studio business". The objective of the class is prepare students to function in the entertainment industry as business executives or students who want to understand and succeed in the "studio" **environment**. A student's success in the class will be based on successfully analyzing and applying concepts discussed in class and in required reading materials into coherent and supportable business

proposals and positions. Although the class will discuss in detail aspects of the creative process as it relates to content creation, the main focus will be on the business proposition in the Studio environment. These skills will be tested in classroom conversations, a midterm paper, weekly class group projects, and a final group project.

Mid Term Paper and Final Group Project

The **midterm paper** will be three pages in length on a current topic facing the industry. You will be provided a prompt and questions to answer. Your paper will be graded on the subject matter analysis and logic to support your position(s) and recommendation(s). The paper will be assigned during the seventh week of class. The midterm papers will be submitted via email prior to class on March 15th, 2021.

The **Final Group project** will be based on a prompt provided during week twelve. A detailed discussion on expectations and deliverables will be had during that class. Class members will be assigned to new Groups. Each Group will prepare a powerpoint and oral presentation. During subsequent class meetings, I will make time during each class to answer questions and individually help guide the Groups in the execution of these presentations. On the last day the class meets (week 15), each Group will orally present their findings to the other members of the class via ZOOM for approximately 20 minutes. The written and oral presentations will be graded on the same basis as the midterm. The written presentation will be submitted before the last class via email.

Course Notes

Required reading assignments will be posted on Blackboard by Professor Osher.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

- Articles posted on Blackboard by Professor Osher. These articles will be discussed and be the basis of the weekly group projects during the third hour of the class.

OPTIONAL READING:

- The Hollywood Economist 2.0, by Edward Jay Epstein, Melville House, Publisher
- The Big Picture: Money and Power in Hollywood by Edward Jay Epstein, Random House, Publisher
- The Curse of the Mogul: What's Wrong with the World's Leading Media Companies by Jonathan A. Knee, Bruce C. Greenwald and Ava Seave, Penguin Group, Publisher
- DAILY VARIETY, HOLLYWOOD REPORTER, or DEADLINE (online)

Course Evaluation

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	% of Grade
Mid Term Paper (3/5)	40%
Final Group Project (4/23)	30%
Classroom Participation / Weekly Group Projects	30%
TOTAL	100%

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Attendance

Class attendance is essential to your success in this course and is part of your grade. Students are responsible for the course materials, including lectures, from the first day of this class, forward. It is the student's obligation to bring oneself up to date on any missed coursework.

In class contribution is a significant part of your grade and an important part of our shared learning experience. Your active participation helps me to evaluate your overall performance.

Online Class & Asynchronous Learning Policies:

Camera: Please have your camera on for our Zoom class 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 you have 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 regardless of the region or time zone you are studying from.

Time Zones: If you currently reside in a region where the time zone falls outside 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 me for accommodations.

You can excel in this area if you come to class on time and contribute to the course by:

- Providing strong evidence of having thought through the material
- Advancing the discussion by contributing insightful comments and questions
- Listening attentively in class
- Demonstrating interest in your peers' comments, questions, and presentations
- Giving constructive feedback to your peers when appropriate
- Actively participating in weekly group projects and the Final Group project

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics/Daily Activities
Week 1 1/18	NO CLASS Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Week 2 1/25	Class Introduction, overview of the creative process: Weekly Group Project
Week 3 2/1	Creative development of IP; Weekly Group project
Week 4 2/8	Physical Production (Post-Production) Assessment and impact of Covid -19 thereon; Weekly Group Project
Week 5 2/15	NO CLASS President's Day
Week 6 2/22	Business Affairs (Deals); Weekly Group Project
Week 7 3/1	Business Affairs (packaging/green-light); Weekly Group Project
Week 8 3/8	Film and TV Finance; Weekly Group Project
Week 9 3/15	Production/Distribution Structures including tectonic shift to SVODs; Weekly Group Project MIDTERM PAPER DUE
Week 10 3/22	Shifting Forms of Distribution/Content (SVOD/OTT/TVOD); Weekly Group Project
Week 11 3/30	Sports Broadcasting; Weekly Group Project
Week 12 4/6	International Production / Acquisitions; Weekly Group Project
Week 13 4/13	TV Sales; Final Weekly Group Project
Week 14 4/20	Working in a Studio/Entertainment Industry (relationship management and leadership skills, etc.); Final Group project prep
Week 15 4/27	Final group project presentations

Week 16 5/4	University Finals Period (class does not meet)
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**Order and topics subject to change and guest speaker availability.*

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, 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

