

SCWR 441 Industry and Pitching Seminar

When: Monday · 5:45pm – 9:00pm
Where: 14 East Jackson 207 Loop Campus

Instructor: Matt Quinn · mquinn@cdm.depaul.edu · 312-362-5807 · CDM 509
Office hours: Monday · 3:00pm – 5:00pm, Tuesday & Wednesday · 11:00am – 1:00pm

Summary of Course

Students will learn the art and craft of pitching including the differences between pitching new or existing ideas, shaping pitches based on your audience, and pitching a take on existing source material. Students will also learn not only how to pitch projects, but to pitch themselves, focusing on what makes them unique as a writer/director/producer, the themes that connect their work, and how to present themselves as a brand. Industry professionals will visit class when appropriate. Students will also learn how to create pitches for existing material that is either in the common domain or material that the students have acquired the rights to work on.

Learning Outcomes

Students completing a Capstone course should 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

Prerequisites

SCWR 240 Introduction to Pitching

Grading

Attendance & Participation	10%
OWA Story Pitch	10%
Feature Film Story Pitch	20%
Television Series Story Pitch	20%
Revised Story Pitch	40%

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 in some respect, F is substantially unsatisfactory work.

D2L

You will be using D2L extensively in this course. To log on, go to:

<https://login.depaul.edu/ldap/login?service=https%3a%2f%2fd2l.depaul.edu%2fd2l%2fcustom%2fcas> and enter using your campus connect logon and password. Once you are logged on, click on the course number link and you will find links to the syllabus, course outline, video lectures, discussion forums, weekly assignments, etc.

Group Workshops

Feedback is an essential part of the development and pitching process. To facilitate this, every student will be assigned to one of two groups. A segment of each class will focus on a discussion of that week's assignment and then breaking off into your assigned group to workshop each student's submission and/or presenting the project to the entire class. The schedule for the in-class sessions is provided in the course outline of this document.

Content Warning

This course recognizes that to engage with media is to engage with historic and ongoing problematic representation, as well as the ways that harmful representation impacts students in different ways. Please be aware you may encounter racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and otherwise violent or socially violent material in the creative work, readings, and/or lectures presented in this course. Content warnings will be provided prior to lecture and writers will be expected to label potential triggers in their assignments submitted to D2L, and then again before their workshop session begins, so students may make decisions about their mental and emotional health and well-being. Students may inform the professor of any material that they cannot engage with to find a suitable alternative.

Course Outline

Week 1 – March 27th

Lecture: Course Overview, The Acquisition Process, Pitching Basics
Assignment: OWA Story Pitch

Week 2 – April 3rd

Lecture: The Feature Film Story Pitch
Workshop: OWA Story Pitch

Week 3 – April 10th

Lecture: Pitch Decks
Assignments: Groups 1 & 2 Feature Film Story Pitch Prep

Week 4 – April 17th

Lecture: In the Room, The Studio Executive
Workshop: Group 1 Feature Film Story Pitch

Assignments: Group 1 Feature Film Pitch Prep

Week 5 – April 24th

Lecture: Adaptation, Rewrite & OWA Pitching

Workshop: Group 2 Feature Film Story Pitch

Week 6 – May 1st

Lecture: The Television Series Story Pitch

Assignments: Groups 1 & 2 Story Pitch Prep

Week 7 – May 8th

Lecture: In the Zoom, The Television Network Executive

Workshop: Group 2 Television Story Pitch

Assignments: Group 1 Story Pitch Prep

Week 8 – May 15th

Lecture: Revising the Pitch

Workshop: Group 1 Television Story Pitch

Assignments: Revised Story Pitch, Pitch Deck

Week 9 – May 22nd

Lecture: Guest Speaker

Workshop: Rehearse Revised Story Pitches

Assignments: Revised Story Pitch, Pitch Deck

Week 10 – May 29th

No Class – University Closed for Memorial Day

Individual Meetings for Revised Story Pitch

Week 11 – June 5th

Individual Meetings for Revised Story Pitch

Assignments

OWA Story Pitch (10% of Final Grade)

There are two components to the OWA Story Pitch outlined below.

