



**TV385: Television Producing** (601)

**DC372: Topics on Television Production** (601)

2017-2018 Spring

Room: CDM202

Mondays and Wednesdays 1:30 – 3:00 pm

Course Management System: D2L

José A. Soto

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays  
from 11:30am to 1pm; and  
from 3:30 – 5pm (Loop CDM  
506)

Office Telephone: +1 (312) 362-5846

Email: jsoto23@depaul.edu

**Course Description:**

This is a course discussing the different roles of the television producer and showrunners. Particular emphasis will be put on exploring and discussing the difference between line, segment, coordinating, field, executive (show-runner), and supervising producers. Students wear many television producer hats through the quarter, and will explore those roles in relation to different scripted and non-scripted formats. Examining and performing various tasks like budgets, staffing, and scheduling will give students a comprehensive view of the needs and responsibilities of different producers. Additional consideration will be given to the on-set roles and responsibilities of the showrunner in the television production environment. The class will culminate in the production of some episodes for a short-form television show.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

- Recognize the specific dynamics of the production processes in a scripted serialized television show.
- Practice key crew positions above and below the line on an episodic television production.
- Produce several episodes of a television series based on current production models

Students should note that this course will be in a *Workshop* format. That means that you have to submit on time your assignments so others students may read, critique and use them in class. It also means that you have to participate in session discussions of the projects we will produce. We will function as closely to a “production company” as we can, and that entails enthusiastic participation and offering constructive criticism, even if it’s not your own work. If you are not willing to do this, you have to reconsider taking this course.



I encourage students to approach me about suggestions for more in-depth readings and/or projects related to television series, movies for television, sit-com, reality programming and other TV related subjects.

### Reading:

- Recommended: Del Valle, Robert (2008) THE ONE-HOUR DRAMA: PRODUCING EPISODIC TELEVISION; Silman-James Pr
- Zettl, Herbert (2016) SIGHT SOUND MOTION: MEDIA AESTHETICS APPLIED; Cengage Learning
- Zettl, Herbert (2012) TELEVISION PRODUCTION HANDBOOK; Wadsworth Publishing
- Benedetti, Robert (2002) FROM CONCEPT TO SCREEN: AN OVERVIEW OF FILM AND TELEVISION PRODUCTION; Allyn & Bacon

You are also invited to examine *Variety* and *The Hollywood Reporter*, trade magazines that account the newest developments in this thriving industry. Lectures will be supplemented with handouts and videos from the instructor over the course of the semester.

### Grading:

Final grades will be based on the team-production of an episode of a short-format television series, the production of an individual reflection video, as well as class participation and attitude.

Pre-Production book for a TV series short-format episode – 20%

Production of a TV series short-format episode – 50%

Each student will be evaluated depending on the crew position he/she undertakes during the production of the episode. They will be evaluated on execution of their craft, but also on the compliance of interaction, participation and submission of reports requested by the instructor.

Individual Reflection Video – 20%

Participation – 10%

### Grading Standards:

Letter Grade	Minimum % of Total Points	Letter Grade	Minimum % of Total Points
A	92	C+	78
A-	90	C	72
B+	88	C-	70
B	82	D+	68
B-	80	D	60
		F	0

## **Course Policies:**

### **1. Participation**

At this level, students should be interested in the subject of the class. The only way to see this is through participation in class, either asking questions or adding constructive comments to the projects presented at the sessions. A very important part of this component is the student's interaction with their teams, reports of students not participating in the meetings, discussions and particularly shooting dates would negatively affect the grade.

### **2. Attendance**

It does not constitute a specific part of your grade, but perfect attendance is required. Most of the information you need to complete the projects will be discussed in-class; also any doubts about the show you will be producing will be address then. Subjects and/or assignments will not be discussed outside of the programmed sessions. This makes attendance critical, and thus not an issue to be negotiated. The instructor reserves the right to fail with an F (0%) any student that misses 3 or more sessions. However, if you have to miss a class or a deadline, make sure to plan ahead, and inform the instructor in advance. Calling in advance does not automatically excuse an absence or a missed deadline, but it is the only way to present your case. If you fail to communicate before the next class period to explain an absence or a missed deadline, they will not be excused. Please note that work, non-emergency medical and dental appointments, hangovers, intramural games, visitors from out of town, fixing your roommate's computer, fraternity/sorority events, arguments with boyfriends or girlfriends and studying for other classes do not constitute excused absences or missed assignments.

In order to petition for an excused absence, students who miss class due to illness or significant personal circumstances should complete the Absence Notification process through the Dean of Students office. The form can be accessed at <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/dos/forms.html>. Students must submit supporting documentation alongside the form. The professor reserves the sole right whether to offer an excused absence and/or academic accommodations for an excused absence.

