

USC Gould

School of Law

LAW 689: Digital Media Transactions

Units: 2

Term—Day—Time: Spring 2025 – Thursday – 2-3:50pm

Location: LAW 211

Professor: Katherine M. Imp, Esq.

Office Hours: By appointment

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Course Description

The course will focus on the business and legal issues that relate to development, acquisition, production and exploitation of digital media in the entertainment industry, including film and TV, social media and sponsored content, videogames, podcasts, and more. This course provides students with practical foundations through a series of exercises and doctrinal foundations through readings and class lectures. Students will gain exposure to the anatomy of entertainment contracts generally, as well as important aspects of copyright law and rights of publicity from a transactional perspective.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Possess knowledge and understanding of copyright law and rights of publicity as it applies to various digital media transactions;
- Demonstrate the ability to engage in thorough legal analysis, reasoning and problem-solving as it relates to various digital media transactions, including issue spotting;
- Conduct effective written and oral communication in the legal context as it relates to various digital media transactions; and
- Demonstrate a working familiarity with the basic categories of agreements and the relevant provisions involved in various digital media transactions.

Prerequisite(s) or Recommended Preparation

None.

Required Materials

- **Book:** Moore, Schuyler M. (2023). *The Biz: the basic business, legal and financial aspects of the film industry in a digital world* (6th Edition, Expanded and Updated). Silman-James Press.
- **Articles and Handouts:** as posted on Brightspace.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Weekly Question

By no later than 11:55 p.m. Pacific Time on the day before each in-class session, students must post to Brightspace a question based on that week's readings that may be discussed in class. For weeks in which a guest lecturer will join our class, your question can be directed at the guest lecturer (the names/bios of such guests will be provided in advance once they are confirmed). These questions are meant to enrich the conversation and deepen your understanding of the content.

Weekly Reflection

Following each in-class session, students must post to Brightspace a short summary of one of the business or legal issues discussed in class, and how that issue is relevant to digital media transactions. The summaries should be no more than 4-5 sentences and posted no later than 11:55 p.m. Pacific Time on the day before the next in-session class. These summaries are meant to strengthen your legal analysis, reasoning and problem-solving skills as they relate to the specific issue summarized.

Final Project

For the Final Project, you will participate in a negotiation simulation opposite another student, which will include contract markups, live negotiation, and reflection. This simulation is an opportunity to experience first-hand the dynamics of a negotiation in the digital media space. The prompt and model contract will be posted to Brightspace and the project deliverables will consist of the following:

- **Contract Markup:** Markup/revise/edit the agreement to protect your client's interests and submit your markup pursuant to the "Take Home Exam" instructions.
- **Negotiation Session:** Conduct your negotiation session via Zoom call then submit a link to the recording to kimp@law.usc.edu. Session should be approximately 30 minutes in duration.
- **Reflection:** Following completion of your negotiation session, students must post to Brightspace a short summary of learnings from the experience. The summaries should be no more than 4-5 sentences and posted no later than 11:55 p.m. Pacific Time on the last day of the exam period.

Participation

Your participation grade is based on your participation during in-class sessions, and your professional interaction with the professor and other students throughout the semester. You will receive a participation grade at the end of the semester. Student participation during in-class sessions is designed to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the material and specific areas of law. In-class sessions are intended to involve continuous dialogue between the professor and students. There are no right or wrong answers; the key to participation is showing the professor, that as a student, you have reviewed the week's assigned reading and assignments, and are prepared to discuss them with your peers. Some weeks may prove to be more challenging than others, but a student will never be penalized for having a wrong answer—rather, a student can lose points if they are consistently unprepared, disorganized, or unwilling to participate. Every student will have an opportunity to participate; if the professor does not call on a particular student during the in-class session, a student should not hesitate to initiate participation. If you regularly contribute meaningfully to the class discussion, you will help your participation grade.

Grading Options

This course may be taken for a numeric grade or CR/D/F.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	% of Grade
Weekly Question	10%
Weekly Reflection	10%
Attendance	10%
Participation	10%
Mock Project	10%
Final Project	50%
Total	100%

Course-specific Policies

Formatting Guidelines for All Written Assignments

- Written assignments should be in Microsoft Word format, single-spaced, with 12-point font.
- Make sure you keep a copy of all submitted assignments.
- Remember to proofread your work several times.
- Please cite any non-assigned materials from which you're quoting or drawing information. You can use any known citation method (e.g., APA or MLA).

Late Assignment Policy

Late work is highly discouraged. Assignments are considered late if they are not posted by either the stated time for any given assignment or by 11:55 p.m. Pacific Time on the day they are due. No credit will be given for "Weekly Questions" or "Weekly Reflections" which are submitted late. The Final Project will receive a ten percent (10%) deduction for each day it is late.

Technical issues are not considered acceptable excuses for late work. Be sure to back up your work and have a plan for completing your coursework even in the case of computer problems or lost Internet access. Students are expected to contact the Help Desk immediately for assistance if technical issues are present within Brightspace. If, for whatever reason, students are unable to submit their work by the stated deadline due to technical issues, they should email their professor a copy of the submission (preferably by or before 11:55 p.m. Pacific Time) and continue to work with the Help Desk to resolve any technical issues.

Professors have discretion over accepting late work without prior arrangement in the case of extenuating circumstances (such as hospitalization, childbirth, major accident, injury or bereavement). Students who experience such a circumstance must notify the professor as soon as possible of the extenuating circumstance that prevented them from submitting work on time and determine a deadline with the professor for submitting the work. A doctor's note may be requested. In these instances, the professor may waive the late penalty listed above. However, students who do not meet the deadline arranged with the professor will receive a grade of zero on the assignment. Students experiencing life circumstances that disrupt their studies for more than two weeks should consult with their Student Advisor about their grading and enrollment options. Coursework submitted after the last day of the semester will not be accepted. This "Late Assignment Policy" may be revised at any time and for any reason during the course of the semester. If a student has questions about the policy, they should contact their professor immediately.

In-Class Sessions

This course will include weekly in-class sessions designed to further your understanding of course content and provide an opportunity for class discussion on weekly readings. Attendance at all in-class sessions is strongly encouraged and will be in your best interest, as topics covered during the sessions may be included in the Final Project.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics	Readings *	Assignment Dates
Week 1 Jan. 16	Introduction/Overview (In Person)	None.	Weekly Question: none. Weekly Reflection: due 1/22
Week 2 Jan. 23	Copyright/Right of Publicity (In Person)	Pg. 173-192	Weekly Question: due 1/22 Weekly Reflection: due 1/29
Week 3 Jan. 30	Development (In Person)	Pg. 1-18	Weekly Question: due 1/29 Weekly Reflection: due 2/5
Week 4 Feb. 6	Financing (Virtual)	Pg. 19-32	Weekly Question: due 2/5 Weekly Reflection due 2/12
Week 5 Feb. 13	Production – Part 1 (In Person)	Pg. 55-68	Weekly Question: due 2/12 Weekly Reflection: due 2/19
Week 6 Feb. 20	Production – Part 2 (Virtual)	Pg. 207-219	Weekly Question: due 2/19 Weekly Reflection: due 2/26
Week 7 Feb. 27	Mock Project (In Person) (DLA Piper Associates Assist)	None.	Weekly Question: due 2/26 Weekly Reflection: due 3/5
Week 8 Mar. 6	Distribution – Part 1 (In Person) (Stephanie Ward - Starz)	Pg. 93-114	Weekly Question: due 3/5 Weekly Reflection: due 3/12
Week 9 Mar. 13	Distribution – Part 2 (Virtual) (Nicole Gates – Dr. Seuss)	Pg. 153-166	Weekly Question: due 3/12 Weekly Reflection: due 3/26
Week 10 Mar. 27	Music (In Person) (Chris White – Warner Chappell)	None.	Weekly Question: due 3/26 Weekly Reflection: due 4/2
Week 11 Apr. 3	Video Games (Virtual) (Ryan Black – DLA Piper)	None.	Weekly Question: due 4/2 Weekly Reflection: due 4/9
Week 12 Apr. 10	Sponsored Content (Virtual) (Michael Isselin – DLA Piper)	None.	Weekly Question: due 4/9 Weekly Reflection: due 4/16
Week 13 Apr. 17	Litigation (In Person) (Lauren Greene – Jenner & Block)	None.	Weekly Question: due 4/16 Weekly Reflection: due 4/23
Week 14 Apr. 24	TBD	None.	Weekly Question: due 4/23 Weekly Reflection: none.

*See Brightspace for additional handouts and reading assignments.

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/files/2020/07/SCampus-Part-B-2.pdf>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable.

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://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling/>

See also this guide for Gould students to facilitate access to mental health resources on campus: <https://gould.usc.edu/assets/docs/directory/Mental-Health-Services-at-USC.pdf>

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. 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://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault/>

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: <https://eeotix.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://eeotix.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://eeotix.usc.edu/>

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. <https://dsp.usc.edu/>

Student Support and Advocacy

Campus Support and Information is where members of the Trojan Family go to seek support for themselves, for others, and for the community. It is a one-stop-shop for care and support, troubleshooting and advocacy. <https://cwcs.usc.edu/campus-support-and-intervention/>

If you are concerned about a fellow Trojan challenged with personal difficulties, you can file a report through Trojans Care for Trojans. The form can be found at: <https://campussupport.usc.edu/trojans-care-4-trojans/>.

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/>

Gould-specific information can be found at <https://gould.usc.edu/about/race-equity/> (Law, Race and Equity page) and <https://gould.usc.edu/students/diversity/> Students can submit anonymous EDI-related comments/complaints through the law portal:

<https://mylaw2.usc.edu/about/contact/anonymous-comments>

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. <https://emergency.usc.edu/>

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

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