



## **CMPP 548**

### **Introduction to Producing for Television**

**Units:** 2

**Fall 2023:** Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM

Aug 23 - Nov. 29 (14 classes)

**Location:** SCI 207 – second floor of the SCI Building located at 3470 McClintock Ave.

**Instructor:** Jeff Hegedus

**Cell:** (310) 890-6902

**Email:** jshegedu@usc.edu

**Textbook:**

*The Business of Television* by Ken Basin

**Office Hours:** Upon request

**Student Assistant:** Alexa Zachary

**Cell:** (949) 444-8408

**Email:** alexazac@usc.edu

## Course Description

This graduate-level seminar examines the process of how to make a TV show. We will cover the big picture e.g., who the major entities are and how they interact, how networks and platforms define success and with what metrics. We'll be examining how buyers' business models drive the creative criteria that they are using to select projects, how streaming is changing the types of projects that are being greenlit, and the ever-evolving skills and expertise that creatives (producers/showrunners/etc.) need to bring to the table to increase their odds of success.

## Learning Objectives

This class is being taught from the perspective of a creative producer who is at the center of orchestrating the successful development and production of a TV series. Note: the textbook we are using is written from a different perspective - that of a business affairs executive at a TV studio. At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Identify and explain the key players in the TV ecosystem and their roles
- Summarize the essential steps in developing and producing a television series
- Describe different approaches and paths to getting a television show bought and produced
- Explain the business model of a traditional TV studio, linear network, and AVOD/SVOD service
- Compare and contrast the primary differences among a broadcast network, cable network, and SVOD platform in how they evaluate projects
- Analyze why a buyer decides to buy a project (or not) from both the creative and business POVs

## Course Notes

This course may only be taken for a letter grade.

## Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

- Laptop computer & possibly Blackboard (I am going to try to NOT use BB, but it is possible some assignments will be submitted and quizzes will be administered via BB during class)
- USC provided Zoom account
- Google Docs

## Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Assigned chapters from *The Business of Television* by Ken Basin (don't skip the footnotes – they are the most interesting parts of the book); short videos; podcasts, additional articles and research will be required to complete the group role play assignment.

## Note on Course Content

The required materials (readings, screenings, etc.) that are used in this course may, at times, depict or address potentially sensitive subject matter. Our discussions in class may also include these topics. The selection and presentation of these materials do not amount to an endorsement of the ideas expressed in them. If you have personal concerns about any of these materials, please discuss them with me so that I may arrange appropriate alternatives if needed.

## Description and Assessment of Assignments

- Reading from the textbook
- Watching short videos about TV and/or listening to podcast interviews with industry leaders
- Doing industry research (trades, mainstream press, interviews)
- Questions in advance for all guest speakers – these are due by **midnight Monday** prior to class
- Brief in-class quizzes about the reading and in-class content
- Group role play exercise with background research and in-class analysis

## Communication Policy

I welcome any questions regarding clarification of assignments, including the reading and class discussions, as well as suggestions during the course about what's working and what could be improved. As graduate students and instructor, we're collaborating on how to maximize your learning experience, and as with any productive partnership, trust and communication are key. Unless very timely (in which case, feel free to text/call my cell), please email me ([USC.edu](mailto:USC.edu) email TBD). I will do my best to respond within 48 hours.

## Office Hours

During the course, each student is assigned an optional 15-min slot with the instructor. A few bullet points prepared ahead of time may help you get the most out of our 1:1. If this 1:1 needs to be rescheduled, please work with the SA on alternative times and give as much advance notice as possible. I will start the 1:1 each evening as soon as class concludes and plan to have two 1:1s per evening starting Sept 1st. If you prefer to meet over Zoom outside of our normal class time, please let me know.

[1:1 schedule to be determined during the August 23 class]

## Stark Program Attendance Policy

I will be taking roll at the start of each class. Prompt attendance at all classes is expected by all students and will be monitored by faculty. In the event of documented illness, family emergency or religious holiday observance, please notify the instructor and the SA.

## Laptop and Cellphone Policy

The Stark Program's policy is absolutely no cellphone use in class either as a phone or messaging device; there is also no recording (video or audio) allowed. **No laptop, tablet, cellphone use during quizzes.**

## Quizzes

Quizzes will be open (physical) book, so you disservice yourself if you do not purchase the textbook. No electronic copies are allowed during quizzes.

## Course Schedule — Weekly Breakdown

Week	Topics / Activities	By this class, you should have completed:	Homework / Reading
Week 1 <b>Aug 23<sup>th</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions</li> <li>• Syllabus review</li> <li>• Discuss class expectations</li> <li>• Q&amp;A on assigned reading and discuss overview of the US scripted TV business</li> </ul>	<i>College</i> 😊	<i>READ: The Business of TV:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disclaimer</li> <li>- How to Use This Book</li> <li>- Introduction</li> <li>- Chapter 1</li> </ul>
Week 2 <b>Aug 30<sup>st</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TV 101: the Ecosystem of Money, Rights &amp; Access</li> <li>• Discuss Chapter 1</li> <li>• Discuss Assignment #1</li> <li>• Case Study with Guest Speaker (TBD)</li> </ul>	<i>READ: The Business of TV:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disclaimer</li> <li>- How to Use This Book</li> <li>- Introduction</li> <li>- Chapter 1</li> </ul>	<i>READ: The Business of TV:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 2 (Life Cycle of a Television Series)</li> </ul> <i>WATCH:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How a Pilot Becomes a TV Show (VF)</li> <li>- How a TV Show Gets Made (Vox)</li> </ul> <b>WRITE: Assignment #1</b>

Week	Topics / Activities	By this class, you should have completed:	Homework / Reading
Week 3 <b>Sept 6<sup>th</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss Chapter 2 (Life Cycle of a Television Series)</li> <li>• Case Study with Guest Speaker Jeff Frost</li> <li>• <b>Assignment #1 is due</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>READ: The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 2</li> </ul> <p><i>WATCHED:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How a Pilot Becomes a TV Show (VF)</li> <li>- How a TV Show Gets Made (Vox)</li> </ul> <p><b>WRITTEN: Assignment #1</b></p>	<p><i>READ: The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 3 (Intellectual Property) up to section D on page 72</li> </ul> <p><i>WATCH:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How Does Netflix Make Money (The Ringer)</li> <li>- How Disney Will Force Netflix to Change Streaming (The Verge)</li> <li>- Why Amazon is Going After Netflix (CNBC)</li> </ul> <p><b>Prep for Quiz #1 Ch. 1-2</b></p>
Week 4 <b>Sept 13<sup>th</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>In-Class Quiz #1</b></li> <li>• Review Quiz #1 Answers</li> <li>• Discuss Assignment #2</li> <li>• Discuss Chapter 3 (Intellectual Property) up to section D on page 72</li> <li>• Case Study with Guest Speaker (TBD)</li> </ul>	<p><i>READ: The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 3 up to section D on page 72</li> </ul> <p><i>WATCHED:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How Does Netflix Make Money (The Ringer)</li> <li>- How Disney Will Force Netflix to Change Streaming (The Verge)</li> <li>- Why Amazon is Going After Netflix (CNBC)</li> </ul> <p><b>Prepped for Quiz #1 Ch. 1-2</b></p>	<p><i>READ: The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 3 (Intellectual Property) page 72 to end</li> </ul> <p><b>WRITE: Assignment #2</b></p>
Week 5 <b>Sept 20<sup>th</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss Chapter 3 (Intellectual Property) page 72 to end</li> <li>• Case Study with Guest Speaker (TBD)</li> <li>• <b>Assignment #2 is due</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>READ: The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 3 page 72 to end</li> </ul> <p><b>WRITTEN: Assignment #2</b></p>	<p><i>READ: The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 4 (Underling Rights)</li> </ul>

Week	Topics / Activities	By this class, you should have completed:	Homework / Reading
Week 6 Sept 27 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss Chapter 4 (Underling Rights)</li> <li>• Case Study with Guest Speaker (TBD)</li> </ul>	<p>READ: <i>The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 4 (Underling Rights)</li> </ul>	<p>READ: <i>The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 5 up to page 130</li> </ul> <p>WATCH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Two Monkeys Were Paid Unequally: Excerpt from Frans de Waal's TED Talk</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Prep for Quiz #2 Ch. 3-4</b></p>
Week 7 Oct 4 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>In-Class Quiz #2</b></li> <li>• Review Quiz #2 Answers</li> <li>• Discuss Chapter 5 up to page 130 (Talent Agreements)</li> <li>• Discuss Assignment #3</li> <li>• Case Study with Guest Speaker (TBD)</li> </ul>	<p>READ: <i>The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 5 up to page 130</li> </ul> <p>WATCHED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Two Monkeys Were Paid Unequally: Excerpt from Frans de Waal's TED Talk</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Prepped for Quiz #2 Ch. 3-4</b></p>	<p>READ: <i>The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 5 (Talent Agreements) pages 131 to end</li> </ul> <p><b>WRITE: Assignment #3</b></p>
Week 8 Oct 11 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss Chapter 5 (Talent Agreements) pages 131 to end</li> <li>• Case Study with Guest Speaker (TBD)</li> <li>• <b>Assignment #3 is due</b></li> </ul>	<p>READ: <i>The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 5 pages 131 to end</li> </ul> <p><b>WRITTEN: Assignment #3</b></p>	<p>READ: <i>The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 6 (Backend)</li> </ul>
Week 9 Oct 18 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss Chapter 6 (Backend)</li> <li>• Case Study with Guest Speaker (TBD)</li> </ul>	<p>READ: <i>The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 6 (Backend)</li> </ul>	<p>READ: <i>The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 7 (Overalls)</li> </ul> <p><b>Prep for Quiz #3 Ch. 5-6</b></p>
Week 10 Oct 25 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>In-Class Quiz #3</b></li> <li>• Review Quiz #3 Answers</li> <li>• Discuss Chapter 7 (Overalls)</li> <li>• Case Study with Guest Speaker (TBD)</li> </ul>	<p>READ: <i>The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 7 (Overalls)</li> </ul> <p><b>Prepped for Quiz #3 Ch. 5-6</b></p>	<p>READ: <i>The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 8 (Network Licenses and Co-Productions)</li> </ul>

Week	Topics / Activities	By this class, you should have completed:	Homework / Reading
Week 11 Nov 1 <sup>st</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss Chapter 8 (Network Licenses and Co-Productions)</li> <li>• Case Study with Guest Speaker (TBD)</li> </ul>	<p><i>READ: The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 8 (Network Licenses and Co-Productions)</li> </ul>	<p><i>READ: The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 9 (Sample Economic Model)</li> </ul> <p><b>Prep for Quiz #4 Ch. 7-8</b></p>
Week 12 Nov 8 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>In-Class Quiz #4</b></li> <li>• Review Quiz #4 Answers</li> <li>• Review Chapter 9 (Sample Economic Model)</li> <li>• Case Study with Guest Speaker (TBD)</li> </ul>	<p><i>READ: The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 9 (Sample Economic Model)</li> </ul> <p><b>Prepped for Quiz #4 Ch. 7-8</b></p>	<p><i>READ: The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 10 (Unscripted)</li> <li>- Conclusion</li> </ul>
Week 13 Nov 15 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss Chapter 10 (Unscripted) &amp; Conclusion</li> <li>• Case Study with Guest Speaker (TBD)</li> </ul>	<p><i>READ: The Business of TV:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 10 (Unscripted)</li> <li>- Conclusion</li> </ul>	<p><b>Prep for Quiz #5 Ch. 9-10, Conclusion</b></p>
Week 14 Nov 29 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>In-Class Quiz #5</b></li> <li>• Review Quiz #5 Answers</li> <li>• Case Study with Guest Speaker Ken Basin (author of The Business of TV)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Prepped for Quiz #5 Ch. 9-10, Conclusion</b></p>	

## Grading Breakdown

Assignment	% of Grade
Assignment #1	10%
Assignment #2	10%
Assignment #3	10%
Quiz #1	14%
Quiz #2	14%
Quiz #3	14%
Quiz #4	14%
Quiz #5	14%
TOTAL	100%

### **Assignment #1**

Pick a scripted television show that you watch regularly and that has been released in the last two years. Research the history of the show (e.g., books, magazine articles, the trades, podcasts, interviews, etc.) and write a short paper explaining the genesis of the show. Be sure to include whether there was a TV studio involved (or not), if there were underlying rights involved (or not), who the creator(s) is/are, and what some of the challenges were in selling the show. *Please include a brief bibliography with links to your source material. Approximately 350 words.*

### **Assignment #2**

Research and pick a writer who has struck an overall deal with one of the major streaming platforms OR with one of the major TV studios in the last two years. Analyze why you think that writer was offered an overall deal by the streamer or studio. What do you think the streamer or studio expects from the writer? What are the publicly disclosed terms of the deal? What projects have gone into development and/or been produced under that overall deal? Do you believe that the streamer or studio will renew this writer's overall deal when it expires? Why or why not? *Please include a brief bibliography with links to your source material. Approximately 350 words.*

### **Assignment #3**

Pick a streaming service that you enjoy watching...a lot. Let's say someone put you in charge of that streaming service for the next year. What would be your top 3-5 goals to achieve in the year ahead and why? How would you go about achieving these goals? What would be your 3-5 biggest obstacles? *Please substantiate your responses with research and analysis and include a bibliography with links to your source material. Approximately 350 words.*



## Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66	F	59 and
A-	90-94	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62		below
B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69				

## Grading Timeline

Access to graded assignments will be made available on request.

## SCA Diversity and Inclusion Statement

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 is a safe space for open discussion of ideas and self-expression; however, hate speech is not acceptable. 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>

### 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>

PLEASE NOTE:

FOOD AND DRINK (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED  
IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX