

USC SCA CTPR 538 INTERMEDIATE PRODUCING  
Section: 18650 (2 Units)

SPRING 2021

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Day/Time: <b>Mondays 7pm-10pm</b> via ZOOM	Office Hours: By Appt
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### COURSE DESCRIPTION and OUTLINE

#### OVERVIEW

Intermediate Producing (CTPR 538 – 18650), otherwise known as “Real World Producing”, is an in depth examination of the role of the producer in motion picture, television, streaming, and new media production. The course will examine the creative producing process behind the initiation and selling of a concept, funding the production, and the practical processes of casting, staffing, scheduling, budgeting, overseeing the shoot, and post production. It will explore the differences between a Producer, Executive Producer, Line Producer, and Co-Producer. The emphasis will be on current real world practices, focusing on developing skill sets that are essential for successful producers.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Develop an understanding of the fundamental relationships between the Producer and the myriad other collaborators necessary for success: studio, network, and web executives, independent funders, writers, directors, senior creative craftsmen, technical crew, and marketing professionals.
- Develop fundamental knowledge and skills in the areas of line producing: scheduling and budgeting, leadership techniques, mediation, and negotiating skills, and developing proper creative sensitivity.
- Students will learn the specific skills required to develop an effective pitch for a project/production originated by the student specifically for this class.
- Students will learn how to establish standards of quality and ethical conduct to guide on the job behavior and overall career choices.

#### REQUIRED MATERIALS/PROGRAMS

- For this course you will be required to have an up to date version of Entertainment Partner’s Movie Magic Scheduling and Movie Magic Budgeting. You will be provided with a coupon to either lease or purchase these programs at student discount prices.

### PROJECTS and ASSIGNMENTS:

- Each week one student will present an in depth 6-8 minute report on a current topic related to our industry that they feel is of relevant interest to the class. The topic should be inspired and researched using current sources of industry related publications, websites, online newsletters, etc. This will be an opportunity to practice public speaking and pitch techniques, with immediate review comments from the entire class.
- When guest speakers attend class one student will present our guest speaker to the class, having done the proper research on our guest and talking with him/her beforehand.
- Each student will schedule a half hour and a one hour television production.
- Each student will complete a budget assignment based on their one hour schedule.
- Final Project: Each student will develop a final project for development and presentation. These projects will include the full development of a production that is realistically feasible to bring to market within the foreseeable future. This project can be a web series, documentary, television pilot, business proposition and plan, or any other project that the student proposes that receives the go ahead from the professor. Generally, these are not full length feature films, the development of which is covered in other courses.

### 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.

### 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.

Grade weighting:

Class Participation: 25%

Class Presentations: 20%

Budgets & Schedules: 30%

Final Project: 25%

### ADDITIONAL POLICIES

- One of the basic principles of this class is that it is conducted as if we are working together in a professional production environment. Therefore, completing assignments ON TIME is of paramount importance. In fact, it is preferred that they be submitted early. Late handing in of assignments, without prior approval, will result in direct grade demotion.
- As this semester's class will be online, it is strongly encouraged that all students keep their zoom cameras ON, unless granted permission ahead of time by the instructor. I understand there may be circumstances that would require the turning off of the camera. Please let me know before class and I will be as accommodating as possible.

- Proper online etiquette is required. Please dress as if we were together on campus and in the classroom. Drinking water and other non-alcoholic beverages is allowed. Please keep eating to a minimum. We will have breaks during the class during which you will be able to eat.
- Participating in class is highly encouraged. We all know zoom can be awkward at times, but mastering the skill of participating in zoom meetings is essential in today's producing environment. We will go over the procedure for "raising your hand" and asking questions in the chat section of Zoom.
- Time zone issues and challenges may arise if you are not in the Los Angeles area during our live classes on Monday nights from 7-10pm LA time. Please be in touch with the professor to discuss if this applies to you.
- All lectures will be recorded. This is designed for those students who cannot attend the live class due to time zone challenges. This is NOT designed to allow you to miss class if you can possibly attend the live session.

### 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" - researching their career and introducing them to the class.

### CLASS SCHEDULE

All classes will be on Monday evening – 7-10pm – Los Angeles, California, USA time

Class dates Spring 2021:

1/25, 2/1, 2/8, 2/22, 3/1, 3/8, 3/15, 3/22, 3/29, 4/5, 4/12, 4/19, 4/26

**No class on FEB 15 (President's Day).** Note class starts on 1/25 due to MLK holiday on 1/18.

The class SA will be in touch before class begins to offer a time for each student to meet with the professor in a one on one zoom meeting. This is not a mandatory meeting; it's just that in the time of remote/zoom meeting it's good to meet before we gather in our group setting.

### WEEKLY TOPICS

Weekly topics for discussion will be announced beforehand and all course readings, viewings and materials will be posted on Blackboard. Please check the class Blackboard modules for information. Below please see a summary of the course topics that will be covered.

## COURSE TOPICS TO BE COVERED

### Producing Skills

#### Concepts of leadership

Earning respect

Developing the knowledge to know as much as possible about what your colleagues need to get the job done

Working in an ETHICAL fashion with consistency

List making and prioritization of tasks

Understand production is a series of never ending problems to solve

Be consistent, fair and kind

Hold your ground when appropriate

Authority is taken, not given.

#### Interpersonal relationships

It's all "who you know"

Collect people – they are the foundation of your life and work

Follow up with everyone and be open to new relationships

You will be judged on the passion and drive and commitment you bring

Be memorable - Never be boring

#### Special Project Development

Short description/ pitch – your elevator moment

Statement of why project is viable in today's market

Potential buyers

Potential brand partners

Who is the audience?

Option agreement elements

Creative partners

Marketing plan

References for your information that you can call upon in a pitch meeting

Most important – bring your personality and passion to the presentation

#### Scheduling – using Movie Magic Scheduling

Script breakdown procedures

Scheduling concepts – prioritizing time allowed

Balancing pages of work per day considering what each scene requires

Location, cast, sets and other considerations when scheduling

Day out of Days forms

Strip design, report design

Knowing the script in detail to support your decision making powers

#### Budgeting – using Movie Magic Budgeting

Work hours versus pay hours

- Working with the templates
- Setting up and inserting Globals
- Setting up and using Groups
- Setting up and applying Fringes
- Assigning tax credit/incentives to various line items
- Using the budget as a checklist for all your producer responsibilities
- Cost reporting – using cost report to massage money from one category to another
- Using Globals and Groups to aide in figuring out “what if” scenarios
- For budgeting of series – prep, wrap, all series and amortization budgets

#### Options

- Getting an agreement in writing
- Option Period – amount of time
- Option Price – with extensions
- Extending the Option
- Pre negotiated purchase price
- Credits
- Sequels, remakes, other platforms covered
- What markets are covered
- Figuring out amounts and percentages to pay based on platform
- Force majeure, where adjudicated, warranties, indemnifications, assignment

#### Tax incentives / Tax Credits / Tax rebates

- Deciding where to shoot your production
- Comparing offers from competing locations
- What is a “qualified spend?”
- Procedure for receiving consideration – lottery, applications, etc
- Selling your credit – what are they worth?

#### Music

- Practices in licensing and acquiring music for your productions.
- Working with a composer for the creation of new music tracks
- Proper paperwork procedures required for legal use of music

#### Harassment and Discrimination Issues

- Know which traits and groups the law protects
- Learn how to recognize harassment
- Learn how to properly respond to information and conversations brought to you
- Most importantly, learn how to prioritize everyone’s safety and peace of mind

#### “Truisms”

- Concepts and practices that are vital and necessary to being effective and ethical producer in today’s media landscape.

## 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](http://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).

### 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.

### 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. 34<sup>th</sup> Street, 213-740-9355.

### 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.

### Support Systems:

*Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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 Campus Support & Intervention - (213) 821-4710*

[campussupport.usc.edu](http://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](http://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) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

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

[ombuds.usc.edu](http://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.

