## CTWR 459a: Entertainment Industry Seminar
## Spring 2023 - 2 Units

Instructors:     Kristen Davis & Beth Bruckner O'Brien
Class Time:     Thursdays, 4pm-6:50pm* or 7:00pm-10:00pm
          *The classes from 4pm-6:50pm are noted in the schedule.

Class Location:    SCA 112 (7-10pm) & SCA 214 (4-6:50pm)
Office Hours:     By appointment
Contact Information:  kwdavis@cinema.usc.edu
          bethbrucknerobrien@gmail.com

D.A. Contact Information:  Zane Pena: zpena@usc.edu

**Course Objective:** To learn the written and unwritten "rules" of the industry.  By application, students will develop strategies for their individual careers as screenwriters.

**Course Description:** Oftentimes the industry can seem like a daunting uphill battle.  In our class, we aim to give you techniques and strategies to conquer the hill.  We ask that you keep an open mind when discussing the industry and challenge yourself to think how the topics relate to you.

Ask yourself:

*How can I benefit from this information?*

*What is the positive spin I can use?*

*How can I use my material to its best advantage?*

*If this isn't an opportunity for me, could I help someone else?*

*Am I representing myself properly to those around me?*

*Lastly, and most importantly, if it's not working, what can I change?*

We encourage you to incorporate industry news in your daily life by reading blogs, joining feeds, eavesdropping at internships, and networking with friends, family, alumni, and instructors. There will be times when you will need to force yourself out of your comfort zone.  We ask that you challenge yourself to meet new people and find new ways to market yourself.

**Industry Guests:** Over the course of the semester, several guests will join us during class.  These guests are taking time out of their hectic schedules to speak about their experiences.  Please be respectful of the guests' time, do not play on your phone or tablet while they are speaking, and ask respectful questions.

Guests love to speak candidly to students.  Our classroom will be a "code of silence." Anything discussed in the class should not be shared with people outside of the class, posted on facebook, tweeted, blogged, or shared on any platform.

We realize that CTWR 459a is a late class and we know that you have busy writing schedules and will be zooming in from many different locations.  **If you feel that you**

**will be unable to stay awake for the guest, we ask that you leave class early. You will not be penalized for leaving class early**. We typically take a break prior to starting with our guest; during that time please let our DA know if you must leave early.

You will need to speak to a fellow classmate about the material that you missed and collect any handouts from them. Unfortunately, we will be unable to meet with individual students who leave early about the subject matter of that missed class.

We occasionally might have guests who teach a lesson or lead a discussion on a given week. We ask that you give them the same respect you would give any other instructor.

**Laptop and Cell Phone Policy:** Laptops may be used for the sole purpose of notes or breakout sessions as indicated by the instructors. Cell phones should not be used in the room.

**Internet Policy:**
Material discussed in the room is considered private and should not be blogged, tweeted, posted, snapchatted, or be posted anywhere else on the internet.

**Recording Devices:**
You may not record lectures or workshops without the written consent of the instructor.

**Zoom Expectations:**
CTWR 459a is designed as an in-person class. To maintain the integrity of the curriculum, professors cannot approve students to attend via Zoom because of conflicts, travel plans, internships, etc.

**Course Reading:**
*Required:*
Studio System Student Membership (Free)
Scripts (as assigned)

*Recommended:*
The Screenwriter's Legal Guide by Stephen Breimer
The Fine Art of Small Talk by Debra Fine
The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck by Mark Manson
Various Articles as distributed by instructors.

Industry News such as Deadline Hollywood, Variety, The Hollywood Reporter, etc.

**Assignment Policy:** No late assignments will be accepted, as no late assignments will be accepted in your career. Please follow the directions for submission of each assignment.

**Expectation of Professionalism:**
All material is expected to be turned in on time and in the proper format. Assignments will be penalized for grammatical mistakes, spelling errors, format mistakes, and typos. Please proof your assignment prior to submission.

**Class Schedule**: *All dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructors. Guests will be announced via Blackboard and/or e-mail. Students should research guests and come prepared with at least two questions.*

**Week 1: Introduction to Course / POV / Alumni Panel - Thurs, January 12th, 2023**

    <u>Assignments:</u>
- Shadow Writers & POV Due by 7pm January 19th to Blackboard (10%)
- Sign-Up for Studio System (ungraded)

**Week 2: Let's Make a Movie! - Thurs, January 19th, 2023**


**\*\*BREAK OUT GROUPS START WEEK 3\*\***


**Week 3: Break-Out Groups - Thurs, January 26th, 2023**
Group A – General Meetings & Staffing Blurbs - 4-6:50pm, SCA 214

Group B - Television Studios and Networks, Buyer Mandates, TV Guest Speakers - 7-10pm, SCA 112
    \*<u>Assignment</u>: TV BUYERS - PODS Assignment due before the next class

**Week 4: Break-Out Groups - Thurs, February 2nd, 2023**
Group A: Selling Yourself: Networking, Loglines, & Bio - 4-6:50pm, SCA 214

Group B: Film Studios, Streamers, and Independent Film, Film Guest Speakers - 7-10pm, SCA 112
    \*<u>Assignment</u>: FILM BUYERS - PODS Assignment due before the next class

**Week 5: Break-Out Groups - Thurs, February 9th, 2023**
Group A: Logline/Bio Workshop (Group A2: Networking) - 4-6:50pm, SCA 214

Group B: Pitching, Guest Speakers - 7-10pm, SCA 112
    \*<u>Assignment</u>: VISUAL IMAGERY Assignment due before the next class

**Week 6: Break-Out Groups - Thurs, February 16th, 2023**
Group A: Logline/Bio Workshop (Group A1: Networking) - 4-6:50pm, SCA 214

Group B: How to Take Notes, Guest Speakers - 7-10pm, SCA 112

**Week 7: Break-Out Groups - Thurs, February 23rd, 2023**
Group A: Logline/Bio Final Workshop - 4-6:50pm, SCA 214
    \*<u>Assignments</u>: By Thursday, March 2nd due by 7pm to Blackboard Final Draft of Loglines & Bio (25%) and Staffing Blurb (15%)

Group B: How To Function in the Real World - 7-10pm, SCA 112


**\*\*SWITCH BREAKOUT GROUPS\*\***


**Week 8:  Break-Out Groups - Thurs, March 2nd, 2023**
Group B – General Meetings / Staffing Blurbs - 4-6:50pm, SCA 214

Group A - Television Studios and Networks, Buyer Mandates, TV Guest Speakers - 7-10pm, SCA 112
        *Assignment: TV BUYERS - PODS Assignment due before the next class

**Week 9: Break-Out Groups - Thurs, March 9th, 2023**
Group B: Selling Yourself: Networking, Loglines, & Bio - 4-6:50pm, SCA 214

Group A:  Film Studios, Streamers, and Independent Film, Film Guest Speakers - 7-10pm, SCA 112
        *Assignment: FILM BUYERS - PODS Assignment due before the next class

*SPRING BREAK HOLIDAY*

**Week 10: Break-Out Groups - Thurs, March 23rd, 2023**
Group B: Logline/Bio Workshop (Group B2: Networking) - 4-6:50pm, SCA 214

Group A: Pitching, Guest Speakers - 7-10pm, SCA 112
        *Assignment: VISUAL IMAGERY Assignment due before the next class

**Week 11: Break-Out Groups – Thurs, March 30th, 2023**
Group B: Logline/Bio Workshop (Group B1: Networking) - 4-6:50pm, SCA 214

Group A: Notes, Guest Speakers - 7-10pm, SCA 112

**Week 12: Break-Out Groups – Thurs, April 6th, 2023**
Group B: Logline/Bio Final Workshop - 4-6:50pm, SCA 214
        Assignments: By Thursday, April 13th by 7pm to Blackboard Final Draft of
        Loglines & Bio (25%) and Staffing Blurb (15%)

Group A: How To Function in the Real World - 7-10pm, SCA 112


**BACK AS A GROUP, SCA 112 from 7-10pm****


**Week 13: Agents & Managers, Lawyers, and Contracts – Thurs, April 13th, 2023**

**Week 14: Writers' Room Strategies – Thurs, April 20th, 2023**

**Week 15: What's Next? – Thus, April 27th, 2023**


**Grading Criteria:**
All assignments for Kristen are to be uploaded to BLACKBOARD by the start of class time (7pm) unless otherwise indicated. All assignments to Beth are to be e-mailed by the start of class time (7pm). No late assignments will be accepted. Please go to the appropriate instructor for questions.

**Grading Breakdown:**
*Kristen's Assignments:*
Shadow Writers & POV                    10%
Final Loglines, POV, & Bio              25%

| | |
|---|---|
| Staffing Blurb | 15% |

*Beth's Assignments:*

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|---|---|
| TV Buyers / PODS | 15% |
| Film Buyers / PODS | 15% |
| Visual Imagery | 15% |
| Participation | 5% |

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|---|---|
|  | 100% |

## Summary of Assignments:
***All assignments are due by the start of class time on the specified week.  Please include your name and date at the top of the page.***

***Assignments Graded by Kristen:***

## Shadow Writers & POV (10%)
Part 1: Your POV should be a <u>single sentence</u> that starts with "I write…"  It should not include genre, but should speak thematically to your portfolio of work.

Part 2: In a table, generate a list of 5 writers who write material that is similar to your own. Your list of writers should be cohesive and relate to your POV.  It should also represent your future competition in the marketplace. For each writer please include:

- Three (3) <u>most recent</u> credits with dates.
- The writer's position/title (Story Editor, Producer, Writer's Assistant, Feature Writer, etc.)
- Representation (Agent/Manager) for each writer.

No "A List" writers should appear on this list.  Examples of "A List" writers would be John Hughes, Shonda Rhimes, Cinco Paul, Awkwafina, Tina Fey, Issa Rae etc.

## Final Loglines, POV, and Writer's Bio (25%)
Include your revised logline (with title/genre) and writer's biography.  Please include 3 loglines and your 90 words or less Writer's Bio.  <u>Points will be deducted for typos, grammar, and genre mistakes</u>. For your bio, every word over 90 will result in a 1-point deduction per word.

Your bio must include a clear POV that is not genre based.

## Staffing Blurb (15%)
Pick one (1) television show that is on air, at least in their second season (or picked up for a second season) and is not going to be cancelled in the foreseeable future.

Part 1: Include a summary of the show and cite your source.

Part 2: For your chosen show, write a 200-word paragraph that your representation would use to explain how you could offer authenticity to this show based off your past experiences.  This is not a love letter to the show, but a pitch on why you need to be included on their staff and in what way you'll be an asset to the room.

*Assignments Graded by Beth:*

### TV Buyers / PODS (15%)
Identify your top 3-5 writing projects as your "Personal Slate" of projects and, for the purposes of this assignment, pretend they are all TV projects. Using the television buyer mandates and the provided list of "PODS" (producers with overall deals), in conjunction with Studiosystem – identify 3-5 BUYERS and 3-5 PODS per buyer – that would be appropriate for your material based off of the previous series they've produced.
*FORMAT should look like the following for each project:*

> **"Series Name"** – Genre – Logline
> <u>BUYER 1</u>
> POD 1
> POD 2
> POD 3
> *feel free to include your reasoning as to why this buyer and these pods would be interested in your project.

### Film Buyers / PODS (15%)
Identify your top 3-5 writing projects as your "Personal Slate" of projects and. for the purposes of this assignment, pretend they are all film projects. Using the film buyer mandates and the provided list of "PODS" (producers with overall deals), in conjunction with Studiosystem – identify 3-5 BUYERS and 3-5 PODS per buyer – that would be appropriate for your material based off of the previous films they've produced.
*FORMAT should look like the following for each project:*

> **FILM TITLE** – Genre – Logline
> <u>BUYER 1</u>
> POD 1
> POD 2
> POD 3
> *feel free to include your reasoning as to why this buyer and these pods would be interested in your project.

### Visual Imagery (15%)
Create 2 or more pages of visual imagery that you would use as the basis for a visual presentation for your Thesis project. The imagery should be carefully sourced and thoughtfully presented.

### Participation (5%)
Your attendance and participation in class will be taken into account and factored in as 5% of your grade.

### Explanation of Grading:
As per Writing Division policy the following is a breakdown of numeric grade to letter grade:

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 100% to 94% | C | 76% to 73% |
| A- | 93% to 90% | C- | 72% to 70% |
| B+ | 89% to 87% | D+ | 69% to 67% |
| B | 86% to 83% | D | 66% to 63% |

| B- | 82% to 80% | D- | 62% to 60% |
|----|-----------|-----|-----------|
| C+ | 79% to 77% | F | 59% to 0% |

## Writing Division Attendance Policy:

This class is a workshop and your participation in the discussion is important. Participation includes full involvement in, and contribution to, class discussion, as well as reading (in advance at times; see schedule) the assignments of your colleagues and offering thoughtful, constructive comments.

Class attendance is mandatory and students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Tardiness is unprofessional and disrespectful to the class. Two late arrivals equals one full absence. Two unexcused absences will result in your final grade being lowered by a half grade point (Ex. A to A-) Any further unexcused absences will result in your final grade being lowered another two thirds of a point (ex: B to a C+) for each absence

Excused absences can include, but are not limited to: illness, both physical and mental; death of a loved one; personal emergency; sporting events (for Student-Athletes) or other university-sponsored activities; religious holidays, and so on.
If you find you must miss class due to personal emergency or personal crisis, please contact your professor as soon as possible so they can assist you in finding the appropriate University care and guidance.  Your health and well-being are of utmost importance to the Wells Writing Division and to your Faculty.

## 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.

### 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" https://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, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

### 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 suicidal 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://engemannshc.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. https://equity.usc.edu/

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*
Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. https://studentaffairs.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://studentaffairs.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 infeasible, http://emergency.usc.edu

*USC Department of Public Safety  – 213-740-4321 (UPC) and 323-442-1000 (HSC) for 24-hour emergency assistance or to report a crime.*
Provides overall safety to USC community. http://dps.usc.edu

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**PLEASE NOTE:**
**FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX**