CTPR 410 – THE MOVIE BUSINESS: From Story Concept to Exhibitions
Units: 2
Spring 2024 — Mondays — 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Location: SCA 110

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Please contact your SA if you are running late for class.

Course Description
An overview of the Motion Picture and Television Industry from story conception through script development and packaging, production and postproduction, and distribution and marketing. Most weeks will include a guest speaker that is intimately involved in a different aspect of the movie and TV making process in the more traditional financier system, the streaming business, as well as the indie world.

Learning Objectives
Students will learn about the various roles played by all those involved in creating movies and TV – and the steps needed to get it in front of an audience.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials
- *The Movie Business Book* (4th Edition), by Jason Squire, available at the USC Bookstore.

Optional Readings and Supplementary Materials
- *The Business of Film: A Practical Introduction* (2nd Edition), by Paula Landry & Stephen R. Greenwald, available on Amazon or any other book retailer.

Description and Assessment of Assignments
Midterm: Students will be tested on practical application of concepts learned in class discussions, reading materials, as well as commentary from guest speakers.

Term Project: As their final project, students will be divided into teams and will present a concept as well as a production, distribution, and marketing plan as it would be pitched to a financier or distributor. This will require each group to:

• Decide upon a concept (original, adaptation or remake), which could conceivably be turned into a contemporary movie or TV series.
• Choose a writer, director, producers, and principal cast.
• Discuss possible budget and production locations.
• Discuss overall target audience and how that determines the potential buyers/distributors as well as marketing and distribution strategy.

Participation

Students are expected to be active participants in class discussions, ask questions of guest speakers, and provide feedback to other students on their presentations.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:
• Evidence of growth and understanding of materials throughout the semester.
• Ability to translate general concepts to specific examples.
• Innovative, thorough, and creative use of different ideas discussed in class.
• The ability to work with others in a collaborative effort.

Grading Breakdown

Midterm (20%)
Term Project (45%)
Class Participation (35%)

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

Letter grade	Corresponding numerical point range
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	59 and below

Assignment Submission Policy
Class presentations are due per the course schedule. Midterm will be due on the assigned date.

Grading Timeline
The Midterm grades will be available 2 weeks after they are turned in. Term Project grade and final grade will be available prior to the end of the term.

Electronic Devices
Use of electronic devices is permitted for note taking and access of information pertinent to class discussion. No personal use of devices is permitted.

Attendance
Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Faculty may lower a student's grade by one notch (A to A-) for one absence. Two absences will result in a student's grade being lowered by one full letter (i.e.- A becomes B). A third absence will result in a student's grade being lowered by one, additional full letter (i.e.- B becomes C). A student's grade will be lowered by one full letter for each additional absence. Two late class arrivals equate to one full absence.

If a student misses class due to an emergency, the student must contact the professor prior to class or contact the Production Office at 213-740-3317.

Students will have mid-term conferences with informal grades and evaluations; students in danger of failing will be notified at that time.

Academic Integrity
The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the USC Student Handbook. All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the

course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

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

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university 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.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy:

In this course, you are allowed to use artificial intelligence (AI)-powered programs to help you with assignments that indicate the permitted use of AI. You should also be aware that AI text generation tools may present incorrect information, biased responses, and incomplete analyses; thus, they are not yet prepared to produce text that meets the standards of this course. To adhere to our university values, you must cite any AI-generated material (e.g., text, images, etc.) included or referenced in your work and provide the prompts used to generate the content. Using an AI tool to generate content without proper attribution will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Please review the instructions in each assignment for more details on how and when to use AI Generators for your submissions.

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies

USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

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. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown for <u>FALL 2023</u>

January 8 –   An Overview

• Introductions

• Discussion of syllabus

• Art vs Commerce

• Everything begins with a concept

• The process of bringing the concept to an audience

Changing landscapes

• Assignment: The Movie Business Book: Chapter 1 (Introduction), Chapter 5 (The Screenwriter), pages
1-15, 55-66

• Optional Reading: The Business of Film: Chapter 1, 2, & 3 (A Brief History of the Film Industry, A
Business Overview of Film, Movie Development), pages 1-67

January 15 – MLK Day (NO CLASS)

January 22 – The Writer

• Where do ideas come from? What makes them valuable? Writing original ideas versus IP.

• Pitching vs. Specing

• The development process: Drafts, notes, production

• Writing for movies vs. Writing for TV

• Assignment: The Movie Business Book: Chapters 3 & 4 (The Director & A Filmmaker's Journey), pages
30-51

January 29 – The Director

• Bringing the director's vision to the screen

• Writer-Director, TV vs Feature Directing

• Adjusting the vision for budget, audience

• Communicating the vision in development, production, post-production Previews, focus groups, and
a growing audience from beginning to end

Working inside the system vs. outside the system

• Assignment: The Movie Business Book: Chapter 2, 15, 24, 33, 34 (The Entrepreneurial Producer, The
Independent Spirit, Film Festivals and Markets, DIY: An Introduction, Producing in the DIY Model),
pages 19-29, 165-172, 312-326, 459-484

February 5 – The Producer (Indie)

• What are the challenges and benefits of working within the system vs. outside of it?

•Finding financing for a movie

•Tax Credits, Locations, etc.

• Private equity vs. international sales vs. financiers

• Controlling the production, bond companies, contingencies

•Film festivals and angling for distribution

• Assignment: The Movie Business Book: Chapters 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 (Money, Money and Madness, Getting Paid, Analyzing Movie Companies, A Chairman's Perspective, Marvel Studios, The Movie Company as Financier-Distributor), pages 97-164

February 12 – The Producer (Studio)

• Where do projects come from?

• How projects are set up with financiers / studios / networks

• Navigating shifting landscapes and formats based on the story

• The development process and protecting the creative

• First-look deals

• Development, Packaging, and Budgeting Exercise

• Midterm Preview / Assignment

• Assignment: The Movie Business Book: Chapters 25, 26 (Release Windows and Revenue • Streams, Studio Accounting), pages 329-367

  • Optional Reading: The Business of Film: Chapter 9 (Movie Accounting), pages 210-228

February 19 – President's Day (NO CLASS)

February 26 – Studios & Financiers

• How financiers pick projects

• The process of studio development

• The importance of packaging

• The changing landscape of movie-going and the impact on material

• Adjusting packages based on international value and financing around international pre-sales

• **Midterm Due**

• Assignment: The Movie Business Book: Chapters 36, 37, 38 (Global Markets, An Overview of the Chinese Film Industry, Entertainment Technologies: Past, Present and Future), pages 505-581

March 4 – New Platforms (Streaming, TV, Short Form) & New Markets

• How have stories changed and how will they evolve?

• New distribution windows, new audiences, new markets

• Creating cultural urgency around the world

• Reaching new audiences

• Assignment: The Movie Business Book: Chapter 6, 8, 16, 17, & 19 (Representing the Screenwriter, Exploiting Intellectual Property Rights, The Entertainment Lawyer, Business Affairs, & The Talent Agent), pages 67-77, 87-95, 175-198, 213-220)

March 10 to March 17 – Spring Recess

March 18 – Representatives

• Managers vs. Literary Agents vs. Talent Agents

• The importance of a representative in getting a movie or TV show made

• Determining a roster of clients

• Development from the perspective of a representative

• Assignment: The Movie Business Book: Chapter 20 & 21 (Production Management & The Social Network: Production Workflow), pages 223-274

• Optional Reading: The Business of Film: Chapter 4 & 5 (Movie Financing & Movie Production), pages 68-118

March 25 – Budgeting & Making a Movie

• How big should a movie be?

• Size of budget vs. size of audience

• Budget determining marketing and distribution spend

• Indie budgeting vs. Studio budgeting

• Building a production team

• Assignment: The Movie Business Book: Chapter 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 (Studio Distribution, Independent Distribution, The Exhibition Business, The Independent Distributor, Home Entertainment, Online Self-Distribution), pages 371-457

• Optional Reading: The Business of Film: Chapter 6 & 8 (Movie Distribution & Film Exhibition, Retail and Consumption), pages 119-154, 172-209

April 1 – Distribution, Exhibition, and Acquisitions

• What happens to a movie after it's made?

• What do exhibitors look for in a movie?

• The pipeline of monetization across formats, windows, etc.

• How have streaming services impacted distribution?

• Why distributors acquire movies

• Assignment: The Movie Business Book: Chapter 22, 23 (Motion Picture Marketing, Marketing Research), pages 277-311

• Optional Reading: The Business of Film: Chapter 7 (Movie Marketing), pages 155-171

April 8 – Marketing

• How to cut through the clutter and capture the audience's attention

• The importance of concept in selling a movie

• How marketing impacts production

• The importance of IP and pre-awareness

April 15 – Presentation of Term Projects Pt. 1

April 22 – Presentation of Term Projects Pt. 2 – (FINAL CLASS)

May 8 – ALL CLASSES END

Table 3 Course schedule

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings/Preparation	Deliverables
Week 1	**An Overview** (Introductions & Syllabus)	**None**	
Week 2	**The Writer** (TV vs Film, Pitch vs Spec, Original vs IP)	The Movie Business Book: Chapter 1 (Introduction), Chapter 5 (The Screenwriter), pages 1-15, 55-66	
Week 3	NO CLASS	None	
Week 4	**The Director** (TV vs Feature, The Vision in Development)	The Movie Business Book: Chapters 3 & 4 (The Director & A Filmmaker's Journey), pages 30-51	
Week 5	**The Producer (Indie)** (Working inside the system vs outside, tax credits, finding financing)	The Movie Business Book: Chapter 2, 15, 24, 33, 34 (The Entrepreneurial Producer, The Independent Spirit, Film Festivals and Markets, DIY: An Introduction, Producing in the DIY Model) pages 19-29, 165-172, 312-326, 459-484	
Week 6	**The Producer (Studio)** (Where do projects come from, how are they set up with financiers, first-look deals, development, packaging, and budgeting)	The Movie Business Book: Chapters 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 (Money, Money and Madness, Getting Paid, Analyzing Movie Companies, A Chairman's Perspective, Marvel Studios, The Movie Company as Financier-Distributor), pages 97-164	
Week 7	**Studios & Financiers** (How and why financiers pick projects, the importance of packaging, international value)	The Movie Business Book: Chapters 25, 26 (Release Windows and Revenue • Streams, Studio Accounting), pages 329-367	**MIDTERM DUE**
Week 8	**New Platforms & New Markets** (Streaming, TV, Short Form, how do stories evolve, new distribution windows and markets)	The Movie Business Book: Chapters 36, 37, 38 (Global Markets, An Overview of the Chinese Film Industry, Entertainment Technologies: Past, Present and Future), pages 505-581	

Week 9	**Representatives** (Managers vs. Literary Agents vs. Talent Agents, Development from the perspective of a representative)	The Movie Business Book: Chapter 6, 8, 16, 17, & 19 (Representing the Screenwriter, Exploiting Intellectual Property Rights, The Entertainment Lawyer, Business Affairs, & The Talent Agent), pages 67-77, 87-95, 175-198, 213-220)	
Week 10	**Budgeting & Making a Movie** (How big should a movie be, size of budget vs. size of audience, budget determining marketing and distribution spend)	The Movie Business Book: Chapter 20 & 21 (Production Management & The Social Network: Production Workflow), pages 223-274	
Week 11	**Distribution, Exhibition, and Acquisitions** (What happens to a movie after it's made? What do exhibitors look for? Pipeline of monetization across formats)	The Movie Business Book: Chapter 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 (Studio Distribution, Independent Distribution, The Exhibition Business, The Independent Distributor, Home Entertainment, Online Self-Distribution), pages 371-457	
Week 12	**Marketing** (How to capture audience's attention, importance of concept in selling a movie, importance of IP)	The Movie Business Book: Chapter 22, 23 (Motion Picture Marketing, Marketing Research), pages 277-311	
Week 13	**Presentation of Term Projects pt 1.**	None	**TERM PROJECT**
Week 14	**Presentation of Term Projects pt 2.**	None	**TERM PROJECT**
Week 15	**Free Week**	None	
FINAL	**NO CLASS**	None	

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.

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.

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