### **3. Tardiness**

One true thing in all professional fields is the lack of tolerance for tardiness. Employers do not generally tolerate such behavior, and employees who offer weak, irritating excuses frequently find themselves unemployed and unemployable. We will be working under the same rules.

Remember it is your responsibility to make the arrangements when a deadline or a class has to be missed. I will treat you professionally, expecting of you a responsible attitude. This means that it is you who must be worried about solving the problem, not me.



#### **4. Missed Deadlines or Unfinished Projects**

Because it has to present shows on-time every hour of every day, television is one of the most demanding industries, this charge carries over to those who are preparing for it, which is why if you fail to finish any of the projects you will fail them with an F (0%). There will be no exceptions. This is a zero-tolerance policy. I have no time or patience for those who are not going to take this class seriously. If you cannot make it a priority to complete all projects, you better consider not taking this course. One more thing, turning-in an assignment does not guarantee you will have a passing grade, although the opposite will be true. Not turning them in will fail you inevitably.

#### **5. Attitude**

We are going to be spending a lot of time discussing the projects, other student's or your own work. This will be made in an orderly fashion, no matter how vehemently we feel for an argument, we have to be able to provide it in a disciplined manner. It is better to wait and later speak than not speaking at all. My evaluation of your attitude and attention will be based on your participation during discussions as much as it will be based on your assertiveness when making a comment. Students who are not insightful enough to value the learning opportunities inherent to this class tend to do poorly.

#### **6. Use of Technology**

Cellular phones and other similar devices will not be tolerated. In my mind, they are a clear indication of a bad attitude. I recommend students to turn off or switch to silence mode such devices. If your other commitments are so pressing that they cannot wait until the end of the session, it may be in your best interest to reconsider the priority you place on being here. In any case, students whose phones and/or computers make noise during class will be asked to leave immediately.

#### **7. Uncivilized Behavior**

Even though you are students who must constantly thrive to grow, we need to start acting professionally. This is why there will be no tolerance for uncivilized behavior. I require an orderly ambiance to be able to make the most of each session.

By accepting this syllabus, you are indicating that you understand my expectations for students concerning attitude and work ethic.

I reserve the right to drop any student with an F (0%) if he/she has excessive absences, engages in disruptive behavior, has a poor attitude, or in any other way is clearly not taking the class seriously.



## **8. Ethics**

Although your grade does not contain an ethics component like some other courses, I require complete honesty in producing your work. By accepting this syllabus, you are indicating that you understand the seriousness of academic dishonesty and realize I will impose the harshest sanctions possible if I can prove you have engaged in such behavior. You are also indicating that you understand what constitutes academic dishonesty; I will not tolerate an excuse that claims the student did not know he/she was engaging in academic dishonesty.

## **9. Plagiarism**

Plagiarism, cheating and/or fabrication will not be tolerated. They are serious offenses – both in course and in media careers. Thus I reserve the right to drop any student with an F (0%) if he/she engages in any form of academic dishonesty. I further reserve the right to recommend other sanctions as may be appropriate. Plagiarism is useless to you anyway. By having someone else do the work for you, you are missing an opportunity to immerse yourself in the television industry. You are also waiving your right to learn. If you are willing to do that, then you have to evaluate if it's worth the aggravation and the time you invest in this course.

More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>.

## **10. Withdrawal**

Students who withdraw from the course do so by using the Campus Connection system <http://campusconnect.depaul.edu>. Withdrawals processed via this system are effective the day on which they are made. Simply ceasing to attend, or notifying the instructor, or nonpayment of tuition, does not constitute an official withdrawal from class and will result in academic as well as financial penalty.

## **11. Retroactive Withdrawal**

This policy exists to assist students for whom extenuating circumstances prevented them from meeting the withdrawal deadline. During their college career students may be allowed one medical/personal administrative withdrawal and one college office administrative withdrawal, each for one or more courses in a single term. Repeated requests will not be considered. Submitting an appeal for retroactive withdrawal does not guarantee approval.

College office appeals for CDM students must be submitted online via MyCDM.

The deadlines for submitting appeals are as follows:

Autumn Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent winter quarter

Winter Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent spring quarter

Spring Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter



Summer Terms: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter

## **12. Special Accommodations:**

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at:

Student Center, LPC, Suite #370

Phone number: (773)325.1677

Fax: (773)325.3720

TTY: (773)325.7296

## **Course Organization and Schedule:**

We will meet at Room CDM 202, Mondays and Wednesdays at 1:30 pm. I will give you some time to ask questions regarding the logistics of the assignments and their due dates. The Showrunner and the Producers at each of the Production Units will prepare and present a brief report stating advances and setbacks for each episode. In some sessions we'll have lectures and videos that will emphasize certain subjects, but most of the time we will sit and discuss the diverse ways through which the showrunner and the production units may achieve their episodes and the complete series. We will leave few minutes before the class ends to answer specific questions of the projects you will be handling.

This is a tentative course schedule. There may be several circumstances that will most likely change it. I reserve the right to change the class schedule if circumstances make it necessary. You may receive at least one revised schedule before the semester is over. If deadline or assignment dates change, I will tell you well in advance.

### **Week 1**

#### **Session 1** (March 26)

Introduction

Class and Series Structure

Crew Positions and Responsibilities

Team Creation



After this session:

Producers will *Start additional Casting*

- Break Down Express / Contact local casting places.
- Determine the dates and times for additional Casting Calls (April 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup>).

Each production unit should decide what script are they producing.

Directors will get in touch with Screenwriters, and prepare for read through next session.

The Showrunner should write a description of the actors we are looking for and the language to upload to Break Down Express. (Through Google Docs) Producers and directors from each unit should comment and help finalize this language.

Producer should upload a casting call to Break Down Express and other Casting agencies by Friday, March 30<sup>th</sup> at Noon.

The showrunning team and the producers should also start looking for appropriate locations.

***Session 2*** (March 28)

Read through all episodes.

Taking notes from all departments, led by showrunner.

Shooting script

Breaking Down

After this session:

After analyzing the script, each Department Head should upload to *Google Docs*, a list of needs, problems and solutions from their own department's perspective.

**Week 2**

***Session 3*** (April 2)

On Crew.

Production Book.

Locations. Location Lock Down.

Individual Director/Show running Meetings

***Session 4*** (April 4)

Casting and Casting Sessions (suggestions and conversations about it)



Shooting List – Shot Composition

Technical Precautions on Shooting

After this session:

By the end of this week, production units and showrunners need to hold additional casting sessions. Friday or Saturday at the TV Studio. (April 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup>)

- Each producer should run their own casting sessions for supporting characters.

### **Week 3**

*Session 5* (April 9)

No Class

*Session 6* (April 11)

No Class

### **Week 4**

*Session 7* (April 16)

Casting Review and Selection.

Production Calls

How to secure Cast and Crew on a Student Film (suggestions and conversations about it)

The 1<sup>st</sup> AD and how to run a good shoot (also a student shoot).

*Session 8* (April 18)

The preparation of the director.

Rehearsing with actors

After this session:

Producers should prepare for a cast read through (April 23<sup>rd</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup>).

### **Week 5**

*Session 9* (April 23)

Journeys Below the Line: Cinematography (Case: Lost)

Multi-Camera Shooting. Considerations and Lighting.





***Session 10*** (April 25)

Blocking.

Rights/Contracts and releases for actors.

After this session:

Directors should upload to Google Docs their annotated scripts.

Producers should upload photos of the meeting of cast and crew. All members should be featured in the photos.

At the end of this week we start shooting the episodes.

**Week 6**

***Session 11*** (April 30)

Dailies presentation and critique.

Individual meetings between showrunner/producer/director

After this session:

Producers should upload a list of things that are needed or missing in each of their episodes.

The showrunner will compile the producer's lists and add his/her comments to create an overall list of requirements. This should be done by the beginning of the next session.

***Session 12*** (May 2)

The series' editing process.

Journeys Below the Line: Script supervisor (Case: 24)

Presentation and discussion of requirement list.

Showrunner meetings with each unit producer and director.

After this session:

All production units should finish shooting their episodes.

Each producer should upload photos of their shoot.

Editors should have the Editor's Cut of the episode. To present on Session 13.

Producers should have dates for ADR and reshoots already established with actors and labs.



## **Week 7**

### ***Session 13*** (May 7)

Editor's Cut Presentations and Critique.

Showrunner meetings with each producer, director and editor to decide what needs additional shooting and or ADR.

### ***Session 14*** (May 9)

Journeys Below the Line: Prop Master (Case: ER)

#### After this session:

Unit producers, with their entire team should shoot retakes and ADR as needed.

## **Week 8**

### ***Session 15*** (May 14)

Series presentation, event organization.

Show runner will present and organize the event.

### ***Session 16*** (May 16)

Finishing Processes (Video)

#### After this session:

Editors should edit the final "locked" edit of the episode.

Showrunner will distribute invitations and responsibilities for the event presentation.

## **Week 9**

### ***Session 17*** (May 21)

Finishing Processes (Audio)

### ***Session 18*** (May 23)

Presentation and critique of the Final "Locked" edit of the episode.

#### After this session:

Editors should start working on coloring and audio mix.

**Week 10**

*Session 19* (May 28)

Memorial Day

*Session 20* (May 31)

TV Series Distribution

TV Series Revenue stream

TV Series rights.

**Finals Week**

*June 6 @ 11:30*

Presentation of the Episodes

Submission of Student Reflection Video.