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School of Communication, Room 003  
Loyola University Chicago  
Fall 2015

## COMM 371: Producing Film and Digital Media

### **Course Objectives:**

Producing Film and Digital Media examines how to create, budget, finance, visualize and translate knowledge into accessible media formats. Students will research story topics, develop proposals, practice 'pitching', casting, identifying financial support, and translating their ideas into a prospectus and related formats. Students will produce and deliver (both individually and as groups) presentations, web sites, short videos and/or 'teasers' while learning standard software for producing feature films. Students will each propose their own project, but will work in groups to deliver materials. (You will assist at least two other students). We will review relevant films, interactive sites, games, educational materials and other applied promotional, media opportunities.

### **Learning outcomes:**

Story development in multi-media environments, prospectus/preproduction work, data visualization, public speaking, movie budgeting software basics (Movie Magic), collaborative skills, fundraising, persuasive writing techniques, networking techniques, educational applications, broadcast requirements

### **Required Readings and Materials:**

- *Producing and Directing the Short Film*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed, Peter Rea, Focal Press, 2015
- Podcasts—KCRW's "[The Business](#)"—great collection of info on film scene
- Articles, available on Sakai

If you have questions, concerns or documented disability, please see me and/or the Wellness Center before there is a problem. Turn in documentation to Wellness Center.

### **Assignments:**

Story Script/Treatment/Landscape Survey	5 points
Pitch session (presentation)	5 points
Lookbook	5 points
Prospectus with Schedule, Budget,	10 points
Midterm Exam	35 points
Final Project:	
Final Prospectus: script/treatment/ budget/schedule/teaser/ distribution plan,	
Public Presentation (Group)	35 points
Participation	5 points



**Week 3** BUILDING THE FOUNDATION OF A MEDIA PROJECT Sept. 8

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- **DUE: Prospectus draft (sans top sheet); landscape survey**
- Attaching directors, writers, experts, scientists or other relevant participants to a project
- Convincing participants to share the risk with financiers
- The difference between above-the-line and below-the-line fees
- Networking and social media
- Establish final project teams
- Sustainable media practices—process, test screenings, content,
- Movie Magic—scheduling, budgeting the script
- Movie Magic overview, **SKYPE Michael Sable**
- **HOMEWORK:** Work on Budget, Schedule; Read Rea Ch. 5; “Film festivals” on Sakai

**Week 4** PROPOSALS DUE--PROJECT FINANCING, CASTING Sept. 15

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- **DUE: Schedule, Budget draft**
- Auditions, casting agents
- Media Distributors—educational, commercial; community screenings, Digital/VOD, self-distribution), supply chains, marketing, impact plan
- **GUEST SPEAKERS: Aaron Greer, Troy Pryor**
- **HOMEWORK,** Prepare Pitch, finish prospectus

**Week 5** LOOKBOOKS DUE --THE DEAL – PITCHING Sept. 22nd

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- **DUE: Pitch in-class**
- Pitching a project to a studio or other potential partners, commissioning editors, etc..
- Production deal versus negative pick-up
- Ins and outs of grant world; private donors
- **GUEST SPEAKERS (Tom Weinberg, Michael Zarouny)**
- **HOMEWORK,** Read Rea, Ch. 19; Watch 48 Hours on Amanda Knox

**Week 6** CALENDARS DUE - PRODUCTION DANGER ZONES Sept. 29th

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- **DUE: Final Prospectus** with Schedule, budget
- Putting together a team – delineation of producer duties
- The collaboration between producers and the director (or others)– who’s the boss
- Choosing the proper department heads; location shooting, union crews
- Hiring an accountant and payroll service
- Post Production planning—closed captions, animation work, etc..
- Music and other clearances
- Producer’s representatives and film/media festival planning
- Acquisition deals, contracts and markets
- **GUEST SPEAKER, Bob Hercules**
- **HOMEWORK,** Complete Midterm online by 10/12

**NO CLASS OCT. 6<sup>TH</sup>-- FALL BREAK**

**Week 7**                      **COMPLTE MIDTERM ONLINE BY OCT.. 12th**

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**Week 8**                      **BMARKETING, OUTREACH AND DISTRIBUTION**                      **Oct. 13th**

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- Press agents - The power and financial benefits of free publicity
- Educational components and support
- Test marketing and group research
- The power of the internet and alternative outreach
- **GUEST SPEAKER: Beckie Stocchetti, Kartemquin Films**
- **HOMEWORK**, Work on distribution plans

**Week 9**                      **PRODUCING FOR BROADCAST, CABLE, VOD, Web**                      **Oct 20<sup>th</sup>**

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- How new technologies factor into the financing of creative content
- New platforms for distribution and marketing
- Creating and selling a reality TV or specialty series (science, travel, comedy, etc..)
- **GUEST SPEAKER, Doug Longhini, producer, CBS 48 Hours**
- **HOMEWORK**, Work on outreach plan

**Week 10**                      **WEB, DISTRIBUTION & OUTREACH PLAN**                      **Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>**

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- Is it possible to run a sustainable and profitable business over a long period of time as a freestanding media producer?
- Educational examples
- **SKYPE Brigid Maher; Mama Sherpas, designing for impact**
- Work in Groups; **HOMEWORK**: Revise scripts for final, teasers, etc..

**Week 11**                      **FIELD VISIT**                      **Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>**

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- TBA; **HOMEWORK**: Work on teasers

**Week 12**                      **Producing for WTTW**                      **Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>**

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- **DUE: Draft work for final proposals with visualization**
- Guest speaker; (IFP) Location scouting
- **HOMEWORK**: Work on team projects

**Week 13**                      **Work on Group Prospectus in Class**                      **Nov. 17th**

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- Films screening; Meet at Damen to see alumni T.J. Berden's "Full of Grace" at 7:00
- Post screening discussion with T.J.

**Week 14**                      **PUBLIC PRESENTATION**                      **Nov. 24<sup>h</sup>**

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- **DUE: GROUPS PRESENT PROSPECTUS, FINANCING, STORYBOARDS, OUTLINES, OUTREACH AND DISTRIBUTION PLANS 10 – 12 minute presentations**

**Week 15**                      **FINAL PROSPECTUS AND MEDIA PROJECTS DUE BY**                      **Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>**

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