FILM TV 146 – Art and Practice of Motion Picture Producing: So you want to make a movie?
4 units

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Class Website: https://ccle.ucla.edu/course/view/191A-FILMTV146-1

Course Overview
Introduction to Producing for Non-Majors: This course presents an overview of the development, production, and distribution of feature films for the worldwide theatrical market including identifying material, attracting elements, understanding the basics of studio and independent financing and distribution.

Course Goals:
1. Learn the vernacular of the industry
2. Gather and prepare comparative film data
3. Read, analyze and evaluate literary material, including scripts
4. Review and understand basic industry practices and economics
5. How to find potential financiers and distributors

Assignments
- Budget: Examine the differences between the $5.6MM and $88MM Budgets (2 pages)
- Marketing: Analyze the marketing and distribution strategy of two films: one released prior to the year 2000, one released within the last year (2 pages)
- Final: Develop your own creative producing project and marketing strategy.

Grading
30% - Participation (Discussion Board)
10% - Budget Assignment
10% - Marketing Assignment
50% - Final

Late assignments will be reduced one grade. Parameters considered for grading, oral and written: eloquence of expression, soundness of thought, and grammatical correction.
Suggested Reading:
Think Outside the Box Office – Jon Reiss  
Easy Riders, Raging Bulls – Peter Biskin  
The Movie Business Book – Jason Squire  
Down & Dirty Pictures – Peter Biskin  
So You Want To Be A Producer – L. Turman  
Genius of the System – Thomas Schatz  
The Business of Television – Ken Basin

Course Materials:
Scripts and Films:
  • Phenomenon
  • Reversal of Fortune
  • Brokeback Mountain
  • Curious Case of Benjamin Button
  • The Falcon & The Snowman
  • The Hi Line
  • Desperately Seeking Susan
  • Fatal Attraction
  • My Left Foot
  • Cinema Paradiso
  • Twilight
  • Inception

Short Stories:
  • “Brokeback Mountain” by Annie Prolux
  • “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Short Film:
  • Bottle Rocket

Additional Research:
  - Variety: www.variety.com
  - Screen International: www.screendaily.com
  - Indie Wire: www.indiewire.com
  - The Wrap: www.thewrap.com
  - Los Angeles Times: www.latimes.com
  - New York Times: www.nyt.com
  - Wall Street Journal: www.wsj.com
  - Hollywood Creative Directory
  - Studio System: www.studiosystem.com
  - IMDB: www.imdb.com
  - Box Office Mojo: www.boxofficemojo.com
Weekly Schedule

Week One

Introduction: Introduction: The Producer
Production, Financing, and Distribution

Lesson 1: Pre-Production I: Story Rights & Adaptation
Where does material come from?

Required Reading: “Brokeback Mountain” Short Story (The New Yorker)
Brokeback Mountain screenplay by Larry McMurtry & Diana Ossana

Recommended Reading: “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” Short Story by F. Scott Fitzgerald
“The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” Screenplay by Eric Roth

Screening: Brokeback Mountain
2008, Directed by Ang Lee
The Curious Case of Benjamin Button
2008, Directed by David Fincher

Exhibits: Industry Vernacular
Types of Producers
Sample “Option Agreement”
Sample “Assignment of Rights”
Basic Three Act Structure by Syd Field
Brokeback Mountain Production Notes by James Schamus

Lesson 2: Pre-Production II: Talent Attachments and Casting
Attaching Elements, Start Date, “Pay or Play” and Assembling the Creative Team

Required Reading: “Phenomenon” screenplay by Gerald Di Pego
“The Falcon and the Snowman” Screenplay by Steve Zallian

Screening: Phenomenon
1998, Directed by Jon Turteltaub
The Falcon and the Snowman
1985, Directed by John Schlesinger

Week Two

Lesson 3: Pre-Production III: “Green Light”
Pre-Production, Location Scout, Budget and Schedule

Required Reading: Reversal of Fortune Screenplay by Nicholas Kazan

Screening: *Reversal of Fortune*
1990, Directed by Barbet Schroeder

Exhibits: Sample $3MM Indie Budget
Sample $20MM 3D Budget

Lesson 4: Principal Photography
*Key Crew, Unions & Principal Photography (Below-the-Line)*

Exhibits: Sample Call Sheet
Sample One-Line Schedule
Sample Production Report
Film Financing: List of Required Documents

Assignments: Budget Assignment Due

**Week Three**

Lesson 5: Post-Production
*Delivering the Finished Film, Prints & Advertising (P&A)*

Required Reading: “Desperately Seeking Susan” - Screenplay by Leora Barish
“Fatal Attraction” - Screenplay by James Dearden

Screening: *Desperately Seeking Susan*
1985, Directed by Susan Seidelman
*Fatal Attraction*
1987, Directed by Adrian Lyne

Exhibits: Post Production Flow Chart

Lesson 6: Financing I: Where’s the Money?
*Two Sources of Funding*

**Week Four**

Lesson 7: Financing II: Studios & Independents
*What are Major Studios, Independent Studios and Studio Co-Financers?*

Exhibits: “Facts on Pacts” from *Variety*
Assignments: Marketing Assignment Due

**Week 5**

**Lesson 8:** Distribution I: Who’s Buying? Who’s Selling?  
*Foreign Pre-Sales, Foreign Sales Agents and International Distributors*

Required Reading:  
“The Hi-Line” Screenplay by Ron Judkins  
“Cinema Paradiso” Screenplay by Giuseppe Tornatore  
“My Left Foot” Screenplay by Shane Connaughton & Jim Sheridan

Screening:  
*The Hi-Line*  
1999, Directed by Ron Judkins  
*Cinema Paradiso*  
1988, Directed by Giuseppe Tornatore  
*My Left Foot*  
1989, Directed by Jim Sheridan

Exhibits: Print ads from *Cinema Paradiso* and *My Left Foot*

**Lesson 9:** Distribution II: Release Windows & Platforms  
*Exhibition, Distribution Release Windows and Platforms*

Required Reading:  
“Inception” Screenplay by Christopher Nolan  
“Twilight” Screenplay by Melissa Rosenberg

Screening:  
*Inception*  
2010, Directed by Christopher Nolan  
*Twilight*  
2008, Directed by Catherine Hardwicke

**Week 6**

**Lesson 10:** Producer Compensation and Final Wrap Up  
*Box Office Receipts, Opening Weekend, Playdates, Reviews Tracking the money.*

Required Reading:  
“To the Rear of the Back End” by James Schamus

Assignments: Final Due