

CTPR 438 - PRACTICUM IN PRODUCING
SYLLABUS
2 UNITS

USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS
Spring 2019

Pre-requisite: CTPR 310 - Intermediate Production or
CTPR 425 - Production Planning

MEETING TIMES: Tuesday 4-6:50 pm

CLASSROOM: Ron Howard Theater, Zemeckis

INSTRUCTOR: Dan Lupovitz
lupovitz@usc.edu
Office Hours: by appointment

STUDENT ASSISTANT: Kristie Taiwo-Makanjuola
taiwomak@usc.edu
443-630-1609

NOTE: THIS CLASS MAY NOT BE AUDITED.

CLASS OVERVIEW:

This course will provide a comprehensive overview of the world of producing. It is designed to provide the skills for producing a CTPR 480 project and projects produced outside of USC. In both areas, we'll discuss how Covid-19 impacts production and what the producer's role is in dealing with that,

We will look at how projects are conceived, developed, packaged, financed and marketed.

Who are you as a producer? What kind of projects do you want to make? How do you get them made?

We'll cover the nuts and bolts of short and long form projects. By the end of the semester, each student should have the practical skills to pitch a project, develop a script, package the talent, schedule and budget a screenplay and manage a production.

The course will consist of lecture, discussion, audiovisual presentations and if possible given schedules, guest speakers from within the industry.

PROJECTS:

1. Production Company Name and Logo: Each student will create a name and a logo for their production company. **Due January 18.**
2. Movie Release Report: Each student will report on a movie or television show released during the term. Television releases need to include streaming or broadcast venue, format, creative elements, Rotten Tomatoes score, any audience hits/scores information published and marketing profile. Theatrical releases need to include the opening weekend box office, number of screens, per screen average, and Rotten Tomatoes score. For audience scores see Tom Bruggemann's release round up on Mondays published in Indie Wire. For theatrical opening weekend data see boxofficemojo.com and the-numbers.com. **Due date will be scheduled on selection.**
3. IP Acquisition Project: Each student will chose a piece of source material such as a book, play, magazine article, remake, etc., from which a screenplay could be adapted. Students will track down who represents the rights and contact them to find out if they are available and any other information on what the representative would require to option the material. **Report to class what your source material is and who represents it February 8th**
4. Individual Project Pitch: Each student will pitch a feature idea to the class. The pitch should last no longer than 7 minutes. The class will respond and discuss. **Due February 1.** Using this input, students will adjust their pitch, and add the creative package of writer, director and cast. **Due March 1.**
4. Final Pitch: "Production Slate" Pitch: Each student will create a slate of three projects. The centerpiece will be the project they've been pitching, but with a budget figure, a production plan, and a distribution plan with a poster and a tag line. The other two projects will be ideas for projects in a medium of your choice. The slate as a whole should have a cohesive "personality" that reflects the identity of the producer and their production company. Final projects should be handed in on a digital file as well as a hard copy. **Due April 19**

GRADING:

Class Participation	15%
Production Company and Logo	5%
Movie Release Presentation	5%
Individual Project Pitch Part One.	15%
Individual Project Pitch Part Two.	15%
IP Acquisition Project	15%
Final Pitch	30%

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	50 and below

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class.

Two absences will result in your grade being lowered by one full point (ex: A >B).
A third absence will result in your grade being lowered another full point (B >C).
Your grade will be lowered by a point for every subsequent absence.
Two late arrivals equal one full absence.

If a student misses class due to an emergency, the student must contact the professor prior to class (also please contact, and copy, the class Student Assistant).

Required Reading:

Producer to Producer by Maureen A. Ryan - Second edition (2017)
Available at USC Bookstore

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Note: This schedule is approximate. It may be adjusted as required.

Week 1 - January 11th: COURSE OVERVIEW and WHAT IS A PRODUCER?

Introductions
Course overview
Review syllabus, projects, and grading.

What is a producer?

Producer titles and definitions—various types of producers.
What is the work, the craft?
Who are you as a producer?

Assignment: Students will come up with a name of their production company and a logo. Email your logo to Angela before next class.

Week 2 - January 18th: WHAT DO I WANT TO PRODUCE?

Where do ideas come from?
What will work in the marketplace? How do you know?
What's the right medium for the idea?
What's source material?

Presentations: Production Companies and Logos

Assignment: Producer to Producer reading, "Development" pp. 1-17.

Week 3 - January 25th: STEP ONE: THE ART OF THE PITCH

What makes a good pitch?
What's the story?
Who's the audience

Why should this be made now?
Who are you pitching to?
Pitching with a writer and/or director.
Length, characters, visual language, presentation, the art of the meeting.

Originals versus Adaptations

Log Line Game

Assignment: Bring an idea to pitch for your Pitch Project. Pitch must be for a feature film.

Week 4 - February 1st: PITCHING

Students will pitch their Pitch Projects ideas. The class will respond and give input.

Assignment: Adjust your pitch in ways you see it can be improved based on the input from the class.

Choose source material for IP acquisition project

Week 5 - February 8th: WORKING WITH THE WRITER

Adaptations versus Originals

Writing steps: drafts and polishes

How does the producer work with the writer? With and without a director.

How to give script notes.

How and when should you replace the writer?

WGA versus non-WGA

Assignment: Choose a writer for your Pitch Project

Producer to Producer, "Casting," pp. 120-129

Choose source material for IP acquisition project

Week 6 - February 15th: WORKING WITH THE DIRECTOR

Directors

How do you choose a director?

How does the producer work with the director? In development, in preproduction, in production, in post-post-production.

Writer/directors and Director/Producers

How a director brands your project

Week 7 - February 22nd: TALENT PACKING

Actors

Working with the casting director

Character breakdowns

How to get actors to do your movie

Marquee value versus Creative Concerns: do they always have to be in conflict

How actors brand your project

Assignment: Choose a director and lead cast for your Pitch Project

Producer to Producer, "Legal," pp. 199-209

Week 8 - March 1st: DEALS

Writer Deals: Deal memos, shopping agreements, option purchase agreements, chain of title

Director deals

Actor deals
Production deals: crew, cast, E&O Insurance

Producer deals

Personal attorneys versus Production attorneys

Negotiation Exercise: Are you a buyer or a seller?

Report to class what the Source Material your source material is and who represents it.

Assignment: Prepare Second Pitch of Pitch Project with creative elements of
Writer, Director and key cast.
Producer to Producer, "Funding," pp. 108-119

Week 9 - March 8th: STUDIO v INDEPENDENT v INTERNATIONAL

How do you know what kind of project you have and how to best get it made?
Identifying and distinguishing between projects that are right for the studio system, the independent marketplace or the international production or co-production structure.

Sales agents and Pre-sales

Second Pitches, first half

Assignment: Producer to Producer, "Script Breakdown" pp. 52-68 and
"Scheduling," pp. 224-252
Begin to invent ideas for your 2nd and 3rd projects for your slate

Week 10 - March 15th SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS

Week 11 - March 22nd: Television

Format: returning series v limited series v one-offs

Buyers: streamers, broadcasters, premium cable v network, international sales

The producer in television: show runner v non writing produce

Pitch creative elements, part 2

Assignment: Producer to Producer, "Script Breakdown" pp. 52-68 and
"Scheduling," pp. 224-252

Continue working on ideas for your 2nd and 3rd projects for your slate

If your pitch project is for television, start to identify its format and Likely buyers

Week 12 - March 29th: THE ROLE OF THE PRODUCER IN PRODUCTION

Working with the director

Working with department heads

Managing a budget and a schedule

How to determine what size project you have based on your idea and your creative elements.

How to figure out where and how to shoot.

Tax credits, subsidies, and rebates...and does the location have the crew? What you save versus what you spend

Assignment: Start to determine if your Pitch Project is a Studio, Independent or International production or co-production, what budget level it will be and where you'll shoot it.

Continue working on your second and third project for your slate

Start to determine if your Pitch Project is a Studio, Independent or International production or co-production, what budget level it will be and where you'll shoot it.

Continue working on your second and third project for your slate

Assignment: Producer to Producer: "Marketing/Publicity" pp, 347-359

Week 13 - April 5th: MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION

Marketing campaigns

Advertising versus Publicity

What works and what doesn't?

How does the producer work with the marketing team?

What make a good poster and trailer?

Distribution models: platform, limited, wide

VOD, Day and Date

The Collapsing Window

Streamers: Netflix, Amazon, Apple, Hulu

Assignment: Choose a distribution plan and a first-choice distributor for your Pitch Project. Create a poster and a tag line for your marketing

campaign.

Continue working on idea for your second and third project for your slate

of its marketing campaign.

Producer to Producer, "Film Festivals," 361-368

Week 14 - April 12th: FILM FESTIVALS, FILM MARKETS AND FINDING YOUR DISTRIBUTOR

The difference between Festivals and Markets

How do use festivals to find distribution

How to use festivals to launch your film if you already have distribution

The pros and cons of festivals

How to choose the right festival

How to use a film market

Assignment: Prepare to pitch your final version of your Pitch Project, complete with writer, director, lead cast, budget level, production plan, distribution plan and ideal distributor, a movie poster, and a tag line.

Week 15 - April 19th: FINAL PITCH PROJECTS, PART ONE

Week 16 - April 26th: FINAL PITCH PROJECTS, PART TWO

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 Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standard*- <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on 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. 34th Street, 213-740-9355.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call.

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicide crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - 213-740-4900
24/7 on call*

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://enemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting, options, and additional resources, visit the website: / <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance - (213) 740 5086

Works with Faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class /

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity <http://equity.usc.edu/>

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and micro-aggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentsaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations.

<http://dsp.usc.edu>

Student Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student. EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentsaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. <https://diversity.usc.edu/>

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus unfeasible, <http://emergency.usc.edu/>

USC Department of Public Safety - 213-740-4321 (UPC) and 323-442-1000 (HSC) for 24-hour emergency assistance to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. <http://dps.usc.edu>

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 IN-
STRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX**