

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
LOS ANGELES INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
5700 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 675
Los Angeles, California 90036
Phone 323 – 571 – 4535 Fax 323 – 571 – 1378
lweinberg@e3ent.net

08/24/15

BOSTON UNIVERSITY LOS ANGELES PROGRAM

COURSE SYLLABUS (August 1, 2015 - December 3, 2015) – Business of Hollywood

COURSE #s, TITLES and CREDITS:

Film & Television Students

COM FT 566E A1 The Business of Hollywood
(4 credits)

Advertising and PR Students:

COM FT 566E A1 The Business of Hollywood
(4 credits)

BUSINESS OF HOLLYWOOD – Course Overview and Objective:

A practical analysis of the entertainment industry, covering a broad spectrum of the business, including film, television, internet, new media, gaming, publishing, marketing and related fields. The course explores the changes occurring today in the entertainment industry and the challenges graduating students will face when entering the marketplace.

Discussions will include: (i) the age-old balancing act between art and commerce and how each influences the other and how one does not exist without the other; (ii) the skills which one needs to succeed in developing and producing content for both film and television and how those skills are applicable to emerging areas of the industry such as the internet, new media and gaming; and (iii) how to evaluate, acquire, develop, package, finance, produce and market various forms of intellectual property for a broad range of media outlets. The course begins with the birth of an idea and the acquisition of various forms of intellectual property – the basis for all content created for media exploitation. We will then track the business aspects of the development, financing, production, post-production, marketing, sale and all-media exploitation of finished product – be it in film (studio, independent), television (broadcast, pay, cable, VOD), home entertainment (DVD/Blu Ray), the internet, new media outlets (cell phone, hand-held devices), gaming, publishing and merchandising and licensing.

The course will include a heavy emphasis on the actual real-life experiences of the Professor and his associates from various disciplines within the field.

The traditional paradigm of the entertainment industry career is quickly changing. The new graduate from the College of Communication must understand the rapid changes occurring today, the need for a working professional to understand multiple facets of the business, and the practical knowledge that many practitioners are crossing over (and back) between careers in film, television, the internet and new media and more. An understanding of all facets of the business will give our graduating students an edge as they enter the workplace.

PROFESSOR/DIRECTORS:

Larry Weinberg

Bill Linsman

Clare Le

Senior Advisor/Lead Lecturer -
Film & TV Department BU LA Program
5700 Wilshire Blvd., #675
Los Angeles, CA 90036
(P) 310 – 499 – 0066
(cell) 310 – 940 – 6835
(E-Mail) larry@wifylaw.com

Program Director
Los Angeles, CA 90036
(P) 323–571–4535

clareg@bu.edu

MEETING TIME:

Monday 7:30pm-10pm

LOCATION:

Boston University Offices
5700 Wilshire Blvd.
Suite 675

READING ASSIGNMENTS/GRADING: There will be one (1) optional book to read during the semester for The Business of Hollywood; several additional books will also be recommended, as well as trade papers and magazines. There will be a large number of hand-outs provided for the students for The Business of Hollywood. They will include contracts, applicable articles, work sheets, production budgets and schedules, business plans, and more.

GRADING: The Business Of Hollywood course grade will be determined as follows: (i) 30% class attendance AND class participation; (ii) 25% for mid-term exam (which will be a short essay format); and (iii) 45% for the final Class Project (see Class Project description at end of course syllabus).

CLASS PARTICIPATION: Class attendance and participation are extremely important for The Business of Hollywood. The course involves lectures and question and answer sessions, and discussion is very important to the process and allows for the best experience for the students; however, workshops and screenings of works-in-progress may also come into play. We are in the “communications” business, so classroom discussion and interaction is an important part of the course. Please be aware that particular student interests that are not covered by the course syllabus should be brought to the Professor’s attention. All attempts to cover such topics will be made.

As set forth in the Boston University Los Angeles Program Student Handbook, unexcused absences will result in the student’s class grade being lowered. Please be aware that class time takes precedent over internship time, so missing class due to an internship conflict, unless excused by the Professor, is no excuse for missing class. Any issues resulting from a conflict between class and a student’s internship may be addressed through the Director’s office. All internship coordinators are informed of this University policy.

HONOR SYSTEM: Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Any kind of academic misconduct (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) will result in the filing of academic misconduct charges. Any suspicious act/material/ etc. will be investigated to the fullest extent possible and those found guilty will be punished accordingly. BE SURE TO READ AND COMPLY WITH BOSTON UNIVERSITY’S UNIVERSAL ACADEMIC CONDUCT CODE. It is available at: bu.edu/academics.

COURSE OUTLINE & CLASS SCHEDULE: THE BUSINESS OF HOLLYWOOD

| | <u>Class</u> | <u>Time</u> | <u>Topic</u> |
|----|-----------------|-------------|---|
| 1. | 8/31 | 7:30pm | Defining Roles; Coverage; Acquisition of Content and Intellectual Property |
| | | | A. Course overview and objective; review course outline, schedule, reading list and Class Project (see attached outline) B. Why do you want to be in this business – what motivates you? What turns you on? What role do you want to play in the business? C. Typical places to start in the business (e.g.; producer assistant, agent assistant, etc.); networking, networking, networking.... D. A practical application of what you learn in college. E. Knowing your audience – for everything: resume, interviews, pitching, submissions, etc. F. Internships and how best to use them. G. Navigating the Hollywood seas: love of storytelling, tenacity, art of the schmooze; how to deal with the “personalities” in the biz. H. Intellectual property; copyright; where to find material. I. Art vs. Commerce – the fragile balance between the two. J. Handout: Agencies and Entertainment Job Web Sites K. Handout: Copyright memorandum L. Handout: Examples of coverage; reading, thoughts, comments, “ <i>COVERAGE</i> ”. Evaluating material - Who is evaluation for: producer, executive, agent/manager, et al. ** Assignment: Handout Screenplays for the “ Weekend Read ” (ala an agency or studio/network): One screenplay and one television pilot to be read for next week’s class. ** Each student to choose one (1) script to do “coverage” to be turned in next class. |
| 2. | ***** 9/7/15 | NO CLASS | HOLIDAY/LABOR DAY |
| 3. | 9/14 | 7:30pm | The Producer and Executive Producer, et al. |
| | | | A. Producing: “The art of Alchemy...creating something from nothing.” B. How many types of producers? Film vs. TV (Producer; Executive Producer; Show-Runner) C. Selling intellectual property (i.e.; ideas, stories, characters); the “Pitch!” . D. What kind of content are you producing: (Film, TV, Internet Web Series, Video Game, etc.) E. Where to begin? It all begins with an idea: finding the Property you want to acquire, develop, promote and produce. “ <i>In the dizzying world of moviemaking, we must not be distracted from one fundamental concept: The idea is king.</i> ” Jeffrey Katzenberg F. Acquisition of material: screenplay, teleplay, novel, play, short story, etc. G. Handout: Option Agreement H. Handout: Film Producer Agreement I. Handout: TV Executive Producer Agreement J. Discussion: Discuss students’ Coverage Assignment - script notes and the development process. |

4. **9/21** **7:30pm** **The Writer**
- A. The Writer's role.
 - B. The "Pitch"!
 - C. Selecting a writer and the development process.
 - D. Writing for film vs. writing for TV vs. writing for the internet and other media outlets (e.g.; video game industry).
 - E. How to find representation (agent, manager, entertainment attorney).
 - F. The Writers Guild (WGA).
 - G. **Handout:** Film Writer Agreement
 - H. **Handout:** TV Writer Agreement
 - I. **Handout:** Web Series Writer Agreement
 - J. **Handout:** TV Series Bible

5. **9/28** **7:30pm** **The Director**
- A. The Director's role.
 - B. Selecting a Director.
 - C. The Director in the development process.
 - D. Directing for film vs. directing for TV vs. directing for the internet and other media outlets.
 - E. How to find representation (agent, manager, entertainment attorney).
 - F. The Directors Guild (DGA)
 - G. **Handout:** Film Director Agreement
 - H. **Handout:** TV Director Agreement
 - I. **In-Class Viewing:** class to view director show reels, and work examples.

6. **10/5** **7:30pm** **The Actor**
- A. Attaching talent: making offers; getting scripts to cast; dealing with talent agents and managers.
 - B. The casting director; casting calls; sides and auditions; the actor's reel.
 - C. The package; putting a cast list together and valuing talent attachments.
 - D. Screen Actors Guild (SAG)
 - E. **Handout: Film Actor Agreement**
 - F. **Handout:** TV Actor Agreement
 - G. **In-Class Viewing:** class to view actor showreels, audition tapes.

7. ***** **10/12/15** **NO CLASS** **HOLIDAY/COLUMBUS DAY**
 ***** **Class to meet on Tuesday 10/13/15**

8. **10/19** **7:30pm** **Financing Your Project**
- A. Submitting your project to the film studio or TV network; **the "Package"**.
 - B. Submitting your project to established film producers and TV showrunners: companies that have overall deals with studios and networks – the "first-look" deal.
 - C. Submitting your project to foreign sales companies.
 - D. Submitting your project to independent equity financiers (private, institutional, funds).
 - E. Debt financing – the bank's role.
 - F. Alternative Financing: (i) Domestic and International "Soft Dollars" (subsidies, tax incentives, etc.); (ii) corporate sponsorship and product placement; (iii) Internet, new media, technology.

- G. Acquisition divisions at the studios.
- H. Creating “*a false sense of urgency*”.
- I. The changing paradigm of television financing, advertising, Tivo and digital recording.
- J. Submission Releases.
- K. Setting up your own legal entity for production (corporation, partnership, limited liability co.)
- L. **Handout:** Financing Agreement.
- M. **Handout:** Business Plan for production financing and development fund.
- N. **Handout:** Single Purpose Production Vehicle Operating Agreement (Film, TV, Internet)
- O. **Handout:** Studio 1st Look Deals List
- P. **Handout:** State Tax Credit Financing Agreement

9. **10/26** **7:30pm** **Pre-Production; Production**

- A. Pre-Production & Production: Line producer/UPM (Unit Production Manager) /1st AD (Assistant Director); Above-the Line vs. Below-the-Line
- B. Creating budget & schedule - where to start: crew size, # of days to shoot; budget; location; effects, etc.; cash flow and draw down; TIME = MONEY (The budget is king! Taking care of the budget, crew, cast, director; taking care of your cast and crew; Safety & law; Locations; Film Permits).
- C. Hard costs, soft costs, deferrals.
- D. Bond Companies and Completion Guarantors
- E. Insurance and liability.
- F. Clearances and Product Placement; script clearance report.
- G. Key Department Heads (e.g.; Cinematographer, Editor, Production Designer)
- H. **Vendors:** equipment, facilities, services (sound, lighting, labs, post, film/tape).
- I. Locations vs. Sound Stages.
- J. Transportation.
- K. Prepping the cast and crew; Production meeting; Tech scout.
- L. Storyboarding.
- M. Unit publicity; B-roll; behind-the-scenes (added DVD/internet materials)
- N. **Handout:** Budget
- O. **Handout:** Schedule

10. **11/2** **7:30pm** **Post-Production; Distribution Film, TV (VOD, Broadcast, Cable); Internet**

- A. Sound and Picture editorial.
- B. The producer/financier-director agenda dilemma – “final cut”.
- C. Special EFX: practical vs. CGI.
- D. The Editor.
- E. Director in the editing room; Director’s Cut vs. Final Cut
- F. Post-production sound house: dialogue editor, ADR & Looping, sound effects,, music editor, scheduling; Post-production Supervisor
- G. **Music:** songs, temp track, music clearances/licenses/sound track.
- H. **Handout:** Editor Agreement
- I. **Handout:** Music License Agreement (Synch and Master Rights)
- J. How to choose a distributor or broadcaster: worldwide rights, split rights (foreign & domestic). The Distribution Agreement for film, TV the internet.
- K. Understanding your product and how to determine the best outlet and distribution model to maximize exposure and financial return.
- L. Video On Demand (VOD); Digital Video Discs (DVDs)
- M. Television: Broadcast, Cable and other TV sales: the license deal.
- N. Ancillary and Allied Rights (e.g.; airplanes, hotels, etc.)

- O. The Internet: distribution outlet vs. marketing.
- P. Delivery: Delivering your completed project to the distributor or network: the pitfalls and anguish in trying to close the deal.
- Q. **Handout**: Film Distribution Agreement
- R. **Handout**: TV Broadcast Agreement
- S. **Handout**: Internet Distribution Agreement

11. **11/9** **7:30pm** **Sales & Marketing; Merchandising & Licensing**

- A. Sales and Marketing: bringing your product to the marketplace – film and TV markets and festivals (Cannes, Berlin, Toronto, Sundance, NATPE, MIP, MIPCOM).
- B. The Internet: viewed from the marketing perspective rather than distribution of content; creating the website and viral marketing; how best to use it.
- C. How to market your product on your own: sales kits, advanced notices, websites, Public Relations, etc.
- D. Working with the studios and networks on marketing your film or television program.
- E. Merchandising and Licensing: products and services; toys and games; publishing; sports, travel and leisure industries; clothing; food and restaurants; live theater; theme parks; etc.
- G. **Handout**: Promotional Bible
- H. **Handout**: Key Festival and Market List
- I. Class to view: various promotional materials for film, television and internet product.

12. **11/16** **7:30pm** **New Media; Technology; Innovation and Emerging Opportunities**

- A. Other media markets and festivals: Showest Exhibitors, E3 Technology Convention, Comicon.
- B. Exhibition and Innovation: 3-D; large screen format exhibition; interactive theaters; gaming theaters; etc.
- C. Internet: multi-player gaming; interactive websites.
- D. New Technology applications to traditional models.
- E. Video Game Industry – higher gross numbers on game sales than theatrical box office receipts.
- F. The animation industry.
- G. Cell phones and other hand-held devices (iPhone, iTouch, Sony)
- H. Virtual studios.
- I. 4-D Live Experiences: concerts, live theaters, theme parks, traveling modular exhibitions.

13. **11/23** **7:30pm** **TBD; GUEST SPEAKER OR EVENT**

14. **11/30** **7:30pm** **TBD; GUEST SPEAKER OR EVENT**

SUGGESTED READING LIST:

1. The Biz by Schuyler M. Moore (Silman-James Press)
2. Dealmaking in the Film & TV Industry by Mark Litwak. Silmar/Jones.
3. Pound of Flesh by Art Linson
4. From Script to Screen: The Collaborative Art of Filmmaking by Linda Segar and Edward Jay Whitmore. Owl Books 2000.
5. How To Make It In Hollywood by Linda Buzzell. Harper Perennial.
6. Down and Dirty Pictures by Peter Biskind. Simon & Schuster
7. Hello He Lied by Linda Obst
8. The War For Late Night by Bill Carter
9. Daily trade papers/sites such as Variety, Hollywood Reporter, Deadline Hollywood [Required]

COURSE HANDOUTS:

Per the syllabus.

SUGGESTED ENTERTAINMENT RELATED SOCIETIES TO JOIN:

1. Independent Feature Project (IFP)
2. American Cinemateque
3. Women In Film
4. Guild/Union Internship and Mentor Programs
5. New Filmmakers Los Angeles

SCRIPTS TO BE READ FOR CLASS

TBD

CLASS PROJECT - Content Outline

Fall 2015

The Class Project will be turned in on **December 4, 2015** and will synthesize the entire course material into a single project typically referred to as a "Project Bible". I will discuss the Class Project further during the course of the class and answer all pertinent questions when necessary. I will also bring into class examples of past Class Projects. The concept behind the Class Project is to provide the student with a working model of a motion picture, television, internet, or other, project bible, professionally prepared, which he/she can, if willing, introduce to the marketplace.

A typical Project Bible will include most, if not all, of the following:

1. **THE PROPERTY** - Feature Screenplay (or outline/synopsis), Short Screenplay (or outline/synopsis), Novel (or outline/synopsis), Play (or outline/synopsis), Biography, Newspaper/Magazine Article, Re-Make of Existing Film or Television Program, etc. Basically tell us what the property is and if there is any underlying material it is based upon.
2. **OPTION AGREEMENT** - Underlying property rights agreement (short form). Using the handout as an example, draft a short-form option and purchase agreement for The Property. A statement of rights page is also acceptable should the producer also be the owner of the material (i.e.; the writer of the work).
3. **SYNOPSIS** - Log-line for The Property and short-form synopsis of The Property (no more than a few pages) [Note: If The Property is an outline or synopsis ignore #3]
4. **BUSINESS PLAN** - The Plan can include some or all of the following: (a.) the project concept and why it will work; (b) short analysis and state of the marketplace (i.e.; film, television) as it relates to your Property; (c) principals involved in the production (i.e.; bios on producer, et al.); (d) analysis of what makes this production and production team unique or likely to achieve it's goal and have the opportunity for success; (e) how do you intend to execute the production; (f) how do you intend to market and promote the production.
5. **SUGGESTED DIRECTOR LIST** - Create a list of about 5 – 10 directors who might be right for your project (any director is allowed). Basically create a wish list. If you are the director say so.
6. **SUGGESTED ACTOR LIST** - Create a list of about 5 – 10 actors who might be right for each of your main characters in your project (any actor is allowed). Basically create a wish list.
7. **CHARACTER BREAKDOWN** - Create a character breakdown for each of your main characters in your project wherein you describe the type of character, personality, character traits, physical traits, weaknesses and strengths, back-story, likes and dislikes, and goals.
8. **BUDGET & SCHEDULE** - Give a short statement of the expected budget of the project. Estimates are acceptable. This is not a full-blown budget and only a hypothetical based on solid reasoning.
9. **PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL** - Create or add any graphics, photos, drawings, articles, press, etc. which will help promote and sell your project. Be as creative as you want and include anything you feel will help sell and promote your production.
10. **SUBMISSION LIST** - Create a wish list of film studios, networks, motion picture and television production companies, internet outlets, etc., which might be right for your production. Research the companies to submit your material to.

**** EXAMPLES OF PAST PROJECTS WILL BE SHOWN TO THE STUDENTS PRIOR TO THE END OF THE SEMESTER ****