

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT LOS ANGELES

ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY – THE BIG PICTURE

RTF 347C

UNIQUE #08535

INSTRUCTOR: STUART G. POLLOK

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Email thru inbox in Canvas

UTLA CENTER, BURBANK, CALIFORNIA

Semester Credit Hours: 3

Office Hours Wednesday 6:00-7:00PM and By Appointment

Class Hours Wednesdays 7:00PM-10:00PM

****PLEASE NOTE RESCHEDULE FOR WEEKS OF FEBRUARY 4th and 11th**

SPRING 2019

Course Overview

This class is an overview of the business of media content focused on past, present and emerging practices from the perspectives of the major motion picture studios, streamers, television and independent productions concentrating on the practical, legal, business, strategic, financial, economic and business models – “follow the money” - that drive show business. The class will also include exposure to the critical practical expertise required to satisfy the multi-faceted demands of producing content in the ever-changing media landscape. In addition, the disrupting influence of technological advances, changing consumer habits and the rise of international will be analyzed as well as the tensions between content/distribution, business/creative, and risk/reward, to name but a few paradigms, that are at the core of understanding the eternal beating heart of the entertainment industry.

The class is structured in four ‘alternating’ sequences; the studio world, the chronology of getting to production; the indie and tv worlds; and, finally, the practicalities of production. Information will be presented in class from your instructor, handouts, reading assignments and industry professionals.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify, understand, manage and present critical legal, business, and practical issues with respect to development, packaging, production financing, production, physical production, and post production
2. Analyze the cost and revenue structures in the independent entertainment industry
3. Analyze the cost and revenue structures for the major motion picture studios
4. Monitor emerging disruption factors, critical issues and concepts and future trends within the entertainment industry

5. Identify recurring paradigms, business models, and the role of technology in entertainment
6. Create and present a business plan for a selected project within the entertainment industry

Assignments

Per the Canvas syllabus dates you can instantly access, you will find written assignments are due to be posted onto Canvas no later than midnight the day before the next class session (for example, the Class Assignment which is based on material covered in the previous class is due to be submitted to Canvas no later than midnight on the Sunday immediately *before* the next Class). Please do not submit printed material unless requested. Make sure your name appears on the title of the document and the calendar date of the assignment on the paper itself. Extensions will be difficult to come by. However, if extenuating circumstances arise, like a death in the family or your own illness, please notify me via text or via inbox in Canvas before the deadline so that the matter may be discussed.

Special Guest Speakers

Industry professionals will be scheduled to offer their insights and personal experiences. Owing to unpredictable schedules, there may be last minute changes which will be communicated to all students via Canvas. You will be expected to research the speakers, companies, and their work ahead of time to ask them questions. This is a unique opportunity for you to speak directly with professionals. These visits are highly valuable and you will be expected to participate in the Q&A for each speaker.

It will be a CLASS ASSIGNMENT automatically due after each Guest Speaker's class to write a brief summary of insights (minimum 1 page per speaker) of what you learned from that Guest Speaker and post that to Canvas in advance of the class the following week.

Absences/Tardy

See above in "Assignments." If you have a legitimate scheduling problem (this does NOT include business lunches, family visits or screenings!) please contact me prior to class via inbox in Canvas, text, or a phone call to my cellphone. Unexcused absence from more than one (1) class will result in a deduction of up to 5 points from your overall grade for each individual absence. Likewise, being tardy or leaving early after the first such instance, will also, at my discretion, result in the deduction of overall grade points up to the same level as an absence. At NO time may your internship be used as an excuse for being late or missing class.

Required Texts

The Biz by Schuyler M. Moore, 5th Edition . In addition, there are often required readings that will be made available via Canvas. Canvas should be checked on a regular basis so that you are up-to-date with required readings.

Suggested Reading

A list will be available on Canvas.

Recommended Industry Links

Deadline Hollywood <http://www.deadline.com>

Variety <http://www.variety.com>

Hollywood Reporter <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com>

The Wrap <http://www.thewrap.com>

Screen International <http://www.Screendaily.com> (subscription)

Imdbpro.com <http://www.imdbpro.com> (subscription)

Box Office Mojo <http://www.Boxofficemojo.com>

The Numbers <http://www.the-numbers.com>

Recommended Industry Bookstores

SAMUEL FRENCH: 7623 Sunset Blvd., L.A

WRITERS STORE: 2040 Westwood Blvd, West L.A.

