CTPR 522: REALITY/NON-SCRIPTED TV FROM IDEATION TO EXECUTION

Units: 2.0
Spring 2021 – Tuesday – 6:00pm to 8:50pm

IMPORTANT:
The general expectation for a standard format course offered in a standard 15-week term is that the number of 50-minute contact hours per week should equal the number of semester units indicated and that one semester unit entails 1 hour of class time and 2 hours of outside work (3 hours total) per week. Standard fall and spring sessions (001) require a final summative experience during the University scheduled final exam day and time.

Please refer to the *Contact Hours Reference* to see guidelines for courses that do not follow a standard format and/or a standard term.

Location: Online
https://usc.zoom.us/j/95263447915?pwd=VHhqNUVDcVZnVXNxVnpiSWhTUkdNdz09
Meeting ID: 952 6344 7915
Passcode: 8zK0vDQy6Y

Instructor: Scott Stone

Office: Zoom Appointments
Office Hours: 5:00 – 6:00pm Tuesday (flexible on other times)
Contact Info: 323-860-8435 (ask Scott/Adam for cell info)
sstone@stonetv.com (always with a cc to Adam)

Scott's Assistant: Adam Everist

Office: Zoom Appointments
Office Hours: By Appointment
Contact Info: aeverist@stonetv.com

1.27.2020

Course Description

This is a hands-on course that provides a comprehensive overview of the world of non-scripted or so called "reality" television defined as any TV show that is not a scripted sitcom, a scripted drama, live sports or live news. You will learn the process of TV development from ideation to sale, including production of industry-quality show materials. The class is project-based, consisting of multiple pitches of original ideas from all students and in class development of those ideas. Each student pitches their own idea to an agent as the midterm. The second half of the semester you work in teams to produce a "sizzle reel" and sales material for a select number of projects. Project work is complemented by class discussion and prominent guest speakers currently working in the industry.

Learning Objectives

Students will first learn how to breakdown reality shows to their core, and then take their own show concept from idea to execution of materials necessary to pitch it. Using real world techniques and skills, students also learn how to work in teams to pitch their ideas to a working network executive.

Prerequisite(s): None
Co-Requisite(s): None
Concurrent Enrollment: None
Recommended Preparation: Students must have basic production skills including but not limted to basic research, writing, shooting (if necessary) and video editing

Course Notes

Students create, develop and pitch original concepts for non-scripted TV shows. Each student must pitch their classmates and professor multiple projects until one is chosen to present as their mid-term to a packaging agent(s). The agent, along with professor Stone, identify the most viable projects. Those projects are further developed, "sizzle reels" and written treatments produced, and then pitched to a real network buyer as the final. Learning how to properly pitch is a big part of this class. **All students are required to work on at least one final project in some capacity.** Examples of past work will be shown in the first class

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

See above

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Watch reality TV!

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Weekly assignments must be turned in on time and reveal students effort and creativity. Emphasis in grading assigments is placed on effort, thouroughness and creativity. Knowing the landascpe of past and existing reality TV is helpful but not necessary.

Grading Breakdown

Topics	Assessment Tool (assignments)	% of Grade
Attendance	Attendance is taken every week. Showing up in this class is key! You may miss up to two classes over the semester.	15%
Participation	Abundant class participation on your project and input on your classmates' is required from all students. Your grade is affected accordingly.	15%
Assignments	Assignments are submitted via email by 6:00 PM PST on the Monday before each class.	10%
Mid-Term	The mid-term consists of a verbal pitch of your original idea to a non-scripted packaging agent(s,) along with a written "Leave-behind." Three or four of the shows pitched will be chosen to further develop for the final.	25%
Final Project	Working in teams, the chosen projects will be developed into a full verbal pitch, 3-5 minute sizzle reel, and a fully fleshed out treatment for the first season of the series.	35%
TOTAL		

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

Production Numbers:

Production Numbers will be given to any class who normally receives numbers. Students will be instructed when it is possible for them to go onto SCAcommunity and create numbers where authorized for their class. Class SAs will aid students in making, or correcting, production numbers if needed. Note many classes work in teams where they share a production number. Ask your SA about the needs for your particular class.

This semester, the School of Cinematic Arts will be covering all student Insurance Premiums and Lab Fees which are normally charged to students. Students will be required to use approved "Fast Track" Insurance companies only for rentals and equipment. No other insurance requests will be honored. USC does not insure Sharegrid or companies not on the "Fast Track List."

Students may still make requests for location insurance verifications (or COIs) when requested by locations. Students are reminded that these requests can take 3-10 days from request to final approval.

All necessary forms and online request forms are available on SCAcommunity under the "Student Productions" heading. Contact your SA with any questions that you may have.

In terms of shooting plans, student are required to vet their plans with their faculty including discussing any Hazardous Shooting Conditions as defined by the SCA's Safety Book as posted on SCAcommunity. This semester students will also be required to vet their plans for remaining Covid-safe with our Covid Safety Monitor. Ask your SA if you are unclear about these protocols.

Asynchronous Learning

All class sessions will be Zoom recorded and made available for asynchronous viewing until end of the grading period in early December. Students enrolled in this course from outside the U.S. Pacific Time Zone will still be expected to participate in real time assuming that the official class time falls between 7am and 10pm in their time zones. Wherever possible faculty will be understanding and make accommodations to ease the inconvenience of asynchronous learning.

Students from outside the U.S. Pacific Time Zone for whom the class falls between the hours of 10pm and 7am may still be required to complete certain components of the course synchronously. These components will be announced at the beginning of the semester and students with concerns about meeting these requirements should discuss them with their faculty at that time.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

WEEK ONE (1/19) HOUSEKEEPING and HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Part One

- Housekeeping - syllabus etc.
- Pitch your loglines

Part Two - How Did We Get Here?

