



CNTV 562: Seminar in the Motion Picture Business
Units: 4.0

1/13/25–4/28/25, Mondays 6-9 PM

Location: SCI 108 (in person)

Instructor: Professor Bob Osher

Office Hours: Set an appointment with Professor's office.

Contact Info: bosher@usc.edu, 310 702-1212 cell

Always reachable by email.

Student Assistant (SA): Sonia Bhatia

Contact Info: sonianbh@usc.edu (732)-486-9996

Please send ALL EMAILS to Professor Osher, and cc sonianbh@usc.edu

Brightspace support: brightspace@usc.edu, 213-740-5555

Course Description

What happens in a motion picture studio? How are decisions made, which motion pictures and TV series get made? How are the motion pictures and TV shows marketed and distributed, how are they financed? Where are they actually produced and why? How do technologies impact current distribution strategies and therefore production and distribution decisions? How do major motion picture studios differ from so-called independents? How do "Streamers" differ from traditional Studios? How has the definition of "Studio" evolved with the advent of the Streaming revolution including the major Streamers earning the sobriquet "Studio". Why is industry consolidation escalating with the addition of major technology companies joining the Studio landscape? Why has "Sports" attracted the attention of Streamers owned by major technology companies? What are the headwinds for the Studios and Streamimng ecosystems.

Throughout the semester senior industry guest executives/creatives will join the Class to discuss their areas of expertise.

This course will delve into the motion picture and television businesses from the studio's perspective with an emphasis on filmed content (IP). Guests speakers will discuss their areas of expertise covering creative development, production/post-production, marketing, distribution, business affairs, deal analysis, film finance, tax-based incentive deals, etc., as well as other areas that the Studios are substantial market leaders including: animation, home entertainment, sports broadcasting, content acquisitions, TV sales, and market leading distribution models that have revolutionized the industry such as subscription **SVOD** (so-called "**Streamers**" like **Netflix**) services/platforms and **TVOD/AVOD/FAST** ad supported platforms.

A Weekly Group project will inform and reinforce the weekly class discussions. Students will be randomly assigned to a Group during week one. During the third hour of most classes these "Groups" will present to their classmates based on question(s) posed in a weekly group project fact pattern ("prompt") that will be posted on Blackboard a few days before the impacted Class. The Groups will have limited in person time during the class period in break out sessions to prepare for their oral presentations. Planning and assessing ahead of time is strongly recommended. Each Class member will be expected to participate in the Group presentiaions. These Groups will also work together on the Final Group Project described below.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes

This is a survey course of the "Studio business". The objective of the class is prepare students to successfully function in the entertainment industry as business executives or students who want to understand and succeed in the "studio" **enviroment**. A student's achievement in the class will be based on successfully analyzing and applying concepts discussed in class and in required reading materials into coherent and supportable business proposals and positions. Although the class will discuss in detail aspects of the creative process as it relates to content creation, the main focus will be on the business proposition in the Studio environment. These skills will be tested in the weekly class group projects, a midterm paper, a final group project and classroom conversations.

Mid Term Paper and Final Group Project

The **midterm paper** will be three pages in length on a current problematic topic facing the industry. You will be provided a prompt and questions to answer. Your paper will be graded on your subject matter analysis and logic to support your position(s) and recommendation(s). The paper will be assigned during the sixth week of class. The midterm papers will be submitted to Professor Osher (with a copy to Sonia) via email prior to class on March 10th, 2025.

The **Final Group project** will be based on a prompt provided during the April 1 class. A detailed discussion on expectations and deliverables will be had during that class. Each Group will prepare a powerpoint and oral presentation. On the last day the class meets (April 28), each Group will orally present their findings to the other members of the class for approximately 20 minutes. The written and oral presentations will be graded on the same basis as the midterm. The written portion of the presentation will be submitted before the last class via email.

Course Notes

Required reading assignments will be posted on Brightspace by Professor Osher.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

- Articles posted on Brightspace by Professor Osher. These articles will inform class discussions and the weekly group projects during the third hour of each class.

