

USC School of Cinematic Arts – CTPR 538 (Intermediate Producing) – Fall 2021

Section: 18650 (2 Units)

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Day/Time: Mondays 7pm-10pm Room: SCA 255 Office Hours: By Appt.
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COURSE DESCRIPTION and OUTLINE

OVERVIEW

Intermediate Producing (CTPR 538 – 18650) is an in-depth examination of the role of the producer in feature, episodic, and new media production. The course will examine the creative and practical producing processes behind the initiation and development of a concept; selling the project or financing the production; casting/packaging; staffing; scheduling; budgeting; and overseeing pre-production, production, post production, and distribution/marketing. The emphasis will be on current real world practices, focusing on developing skill sets that are essential for successful producers.

COURSE GOALS

- Develop a basic understanding of the fundamental responsibilities of the producer from the inception of a project through its release.
- Examine the producer's role in the creative process and in building the many and varied relationships with the community of collaborators necessary for success: writers, directors, senior creative craftspeople, technical crew, talent representatives, marketing professionals, and the studio executives and independent financiers that back the project.
- Develop basic knowledge and skills in the areas of pitching/concept presentation, leadership techniques, mediation and negotiating skills, line producing (including scheduling and budgeting), and creative oversight.
- Establish standards of quality and ethical conduct to guide career choices and job performance.

PROJECTS and ASSIGNMENTS:

- Each week one or two students will present a 10-15 minute in-depth report on an interesting and relevant topic, researched from a variety of industry-related news and information sources. This will be an opportunity to practice public speaking and pitch techniques, with immediate review comments from the entire class.
- Each student will schedule and budget for a one-hour television/episodic production.
- Special Project: Each student will prepare a final project for presentation. The project will be a complete development of a viable, real world production or enterprise – to be pitched to the class at the end of the term.

WEEKLY LESSONS/TOPICS

Weekly lessons/topics will be announced beforehand (either in the prior class or via email) and all course readings, viewings, and materials will be posted on Blackboard as appropriate. Below please see a non-exhaustive summary of the course topics that will be covered.

- Different types of producers (e.g. Producer, Executive Producer, Line Producer, etc.)
- A producer's responsibilities from concept and development through pre-production, production, post production, and distribution/marketing
- Concept identification and presentation: pitch tips, loglines, protecting the idea
- Options & shopping agreements
- Financing & tax credits
- Producing skills: leadership, interpersonal relationships, setting goals & prioritization
- Scheduling: breakdowns, overview principles, day out of days
- Budgeting: critical assumptions, globals, budget as a producing guide
- Film/episodic/media literacy & staying up to date on industry news
- Special project development: from beginning to end (pitch to marketing)

REQUIRED PROGRAMS & MATERIALS

Each student must have their own copy of Movie Magic Scheduling and Movie Magic Budgeting software. If you do not already own these programs, academic versions at discounted student prices may be available via a coupon code. See professor for details.

Each student must maintain an ongoing effort to stay current with industry news. The class as a whole will develop an up to date list of resources (trades, websites, podcasts, etc.).

GUEST SPEAKERS

Throughout the course, guest speakers will visit the class to share their knowledge and experiences. Examples of guests include professional producers, writers, directors, executives, designers, or creative technicians - in other words, senior creatives or executive members of a production team or the larger ecosystem. Confirmed speakers will be announced during class on an ongoing basis, subject to change based on guest availability.

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 all looked-for traits indicative of a growing mastery of the producer's role. Success is predicated on engaged and ongoing interaction between all members of the class.

Grade weighting:

Class Participation: 30%

Class Presentations: 20%

Schedule & Budget Assignments: 25%

Final Project: 25%

Late or missed assignments, as well as tardiness and unexcused absences, will have a negative impact on your grade. If you must arrive late or miss class entirely, call your SA as soon as possible and always before class begins. Excused absences will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and must be requested more than 24 hours before the class in question by contacting the professor.

Negative grade impacts:

Late assignment: -10% of assignment grade per day (e.g. 1 day late -10%, 2 days late, -20%, etc.)

Missed assignment or more than 5 days late: Receive 0% on assignment grade

Failure to present class presentation or final project on scheduled date: Receive 0% on presentation/project grade

Tardy: -5% of overall class grade per tardy

Unexcused absence: -10% of overall class grade per absence

COURSE OUTLINE:

Class #1: Monday, August 23

Housekeeping: Introductions. Course overview/review syllabus & assignments. Establish class protocols.

Lecture/Discussion: What it means to be a producer/different types of producers

Assign weekly presentation dates.

Class #2: Monday, August 30

Student Presentations. Lecture/Discussion.

NO CLASS: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 6 (LABOR DAY)

Class #3: Monday, September 13

Student Presentation. Guest Speaker. Lecture/Discussion.

Class #4: Monday, September 20

Student Presentations. Lecture/Discussion.

Class #5: Monday, September 27

Student Presentation. Guest Speaker. Lecture/Discussion.

Class #6: Monday, October 4

Student Presentations. Lecture/Discussion. MM Scheduling tutorial.

Class #7: Monday, October 11

Student Presentation. Guest Speaker. Lecture/Discussion.

SCHEDULING ASSIGNMENT DUE.

Class #8: Monday, October 18

Student Presentations. Lecture/Discussion. MM Budgeting tutorial.

Class #9: Monday, October 25

Student Presentation. Guest Speaker. Lecture/Discussion.

BUDGETING ASSIGNMENT DUE.

Class #10: Monday, November 1

Student Presentations. Lecture/Discussion.

Class #11: Monday, November 8

Student Presentation. Guest Speaker. Lecture/Discussion.

Class #12: Monday, November 15

Student Presentations. Lecture/Discussion.

Class #13: Monday, November 22

Student Presentation. Guest Speaker. Lecture/Discussion.

Practice pitching final projects to each other.

Assign final presentation dates.

Class #14: Monday, November 29

Individual meetings to review final projects/presentations.

Class #15: Monday, December 6

FINAL PRESENTATIONS DUE.

Class #16: Monday, December 13

FINAL PRESENTATIONS DUE.

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:

USC COVID-19 Resource Center

<https://coronavirus.usc.edu/covid-19-vaccine-information-center/covid-19-vaccine-faq/>

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 Student Accessibility Services - (213) 740-0776

osas.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.

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.

PLEASE NOTE:
FOOD AND DRINKS ARE NOT PERMITTED INDOORS IN THE SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS
COMPLEX DURING COVID