LARRY EDMUNDS BOOKSHOP: 6644 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood

Classroom Etiquette Policy

The use of cell phones, text messaging and all forms of outside-communication during class hours are NOT acceptable and will not be tolerated. Laptops ARE an acceptable form of note-taking in this class and access to the internet may be required for interactive portions of the class.

Learning Outcomes	Assessment	% of Grade
Create, produce and present a Business Plan that includes strategies for Development, Packaging, Production, Finance Plan, Recoupment Plan, Comparables, Physical Production and Location, and Post Production for a selected entertainment, original or adapted, project that has not yet been produced	Final Exam	40%
An exam that will address the practical, legal and business realities of producing in the media business	Mid-Term Exam	25%
Identify, understand,	Class Assignments:	25%

manage and present critical legal, business, and practical issues with respect to development, packaging, production, physical production, and post production, including Finance Plan, Recoupment Plan & Comparable Analysis, Top Sheet Budget, and Studio Revenue Model	Submitted Class Work; and Guest Speaker Summary of Insights	
Engage in critical dialogue and collaborative knowledge-building	In-class participation	10%

Total Course Grade is 100% and delivery of Final Project is mandatory.

Letter Grade	Range
A	100% to 94.0%
A-	< 94.0% to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0% to 87.0%
B	< 87.0% to 84.0%
B-	< 84.0% to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0% to 77.0%
C	< 77.0% to 74.0%
C-	< 74.0% to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0% to 67.0%
D	< 67.0% to 64.0%
D-	< 64.0% to 61.0%
F	< 61.0% to 0.0%

Services for Students with Disabilities

Students with a documented disability may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, [Services for Students with Disabilities](#), 512-471-6259 (voice) or 512-410-6644 (video phone).

Please inform me before CLASS #3 if you have a physical, learning, sensory, or psychological disability and need accommodation to take part in or to complete the required work for this course.

University Email Notification Policy: All students should become familiar with the University's official email student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her email address on inbox at Canvas. Students are expected to check their inbox on Canvas on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that the inbox on Canvas be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your inbox at Canvas address are available at <https://cio.utexas.edu/policies/university-electronic-mail-student-notification-policy>.

In this course, inbox within Canvas will be exclusively used as a the written means of communication with students. You will be responsible for checking your inbox within Canvas regularly for class work and announcements.

Religious Holidays: Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. If you miss an assignment or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence. It is the policy of the University of Texas at Austin that you must notify your instructor at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent to observe a religious holy day.

The University of Texas Honor Code: The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Scholastic Dishonesty: The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor. By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Scholastic dishonesty damages both the student's learning experience and readiness for the future demands of a work-career. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. More information on student conduct and academic integrity is available at <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/academicintegrity.php>.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)

Reading Assignment: In advance of Class 1, Read Chapter 1 “Jargon Translation Guide” of The Biz by Schuyler M. Moore, 5th Edition and be prepared to answer questions in class regarding terminology and suggested (but not mandatory) reading is “Film History Presentation” available on Canvas.

CLASS #1 INTRODUCTION

- Introductions
- Class Methodology
- A History of the Business of the U.S. Industry
- Current State of the film and media industry
- Terminology
- The Players (Talent, Representation, Distributors/Sales Agents, Financiers)

Reading and Class Assignment. In preparation for Class #2, read “The Two Hollywoods” from The Big Picture by Jay Epstein and suggested (but not mandatory) reading is “The Clearinghouse Concept” from The Big Picture by Jay Epstein.

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CLASS #2 HOW THE MAJOR MOTION PICTURE SYSTEM WORKS – Part I

Marketing in the Digital Age

How the Studio System Works: Studio Revenues & Costs (Domestic)

Class Assignment: In advance of Class #3, complete and upload to Canvas a 1-page Domestic Studio Revenue & Costs model that estimates, and shows the calculations and assumptions, of the total gross and net revenues domestically for any movie released theatrically by a major motion picture studio in the last five years that garnered more than \$10m in domestic box office. Be prepared to present and discuss your model in detail in person during Class #3.

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CLASS #3 HOW THE MAJOR MOTION PICTURE SYSTEM WORKS – Part II

Review of Class Assignment – Domestic Studio Revenue & Costs Model

How the Studio System Works: Studio Revenues & Costs (Domestic), Continued

Studio Comparables Analysis

Reading and Class Assignment. In preparation for Class #4, (i) prepare a comparables analysis (minimum 20 titles) for any movie released theatrically worldwide by a major motion picture studio in the last five years that garnered more than \$50m in worldwide box office, and (ii) read and be familiar with the assigned option and writer agreements handouts posted to Canvas and be prepared to discuss them in detail in person during Class #4.

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CLASS #4 DEVELOPMENT (BUSINESS)

Review of Class Assignment – Comparables analysis

How to protect, create and develop your projects from idea to completed scripts: Pre-Initiation Agreements; Standard Writer Business Terms (creation & option)

Reading Assignment. In advance of Class #5, read Chapter 17 “Copyright” and Chapter 18 “Right of Publicity” of The Biz by Schuyler M. Moore, 5th Edition, and be prepared to answer questions in class regarding the subject matter.

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CLASS #5 DEVELOPMENT (LEGAL)

Key legal concepts that must be addressed during the development process:

- Copyright
- Rights of Publicity
- Clearances / E&O / Releases

Reading Assignment. In advance of Class #6, please review and be familiar with the assigned director and actor agreement handouts posted to Canvas and read Chapter 7 “Guilds” of The Biz by Schuyler M. Moore, 5th Edition, and be prepared to answer questions in Class #6 regarding the subject matter.

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CLASS #6 PACKAGING

Key strategies in getting a developed project into production: Packaging/Casting; Director Agreements; Actor Agreements; Producer Agreements; Talent Participations; Guild Agreements

Reading Assignment. In preparation for Class #7, (i) please check Canvas for assigned reading and (ii) review and be familiar with the assigned handout ‘Final Top Ten Production Incentive States 2015-2016’ and be prepared to discuss it in detail in person during Class #7.

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CLASS #7 PRODUCTION INCENTIVES

GUEST SPEAKER: Joe Chianese, Entertainment Partners

How production incentives drive the economic realities for projects: Purpose of Location Incentives; Types of Incentives

Class Assignment: Please review past class work and class and reading assignments in preparation for the Mid-Term Exam.

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CLASS #8 MID-TERM EXAM

An Exam will be presented with questions based upon the curriculum and class work.

Reading Assignment. In advance of Class #9, please review and be familiar with the assigned independent film financing model handout posted to Canvas and be prepared to discuss it in in detail in person during Class #9.

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SPRING BREAK

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CLASS #9 INDIE PRODUCTION FINANCING

How the Independent System Works to Finance projects: Finance Plans; Recoupment Plan; Financing Agreements

Class Assignment. In advance of Class #10, prepare a Finance Plan for an independent film project of your choosing sold in the last five years by a prominent sales agent and be prepared to present and discuss your work in detail in person during Class #10.

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CLASS #10 THE INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

Review of Class Assignment – Finance Plans

How the International Markets Work: Studio; Streamers; TV; Indie; Co-Productions and China

Class Assignment. In advance of Class #11, (i) prepare an International Recoupment Plan for an independent film project of your choosing sold in the last five years by a prominent sales agent.

CLASS #11 HOW THE TELEVISION SYSTEM WORKS
GUEST SPEAKER: Pamela Soper, SVP, Current Programming CBS

Review of Class Assignment – International Recoupment Plans

How the Television System Works: Network / Cable

Reading Assignment. Please check Canvas for assigned reading re physical production.

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CLASS #12 PHYSICAL PRODUCTION
GUEST SPEAKER: Andrew Golov, line producer

Review of Class Assignment – Recoupment Plans

How to manage the process of physically producing a project; Practicalities of Director Vision; Breakdown; Scheduling; Budgeting; Cash Flow; Bond-ability

Reading and Class Assignment. In advance of Class #13, prepare a Guest Speaker Summary.

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CLASS #13 POST PRODUCTION
GUEST SPEAKER: Paul Leonard, TV Post Producer, and Mark Graziano, Feature Executive in Charge of Post Production.

How to manage the process of post production: Practicalities of Post Production in TV and Film

Class Assignment. Prepare for your Final Exam.

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CLASS #14 FINAL EXAM
The Final Exam shall be written questions based upon all of the Class work, reading and work assignments and shall be answered in narrative format.

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