OPTIONAL READING:

- The Big Picture: The New Logic of Money and Power in Hollywood by Edward Jay Epstein, Random House, Publisher
- DAILY VARIETY, HOLLYWOOD REPORTER, or THE Wrap (online)

Course Evaluation

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	% of Grade
Mid Term Paper (3/10)	40%
Final Group Project (4/28)	30%
Weekly Group Projects/ Classroom Participation	30%
TOTAL	100%

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

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

Attendance

In person class attendance is essential to your success in this course and is part of your grade. Students are responsible for the course materials, including lectures, from the first day of this class, forward. It is the student's obligation to bring oneself up to date on any missed coursework.

Attendance Policy

Students are permitted two absences per semester. After 2 absences, any additional absences will impact your participation grade (i.e. A becomes A-, A- becomes B+, etc). Two late arrivals constitutes one absence. If possible, please let Professor Osher and Sonia know if you will have a late arrival in advance.

Class Participation

The In class contribution is a significant part of your grade and an important part of our shared learning experience. Your active participation helps me to evaluate your overall performance.

You can excel in this area if you come to class on time and contribute to the course by:

- Providing strong evidence of having thought through the material
- Advancing the discussion by contributing insightful comments and questions during class
- Listening attentively in class
- Demonstrating interest in your peers' comments, questions, and presentations
- Giving constructive feedback to your peers when appropriate
- Actively participating and adding insights in the Weekly Group Projects and the Final Group Project

Online Class & Asynchronous Learning Policies, if necessary due to University protocol or the class is designated as being taught on Zoom that week:

Camera: Please have your camera on for our Zoom class sessions. If you wish, you can use an artificial background for privacy concerns. If this poses an issue for you in terms of connectivity or you have other concerns, please contact Abhi or me directly for accommodations.

Recording: All classes will be recorded and transcribed which ensures not only ADA compliance, but also allows you to have access to the class regardless of the region or time zone you are studying from.

Time Zones: If you currently reside in a region where the time zone falls outside 7am to 10pm during the time for our class, and you cannot attend class regularly, or need to miss a class for that reason, please contact abhi or me for accommodations.

*If you do join a class remotely under University guidelines, it is still expected that you will endeavor to participate in the Weekly Group Projects and to make arrangements with the other members of your Group to meaningfully participate during your Group's presentation.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

**Order and topics subject to change and guest speaker availability.*

	Topics/Daily Activities
Week 1 1/13	Class Introduction, overview of the creative process: Weekly Group Project
Week 2 1/20	No Class: Martin Luther King's Day
Week 3 1/27	Creative development of IP; Weekly Group project
Week 4 2/3	Physical Production (Post-Production) Assessment; Weekly Group Project
Week 5 2/10	Business Affairs (Deals); Weekly Group Project
Week 6 2/17	No Class: President's Birthday holiday
Week 7 2/24	Business Affairs (packaging/green-light); Weekly Group Project Midterm project assigned
Week 8 3/3	Film and TV Finance; Weekly Group Project
Week 9 3/10	Production/Distribution Structures including tectonic shift to SVODs; Weekly Group Project MIDTERM PAPER DUE
Week 10 3/17	No Class : Spring Recess
Week 11 3/24	Evolving Forms of Distribution/Content (SVOD/AVOD/FAST/TVOD); Weekly Group Project
Week 12 3/31	Sports Broadcasting and new challenges; Weekly Group Project
Week 13 4/7	International Production / Acquisitions; Weekly Group Project; Final Group project assigned
Week 14 4/14	Content Marketing; Final Weekly Group Project
Week 15 4/21	Working in a Studio/Entertainment Industry (relationship management and leadership skills, etc.); Final Group project prep
Week 16 4/28	Final group project presentations

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

AI Policy

The use of AI is not permitted in this class. Since creating, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups, as stipulated. Students may not have another person (unless as part of your work group) or entity complete any portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI-generated tools is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

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.