



USC

**CTPR 410: The Movie Business: From Story
Concept to Exhibition**

Units: 2

Wednesday 6:30 – 9:30 PM

Location: SCA 110

Instructor: Danny Sussman

Office: Online

**Office Hours: Tuesday 5:50 – 6:25 PM (and by
appointment)**

Student Assistant: Srika Ramani

Office Hours: Tuesday 4:30 – 5:15 PM

Contact Info: DannySussmanTA@gmail.com

Course Description

To learn and understand the current business of bringing both film and TV projects to life. We will take a closer look at the inner workings of the entertainment industry. The roles of the agent, manager, attorneys, and financing entities will help us create a true business model in order to enable graduates of this class to have an opportunity to try to get a project made.

This class is going to provide an overview of deal-making, both in film and TV: pilot deals, overall deals, writer deals, director deals, and potentially an in-depth discussion of one of the largest deals ever made in the history of television.

Course Notes

In addition to the content outlined in the syllabus, we will frequently be covering some fundamental details concerning the entertainment business through guest speakers. The topics covered may include: the ratings, Weekend Top Ten, the Big Board, coverage, TV and Movie deals, Variety articles, vertical integration, the agencies, and the networks and studios.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

- LA Times Calendar section, cover-to-cover every Sunday
- NY Times Arts and Leisure, every Sunday
- Deadline Hollywood

Description and Assessment of Assignments

-Class Participation is graded each class. It is based on each of the following:

1) Attendance

Should you need to be absent:

- Send the TA an email **Prior to the start of class** informing them of your reason.

This does not excuse you but merely provides us context.

- If you are tested positive for COVID, you will be required to isolate. Please do not show up to class if you sense you may be showing symptoms. It is in the interest of keeping your peers safe. Classes will be recorded for viewing, **Only** for those that cannot attend in person.

2) The number of questions you ask/comments you make

3) The quality of the questions you ask/comments you make

You will be required to wear a mask throughout the entire duration of the class. Momentary removal to sip water is allowed. Eating during class is strictly prohibited.

-The **Midterm** will be an individual oral presentation in the form of a pitch. You will be required to pitch an original idea for one of the following options of your choosing: a TV series (comedy or drama), studio or independent film, documentary, non-scripted TV series, TV movie or mini-series, or book adaptation to film or TV. Details will follow.

-The **Final Exam** will consist solely of 50 multiple-choice questions and an analytical essay worth 50 points. Please take DETAILED notes throughout the semester on important topics to ensure that you have the necessary study material.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	% of Grade
Participation	20%
Midterm	40%
Final Exam	40%
TOTAL	100%

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics	Daily Activities and Classwork
Week 1 Aug 25	Introducing Networks and Production Companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to Professor Danny Sussman - Students will each introduce themselves to the class - Introduction to networks: How do networks work and their link to production companies
Week 2 Sep 1	Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion of the agencies from A-Z - Discuss how representation can aid and abet a particular project going forward
Week 3 Sep 8	Ratings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This class primarily discusses how to read and analyze ratings - Understanding what Live +3 and Live +7 means - Analysis of box office results
Week 4 Sep 15	Endorsements and Branding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In this class, we will discuss the importance of Super Bowl commercials and ad-buying - A discussion of the importance of the big business generated through live events - Assign people to present Super Bowl commercials
Week 5 Sep 22	Pitching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upon acquiring a property, a potential producer must learn the detailed aspects of how to pitch their products to a studio and or a network. We will do a very detailed A to Z section on pitches in the real world and entertainment business - Presentations of Super Bowl commercials/ presentations

Week 6 Sep 29	<i>Midterm Exam begins</i>	<i>First half of class presentations</i>
Week 7 Oct 6	<i>Continuation of Midterm Exam</i>	<i>Second half of class presentations</i>
Week 8 Oct 13	Television Deals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Covering pilot deals, writer deals, overall deals, recurring deals, etc. - A potential analysis of one of the largest deals made in television history - Script Breakdown for the purpose of casting - Discuss the roles of attorneys working with agents and managers in deal making, in getting a film project to the theaters, changing backend of contracts
Week 9 Oct 20	Feature Deals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will discuss the relationships and role differences between agents and managers. - how representation can aid and abet a particular project going forward. - How does a studio and producer go after directors? How is a production team chosen? How is material submitted to reps? This class covers how representation can aid a project going forward. - Outlining the difference between pilot deals, overall deals, and recurring deals. Analysing one of the largest deals made in history
Week 10 Oct 27	The World of Digital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The world of theatres and theatre marketing: Creating the movie theatre experience and using advertising to get viewers in the seat. - A discussion of the various digital platforms. - How has the digital landscape affected business? - SVOD and its impact on the industry
Week 11 Nov 3	<i>Marketing and Promotion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Big business generated through live events such as televised football. - This class will focus on marketing films and how cinemas get people in the seats in today's world of home entertainment centers - How does a studio or network market its product? How do actors participate in promoting a movie or television show? Who are the marketing targets, audiences, downloads, TV shows, bus stops, billboards, etc.
Week 12 Nov 10	Pounding the Boards - Theater and Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An in-depth discussion about how intellectual property from the literary and stage world become film and television - Discuss adapting material for the screen, trends, issues, etc.
Week 13 Nov 17	FANG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The world of streaming & digital. The impact on contracts, representation and the future of network television.

Week 14 Nov 24	<i>Thanksgiving Break</i>	NO CLASS
Week 15 Dec 1st	<i>Revision</i>	- Revising the course and preparation for final
Final Dec 8th	<i>Final Exam</i>	Final Exam

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/ssaa

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.