- In-class OWA Story Pitch – You will present a 10-minute story pitch for intellectual property in the public domain in class on Monday, April 3rd. There are no rules or expected format for the pitch other than making a strong attempt to "sell" your project within the allotted time frame.

Please provide potential triggers (racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and otherwise violent or socially violent material) prior to presenting the pitch.

- One Sheet – This document must include: Title, contact information, logline, genre, and plot overview broken down into three paragraphs (one for each act). Examples provided on the D2L

Content page. This portion of the assignment must be submitted to the corresponding D2L Submission link before class on Monday, April 3rd.

Please label potential triggers (racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and otherwise violent or socially violent material) in the header section of the assignment.

Feature Film Story Pitch (20% of Final Grade)

There are two components to the Feature Film Story Pitch outlined below.

- In-class Pitch – You will present a 12-minute story pitch for an original feature film in class on Monday, April 17th (Group 1) or Monday, April 24th (Group 2). There are no rules for the pitch other than making a strong attempt to "sell" your project within the allotted time frame.

Please label potential triggers (racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and otherwise violent or socially violent material) prior to presenting the pitch.

- Pitch Deck – The pitch deck must be a minimum of 5 pages. While there is no fixed template for the deck, it should include sections on the following: Overview, Synopsis, Themes, World, Characters. You are encouraged to convey a cohesive visual design in deck, but substance (content) is ultimately more important than style in the first pass. This portion of the assignment must be submitted to the corresponding D2L Submission link before class on Monday, April 17th (Group 1) or Monday, April 24th (Group 2).

Please label potential triggers (racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and otherwise violent or socially violent material) on the cover page for the assignment.

Television Series Story Pitch (20% of Final Grade)

There are two components to the Television Series Story Pitch outlined below.

- In-class Pitch – You will present a 12-minute story pitch for an original feature film in class on Monday, May 8th (Group 2) or Monday, May 15th (Group 1). There are no rules for the pitch other than making a strong attempt to "sell" your project within the allotted time frame.

Please label potential triggers (racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and otherwise violent or socially violent material) prior to presenting the pitch.

- Pitch Deck – The pitch deck must be a minimum of 5 pages. While there is no fixed template for the deck, it should include sections on the following: Overview, Synopsis, Themes, World, Characters, Season One Breakdown. You are encouraged to convey a cohesive visual design in deck, but substance (content) is ultimately more important than style in the first pass. This portion of the assignment must be submitted to the corresponding D2L Submission link before class on Monday, May 8th (Group 2) or Monday, May 15th (Group 1).

Please label potential triggers (racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and otherwise violent or socially violent material) on the cover page for the assignment.

Revised Story Pitch (40% of Final Grade)

There are two components to the Revised Story Pitch outlined below.

- Online Pitch – You will present a 12-minute story pitch for either a revised version of the Feature Film Story Pitch or Television Series Story Pitch based on the feedback you received this quarter in an assigned online individual meeting with the instructor the week of May 29th or June 5th.
- Pitch deck – The revised pitch deck must be a minimum of 10 pages. While there is no fixed template for the deck, it should include sections on the following: Overview, Synopsis, Tonal Frames, Themes, World, Characters, Season One Breakdown (for TV series). In addition to enhancing the content from the initial draft, the revision should focus more on conveying a cohesive visual design that embodies the intended style and tone for the project. This portion of the assignment must be submitted to the corresponding D2L Submission link before your assigned online individual meeting with the instructor the week of May 29th or June 5th.

Changes to the 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 sent via email.

COVID-19 Health and Safety Precautions

The health and safety of everyone at DePaul depend on the cooperation of all who come to campus. By taking care of yourself, you protect the entire community. DePaul's COVID-19 response plans are based on the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Chicago Department of Public Health and the university's medical advisor from AMITA Health.

Mandatory protocols must be followed by DePaul students, faculty and staff at all times on both campuses <https://resources.depaul.edu/coronavirus/guidance/health-safety-practices/Pages/default.aspx>.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. All students are expected to abide by the University's Academic Integrity Policy which prohibits cheating and other misconduct in student coursework. Publicly sharing or posting online any prior or current materials from this course (including exam questions or answers), is considered to be providing unauthorized assistance prohibited by the policy. Both students who share/post and students who access or use such materials are considered to be cheating under the Policy and will be subject to sanctions for violations of Academic Integrity.

More information can be found at <https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/academic-integrity/Pages/default.aspx>.

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: <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/PoliciesandProcedures.aspx>

Respect for Diversity and Inclusion at DePaul University

At DePaul, our mission calls us to explore “what must be done” in order to respect the inherent dignity and identity of each human person. We value diversity because it is part of our history, our traditions and our future. We see diversity as an asset and a strength that adds to the richness of classroom learning. In my course, I strive to include diverse authors, perspectives and teaching pedagogies. I also encourage open dialogue and spaces for students to express their unique identities and perspectives. I am open to having difficult conversations and I will strive to create an inclusive classroom that values all perspectives. If at any time, the classroom experience does not live up to this expectation, please feel free to contact me via email or during office hours.

Preferred Name & Gender Pronouns

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the quarter so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. Please also note that students may choose to identify within the University community with a preferred first name that differs from their legal name and may also update their gender. The preferred first name will appear in University related systems and documents except where the use of the legal name is necessitated or required by University business or legal need. For more information and instructions on how to do so, please see the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at: <http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332>

Online Course Evaluations

Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the student’s identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Please see <https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/Pages/online-teaching-evaluations.aspx> for additional information.

Emergency Plan

An emergency can occur at any time, suddenly and without warning. Proper planning is essential to minimize the impact of any emergency on the university community, operations, and facilities. [This link provides detailed information on Emergency Evacuation and Fire Alarm safety.](#) The University will use the DPU Alert to announce school closing or other emergencies. In the event of an emergency evacuation, the primary outdoor assembly area for CDM will be Grant Park (Southeast corner of Jackson and Michigan Ave).

Students with Disabilities

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist your success. There are two office locations:

Loop Campus - Lewis Center #1420 - (312) 362-8002

Lincoln Park Campus - Student Center #370 - (773) 325-1677

Students can also email the office at csd@depaul.edu

Students who are registered with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact me privately to discuss how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will use in this course. This is best done early in the term. Our conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible.

University Counseling Services

DePaul University Counseling Services (UCS) is committed to providing a range of culturally aware and sensitive clinical services to help currently enrolled DePaul students remove barriers to academic and personal success by addressing emotional, psychological, and interpersonal concerns through multiple treatment modalities. Services offered include: group counseling, individual counseling, couples counseling, crisis management, consultation, referrals, and telereach/outreach workshops. All services are currently being offered on a virtual, remote basis with no fees due to COVID-19. To connect with the counseling center, contact our main number at (773) 325-7779 during regular business hours (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm) to schedule an initial consultation, which is typically scheduled within 1-2 business days of your call.

If you need more immediate assistance or are in acute distress, you can call the main number during regular business hours and ask to speak with a counselor. If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room. The Counseling Services staff has extensive experience with providing support services to individuals of varying social identities and backgrounds. Further, our counselors know that commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and anti-racism is an ongoing and open-ended journey and, as such, our counselors frequently and regularly engage in self-reflection and training opportunities to increase cultural awareness and to challenge one's own privileges and biases.

Incomplete Grades

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. All incomplete requests must be approved by the instructor of the course and a CDM Associate Dean. Only exceptions cases will receive such approval. Information about the Incomplete Grades policy can be found at <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Grading-Policies.aspx>

Withdrawal

Students who withdraw from the course do so by using the Campus Connection system. 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

Copyright Statement

The materials provided by the instructor in this course are for the use of the students enrolled in the course. Copyrighted course materials may not be further disseminated.