

# DePaul University School of Cinematic Arts

## SCWR 341: Pitching Seminar

Spring, 2020

Monday 1:30-4:45 PM, Online

Instructor: Brad Riddell: brad.riddell@depaul.edu

Office Hours: Via Zoom M/W/Th: 11AM-1PM, and by appointment.

### Description:

This advanced course focuses on developing vetted story pitches for existing student projects and how to pitch a unique take on intellectual property. The lectures and in-class workshops will focus on preparing for pitch meetings with an emphasis on how to read the dynamics of a room and creating a unique brand that resonates with producers and executives.

### Prerequisites: DC 288

### Course Outcomes:

One feature film pitch, one television pitch, one open writing assignment / adaptation / OWA / or rewrite pitch, and a final revised pitch for one of the above.

### Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- identify strategies for showcasing the commercial attributes of their projects
- evaluate their story concepts based on the current film and television markets
- produce unique, professional-quality story pitches
- assess and apply peer and instructor feedback to revise their story pitches

### Textbooks

*The Hollywood Pitching Bible: A Practical Guide to Pitching Movies and Television* by Ken Aguado, ISBN13: 9781500191764

### Online Course Management:

This course is housed and managed on D2L. There, you will find course news, reading materials, and discussion and submission boards for posting assignments.

In an effort to provide quality feedback and personal attention to everyone, students will be broken into four small groups: A, B, C, and D. Workshops sessions will be divided in half according to this schedule:

- Groups A and C will meet from 1:30 – 3:00 PM on their workshop days
- Groups B and D will meet from 3:15 – 4:45 PM on theirs

Lectures will be pre-recorded. Students should watch them at their convenience. All live course meetings will take place on Zoom at this link: <https://bit.ly/2xoYPoo>

## Course Schedule:

### Week 1: March 30

- **Everyone:** Course introduction live via Zoom at 1:30 PM
- Watch the posted lectures on *Pitching Basics* and *Video Pitching*
- Read *The Hollywood Pitch Bible*: pages 1-10, 33-91
- Prepare project list and personal statement

### Week 2: April 6

- **Everyone:** meet live via Zoom at 1:30 PM for Guest speaker
- Post project list and personal statement to submissions
- Live Zoom breakout discussions to discuss project list and statement
- Watch the lecture on *Feature Pitching*

### Week 3: April 13

- Group A and B deliver feature pitches.
- Take Quiz 1

### Week 4: April 20

- Watch the lectures on *TV Pitching* and *Using Visuals*
- Read *The Hollywood Pitch Bible*: pages 93-114, 137-148
- Group C and D deliver feature pitches

### Week 5: April 27

- Group A and B deliver TV Pitches.
- Take Quiz 2

### Week 6: May 4

- Group C and D deliver TV Pitches.

### Week 7: May 11

- **Everyone:** meet live via Zoom at 1:30 PM for Guest speaker
- Watch the lecture on *Adaptation, Rewrite, & OWA Pitching*
- Read *The Hollywood Pitch Bible*: pages 115-123, 149-166.

### Week 8: May 18

- Group A and B deliver Adaptation, Rewrite, or OWA Pitch.
- Take Quiz 3

Week 9: May 25: NO CLASS. MEMORIAL DAY.Week 10: June 1

- Group C and D deliver Adaptation, Rewrite, or OWA Pitch.
- Watch lecture *In The Room*

Week 11: June 8

**Everyone:** meet live via Zoom at 1:30 PM for at 1:30 PM for Guest speaker, then rehearse revised final pitch in groups.

**June 15th:** Link to your recorded revised pitch is due on D2L at 5PM in Discussions.

Assignments

Reading Quizzes: 15%

Feature Pitch: 20%

TV Pitch: 20%

Adaptation, Rewrite, or OWA Pitch: 20%

Final, revised Pitch: 25%

There will be three short quizzes on the reading assignments, worth 5% each.

Pitches will be graded according to the attached rubric.

Grading Policy

A = 100-93, A- = 92-90, B+ = 89-88, B = 87-83, B- = 82-80, C+ = 79-78, C = 77-73, C- = 72-70, D+ = 69-68, D = 67-63, D- = 62-60, F = 59-0.

A indicates excellence, B indicates good work, C indicates satisfactory work, D work is unsatisfactory, F is substantially unsatisfactory. **Late work is rarely accepted.**

Attendance:

One unexcused absence will be allowed without penalty. Every unexcused absence thereafter will result in a 10% deduction of your final grade. Absences may be excused with proper documentation.

Creative Subject Matter:

As this is a creative writing class, controversial subject matter may make its way into the conversation. Students have every right to express themselves artistically in their writing and address challenging issues so long as the work does not glorify hate or violence of any kind. If you become uncomfortable with a conversation for personal reasons, you may be excused from the remainder of that class without penalty. Inclusion of individuals from the class will not be tolerated in submitted material.

**Decorum and Civil Discourse:**

DePaul University is a community that thrives on open discourse that challenges students, both intellectually and personally, to be socially responsible leaders. It is the expectation that all dialogue in this course is civil and respectful of the dignity of each student. Any instances of disrespect or hostility can jeopardize a student's ability to be successful in the course. The professor will partner with the Dean of Students Office to assist in managing such issues.

**Changes to Syllabus:**

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L, and students will be notified via email.

**Academic Policies:**

All students are required to manage their class schedules each term in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the [University Academic Calendar](#). Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at: [cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment](http://cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment).

**Online Course Evaluations:**

Instructor and course evaluations provide valuable feedback that can improve teaching and learning. The greater the level of participation, the more useful the results. As students, you are in the unique position to view the instructor over time. Your comments about what works and what doesn't can help faculty build on the elements of the course that are strong and improve those that are weak. Isolated comments from students and instructors' peers may also be helpful, but evaluation results based on high response rates may be statistically reliable (believable). As you experience this course and material, think about how your learning is impacted. Your honest opinions about your experience in and commitment to the course and your learning may help improve some components of the course for the next group of students. Positive comments also show the department chairs and college deans the commitment of instructors to the university and teaching evaluation results are one component used in annual performance reviews (including salary raises and promotion/tenure). The evaluation of the instructor and course provides you an opportunity to make your voice heard on an important issue – the quality of teaching at DePaul. Don't miss this opportunity to provide feedback!

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:**

This course will be subject to the academic integrity policy passed by faculty. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>. The university and school policy on plagiarism can be summarized as follows: Students in this course should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work any assignment which has been prepared by

someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials be sure to consult the instructor.

### **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.

### **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

### **Excused Absence:**

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.

### **Incomplete:**

An incomplete grade is a special, temporary grade that may be assigned by an instructor when unforeseeable circumstances prevent a student from completing course requirements by the end of the term and when otherwise the student had a record of satisfactory progress in the course. CDM policy requires the student to initiate the request for incomplete grade before the end of the term in which the course is taken. Prior to submitting the incomplete request, the student must discuss the circumstances with the instructor. Students may initiate the incomplete request process in MyCDM. All incomplete requests must be approved by the instructor of the course and a CDM Associate Dean. Only exceptions cases will receive such approval. If approved, students are required to complete all remaining course requirement independently in consultation with the instructor by the deadline indicated on the

incomplete request form. By default, an incomplete grade will automatically change to a grade of F after two quarters have elapsed (excluding summer) unless another grade is recorded by the instructor. An incomplete grade does NOT grant the student permission to attend the same course in a future quarter.

**Students with Disabilities:**

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