- The history of non-scripted television, as old as TV itself...older
- *Candid Microphone* to *Candid Camera* to *Punk'd* to *Impractical Jokers*
- *An American Family* to *The Real World* to *The Kardashians.*
- *Ted Mack's Amateur Hour* to *American Idol* to *The Voice*
- The current non-scripted landscape
  - o Docu-Soap (*The Real Housewives, Keeping Up with the Kardashians)*
  - o *Doc-series (Tiger King, Pretend It's a City, The Pharmacist)*
  - o Ocu-Series (*Deadliest Catch, American Pickers*)
  - o Adventure Competition (*Alone, Survivor, Amazing Race, Naked and Afraid*)
  - o Process (*Project Runway, Master Chef, Blown Away*)
  - o Performance (*The Voice, The Masked Singer*)
  - o Game (*Wheel of Fortune, Jeopardy, Family Feud, The Wall, Floor is Lava*)
  - o Relationship (*The Bachelor, Married at First Sight, The Circle, ⊡0 Day Fiancé*)
  - o Make Over/Lifestyle (*Queer Eye, Tidying Up with Marie Kondo*)
  - o Re-enactment (*Swamp Murders, Drunk History*)
  - o Hidden Camera/Comedy (*Impractical Jokers, Punk'd*)
- Writing a logline

Assignment: write three original loglines

WEEK TWO (1/26) - IDEATION

Part One

- Half the class pitches their show
- The class helps develop each show as a team (loglines)

Part Two

- Half the class pitches their show
- The class helps develop each show as a team (loglines)

Assignment: write three original loglines (you may include updated loglines from week one)

WEEK THREE (2/2) CASTING (guest) - MORE IDEATION

Part One

- What does a reality casting director do?
  - o What makes a good reality TV personality?
  - o How to find your cast?
  - o Putting together an ensemble cast
  - o Drawing the line - the moral compass of non-scripted

Part Two

- Further develop show concepts
- Begin to narrow focus to one idea

Assignment: record and edit a two (2) minute interview tied to your show - someone you think would make good TV.

WEEK FOUR (2/9) FORMAT BREAKDOWN

Part One

- Share your interviews

Part Two
- Breaking down a show format (act structure, flow, commercial breaks, cliff hangers)

Assignment - write a draft of your show's act-by-act breakdown

WEEK FIVE (2/16) WRITING A LEAVE-BEHIND
Part One
- Present act-by-act breakdowns
Part Two
- Writing a Leave-behind

Assignment - write a draft of your show's Leave-behind

WEEK SIX (2/23) HOW TO PITCH YOUR SHOW
Part One
- Review Leave-behinds
Part Two
- Pitching non-scripted TV 101

Assignment - write your midterm pitch

WEEK SEVEN (3/2) MIDTERM: PITCH FEST (long class - we go until it's done)
Part One
- Practice pitch to Professor Stone
Part Two - Midterm
- Your shows are pitched to an agent(s)
- 3-4 projects are announced for further development

WEEK EIGHT (3/9) SIZZLE REELS AND TREATMENTS
Part One
- Screen library of sizzle reels
- Review sizzle scripts and treatments
- What is a series Arc? (examples)
Part Two
- Breakout groups
  - Planning for final delivery
  - Assign team jobs
  - Develop your sizzle/treatment plans

Assignment: Draft Sizzle Reel Script - Treatment Outline - TBD Casting

WEEK NINE (3/16) SERIES ARCS
Part One
- Review two projects (sizzle script/series arc/treatment outline)
Part two
- Review two projects (sizzle script/series arc/treatment outline)

Assignment: Shoot and/or edit sizzle (rough cut) - Draft full Treatment (including format and series arc)

WEEK TEN (3/23) NO CLASS (Wellness Day)

WEEK ELEVEN (3/30) HOW TO PITCH (guest) REVIEW MATERIAL
Part One

- Network Exec Visit - How to Pitch from a buyers POV

Part Two
- Review sizzle rough cuts and treatments

Assignment: Sizzle rough cut 2, Treatment v2

WEEK TWELVE (4/6) SIZZLE ROUGH CUTS
- Review sizzles and treatments

Assignment: Sizzle rough cut 3, treatment v3, All research showrunner for next class (guest) write a bullet point bio (limit one page)

WEEK THIRTEEN (4/13) REAL WORLD FEEDBACK
Part One
- Screen sizzle fine cut and pitch format to guest showrunner

Part Two
- Breakout Rooms for final push

Assignment: Sizzle Fine Cut - Treatment v4 - Other material needed for your pitch

WEEK FOURTEEN (4/20) FINAL REVIEW
Part One
- Final Material Review

Part Two
- Pitching 102

Assignment: Sizzle Lock Cut - Treatment FINAL

WEEK FIFTEEN (4/27) FINAL PITCH
Part One
- Practice Pitch to Professor Stone

Part Two
- Final Pitch to Network Programming Executive

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.

Safety:

All students are expected to abide by USC School of Cinematic Arts Safety Guidelines. Violations of any of the safety guidelines may result in disciplinary action ranging from confiscation of footage to expulsion from the University.

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.

Stressful Times:

These are stressful times in our country, and Graduate School in and of itself is stressful. I encourage you to take care of yourself and your fellow students. USC provides opportunities for Mindful Meditation http://mindful.usc.edu and Mental health counseling is available at the Engemann Student Health Center, 1031 W. 34th Street, 213-740-9355.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.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 and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call
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, 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
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
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 Campus Support & Intervention - (213) 821-4710
campussupport.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
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) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu
Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

ombuds.usc.edu
A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.