

USC School of Cinematic Arts – CTPR 538 (Intermediate Producing) – Fall 2023

Section: 18650 (2 Units)

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Day/Time: Mondays 7pm-10pm Room: SCB 101 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. 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 projects.
- 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

- **WEEKLY REPORTS:** Each week one or two students will present a 10-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.
- **SCHEDULING:** Each student will prepare two shooting schedules—one for a half-hour television/episodic production and one for a one-hour television/episodic production.
- **BUDGETING:** Each student will complete a budgeting assignment that relates directly to the one-hour scheduling exercise. They will implement concepts learned to use the budgeting process as a creative tool to maximize the quality of the 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 and all course readings, viewings, and materials will be posted on Google Drive 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 software and a copy of—or subscription or trial for—Movie Magic Budgeting software. If you do not already own these programs or a subscription, academic versions at discounted student prices may be available. See professors for details.

Each student must maintain an ongoing effort to stay current with industry news. The class as a whole will share recommendations and resources (articles, trades, websites, podcasts, etc.) on an ongoing basis.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Throughout the course, guest speakers may visit the class to share their knowledge and experiences. Examples of past guests include professional producers, executives, directors, ADs, designers, or creative technicians - in other words, senior creatives or executive members of a production team or the larger ecosystem. Any 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%

Class participation includes, but is not limited to: offering constructive feedback to others, engaging in class discussions, sharing resources & recommendations, and participating in Q&As.

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, text or 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 professors.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The class will meet on Monday nights from 7-10pm (Los Angeles time). The class begins promptly at 7pm. As is true in all quality real world productions – it is preferable to be early for your “call time.” For the Fall 2023 semester the class will meet on the following dates:

Aug. 21, 28

Sept. 11, 18, 25 (*Note: No class on Sept 4 – Labor Day*)

Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Nov. 6, 13, 20, 27

When appropriate, course topics, guest speakers, assignments, and consultations will be posted and scheduled on Google Drive in advance and announced in class.

<p>FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACE IN THE SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX</p>

Timely attendance is mandatory and failure to attend all class sections from beginning to end may affect grades.

- Exemptions will be allowed on a case-by-case basis, and must be supported by a written accommodation request from the USC Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS).
- Students who become ill and need to self-isolate will be supported in their efforts to stay current with classwork and assignments. Faculty are no longer required to provide an option for students to Zoom into class. However, Faculty may choose to use Zoom at their discretion in an effort to help students stay current in their course work.

Students must contact the professors and SA 24 hours prior to class start time if they need to miss class for any reason.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Integrity:

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, compromises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

Please note that recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation, is also a violation of academic integrity. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

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.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

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

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

Non-emergency assistance or information.

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

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.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.