

Class Time: Mondays 1:30pm - 4:45pm  
Classroom: 14 E. Jackson, Rm 213  
Office Hours: (email to schedule) on Zoom Wednesdays 10-11:30am  
Email will be answered within 24 hours, Saturday emails by Monday

**Add/Drop Dates:** <https://academics.depaul.edu/calendar/Pages/default.aspx>

### **Description**

The course will cover the key areas of producing for documentaries from pre-production, to production, marketing, fundraising, and community outreach and engagement. Students will gain knowledge of the ways in which producers engage with collaborators, crew, grant making institutions and individual donors, along with the festival marketplace. This course will be project-based and include building a budget, developing a fundraising and distribution plan, identifying audiences, and creating a proposal.

There is no required text for this class. Instructor will provide essays, articles, and links relevant to the course on D2L.

### **Learning Goals:**

- Students will demonstrate acquired knowledge of producing through budgeting, scheduling, and project development/pitching.
- Articulate professional standards-of-practice for producers
- Practice the art of pitching

### **Class Format**

Class will meet in-person each week during the Spring Quarter. Meetings will involve discussions, writing, screenings, guest speakers, and group work in breakout rooms. Students should expect to spend 2 to 4 hours per week outside of class time on course-related work.

### **Assignments**

Students will be graded on three major projects: a written analysis on a short documentary from a producer's perspective; a scheduling and budgeting assignment; and a project pitch Presentation, where a student will assume the producer role and generate proposal materials (e.g. logline, topic summary, treatment/story summary, relationship to story, artistic approach, timeline, personnel bios, fundraising strategy and budget) presented to the class at the end of the quarter. Significant time will be spent outside of class generating these materials. Finally, your grade will also require satisfactory participation through class discussions, classwork, guest speakers and written discussions submitted online. Unless otherwise noted, classwork must be

submitted by the end of class at 9pm. All homework assignments will need to be submitted on Sundays by 2pm CT.

### **Grading**

Grading is based on a foundation of aesthetic practices, both conventional and unconventional, and completing an assignment on time and as instructed. Instructor will grade projects based on the demonstration of mastery of project goals, clear communication of meaning as well as the creative unity of the work as a whole. Grades are non-negotiable. For every 24-hour period that any assignment is late, the assignment WILL BE penalized one letter grade.

### **Late Assignments**

Completing assignments on time and having them ready for discussions and classwork is essential for this class.

\*\*Please note that late assignments will not receive credit unless acceptable reasons are documented and communicated to me at least 24 hours before the due date. You must submit on time, even if you are not able to come to class on that day.

\*\* Assignments that are more than 2 weeks late will not be graded.

**Grading:** Assignment Guidelines and Evaluation Criteria will be posted in D2L

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 indicates unsatisfactory work, and F is a failure to demonstrate an understanding of course concepts.

**Incomplete Grades:** An incomplete grade is given only for an exceptional reason. Any such reason must be documented. Any incomplete request must be made at least two weeks before the final, and approved by the Dean of the College of Computing and Digital Media. Any consequences resulting from a poor grade for the course will not be considered as valid reasons for such a request. Information about the Incomplete Grades policy can be found at <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Grading-Policies.aspx>

### **Grading for this class is based on:**

Attendance + Participation	= 25%
Written Short Doc Analysis	= 10%
Documentary Shoot Breakdown	= 25%
Producer's Pitch and Materials	= 40%

### **Attendance and Participation - 25%**

Students are expected to participate in class discussions and Q&As with guest speakers, complete classwork, and engage in any other class activities. It is imperative that students come to class prepared, which means completing any readings, viewing/listening of material assigned before class begins. Each week students will listen, read, and/or view films and will be expected to provide a written response (150 words or more) to an idea/question posted on D2L by the instructor. In-class virtual participation includes and is not limited to: responding to questions verbally or written in the chat; contributing to work in breakout groups; written discussions on D2L as assigned.

During this quarter, any non-excused absence is considered excessive and your final grade will reflect this. The result will be your final attendance/participation grade being lowered one letter grade for each unexcused absence. If absent due to illness or family emergency, please email instructor ahead of time.

### **Short Documentary Evaluation 10%**

#### **DUE: 4/29**

Analyze, from a producer's perspective, a short documentary from the Short of the Week website. Write a concise 1-2 page paper with an analysis that includes the following suppositions: style of the documentary (verite/observational, historical, longitudinal, personal, experimental, etc), relationship between Director/Producer and subject matter/participant, production design choices (lighting, locations, interview styles if applicable), budgetary considerations and legal considerations. Utilize any interviews or articles on the short to inform some of your suppositions.

### **The Documentary Shoot Breakdown 25%**

#### **DUE: 5/13**

Students individually and then in teams will create a budget and shooting schedule for a hypothetical documentary based in Chicago. Students will be provided with the details and will create a budget, a full production schedule, and a short explanation of issues they needed to work through for the production.

### **The Mini Chicago Pitch 40%**

#### **DUE: 5/20**

Students will work in teams on a pre-approved topic to develop a funding pitch for a short documentary. The 10-minute pitch must include a synopsis, reasons as to why your chosen project needs to be made, why you are the team to make it, and potential audience

opportunities. Be prepared to answer questions about potential distribution, sales and funding opportunities. Students will defend their choices in an approximately 10 minute Q&A period by classmates and instructor acting the part of panelists determining if your project is worthy of funding. A panel will be assigned for each project and participation as a panelist is also part of your grade. Each student will submit an evaluation of the pitches at the end of the quarter.

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## Schedule\*

### **4/1 Week 1: INTRO TO CLASS, ASSIGNMENTS, STRUCTURE**

*HW Assignments*

*Read: [IDA The Nonfiction Core Application](#) + the Application checklist (link imbedded)*

*Watch/Listen: [Dear Producer](#), [What I Wish I would Have Learned in Film School](#)*

### **4/8 Week 2: DEVELOPMENT / PRE-PRODUCTION**

Classwork: Documentary styles and production implications + Loglines

Case Studies: [LIFELINES](#) (2023); [LOVE & STUFF \(OpDocs\)](#) (2014)

Classwork: Choose a short film from Shorts of the Week and write an original logline for it and write two questions about the Core Doc Budget

*HW Assignments*

*Read: [A \(Revised!\) Introduction to Documentary Budgeting](#); IDA*

### **4/15 Week 3: OVERVIEW OF THE CORE BUDGET**

Classwork: The importance of accurate budgeting

Watch in class: [Making a Documentary Without Money](#)

Watch in class: [TEN METER TOWER OpDocs](#) and [THE WINTER KEEPER](#) and [HOTEL 22](#) (OpDocs)

*HW Assignments*

*Assign: Project 1 DUE 4/29*

*Watch/Listen: [Inspirations for Women in Film: The Creative Life Episode 18](#) and [Behind the Scenes of a Documentary](#)*

### **4/22 Week 4 - SCHEDULING & LOGISTICS IN PRODUCTION / BUDGET**

Assign groups and present assignment for Project 3

Present Project 2 assignment

Watch in class: TBD

*HW Assignments*

*Read: CSMI's [Documentary Filmmakers Statement of Best Practices in Fair Use](#)*

*Continue to work on Project 1*

**4/29 Week 5: SCHEDULING & LOGISTICS IN POST / BUDGET**

Project 1 Due - presentations in class

Watch in class: ABACUS: Small Enough to Jail

*HW Assignments*

Read: [How to Pitch a Documentary Film: 7 Ways to Avoid Rejection](#)

Research: Budget costs for Assignment 2

**5/6 Week 6: ANATOMY OF A PITCH**

Watch in Class: [Paley Doc Pitch Competition 2020](#)

Classwork: Small break out groups - draft of Project 3 Proposals

*HW Assignments*

Read: TBD

Write: Continue working on Project 2

**5/13 Week 7: DISTRIBUTION AND CAREER SUSTAINABILITY**

**PROJECT 2 DUE**

Classwork: Generating Pitch Materials

*HW Assignments - TBD*

**5/20 Week 8: PROJECT 3 DUE**

**Classwork: PITCHING**

**5/27 Week 9 NO CLASS**

**6/3 Week 10: Last Day of Class**

**Classwork: PITCHING**

**CHANGES TO SYLLABUS**

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. Depending on the many variables outside of our control, the assignments projected for the term may require alteration or rescheduling. If a change occurs, it will be posted under Announcements in D2L. Please ensure that campus connect and D2L have your correct email address. Also, make sure you are receiving all notifications via D2L.

**TECHNICAL ISSUES:** If you're having any tech issues this quarter, please email scaavsupport@depaul.edu.

This new resource is for general tech support and will serve as a unified point of contact for various issues. This email address will be monitored during the following hours:

Monday - Friday: 8:30am - 8:30pm

Saturday: 10am - 6pm

Sunday: 12pm - 6pm

**Resources for students with disabilities:** Students who feel they may need 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) by emailing [csd@depaul.edu](mailto:csd@depaul.edu) and/or visiting one of the locations below.

Loop Campus

Lewis Center Suite 1420

Lincoln Park Campus

Student Center, Suite #370

25 East Jackson Blvd

phone: (312) 362-8002

fax: (312) 362-6544

tty: (773) 325-7296

2250 N Sheffield Ave

phone: (773) 325-1677

fax: (773) 325-3720

tty: (773) 325-7296

Students who register with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact Dr. Gregory Moorhead, Director of the Center, privately to discuss how he may assist in facilitating the accommodations to be used in a course. This is best done early in the term. The conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible. Please see <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx> for Services and Contact Information.

**Visit the Writing Center:** Consider visiting the Writing Center to discuss your written assignments for this course. Writing Center Tutors are specially trained undergraduate and graduate students who can help you at any stage of your writing project. They can help you focus and develop your ideas, review your drafts, and polish your writing, as well as answer questions about grammar, mechanics, style, and citation.

You may schedule appointments on an as-needed or weekly basis. In addition to Face-to-Face appointments, the Writing Center also provides written feedback by email and online appointments. Be sure to schedule your appointment with enough time to think about and incorporate the feedback you'll receive. To schedule a Written Feedback by Email, or Online Appointment, visit [www.depaul.edu/writing](http://www.depaul.edu/writing). You can also call the offices: (312) 362-6726 (Loop Office, 1600 Lewis Center) or (773) 325-4272 (LPC Office, 250 McGaw Hall).

When possible, the Writing Center accepts walk-in requests, but it's always a good idea to schedule your appointment ahead of time. You may schedule tutorials on an as-needed basis or as weekly standing appointments up to 3 hours per week. All Writing Center services are free to the DePaul community. Academic Integrity & Plagiarism This course will be subject to the academic integrity policy passed by faculty. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>.

### **Course Policies**

**In addition to DePaul University course policies (see student handbook), the following special policies will apply to this course.**

**Attendance** – Classes will consist of lecture, screenings, and discussion. Attendance is mandatory unless otherwise stated.

### **Respect for Diversity and Inclusion at DePaul University as aligned with our Vincentian Values**

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.

**Your 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>.

**Screenings** – Film screening discussions are an integral part of the course participation grade. Selected films, trailers and clips will be analyzed for specific legal and ethical choices. Be open to be challenged and honest as there will be differing ideas and points of view expressed. These discussions are important in the development of your ability to collaborate and think critically.

**Trigger Warnings** The films, lectures, and discussion in this course may engage with potentially sensitive or traumatizing material, such as:

- violence
- sexism
- sexual assault, rape
- racism
- police brutality
- transphobia
- homophobia
- abuse
- suicide
- blood
- and body-shaming

I will note especially graphic/intense content and will do my best to foster a classroom in which we can relate courageously, compassionately, and contemplatively with difficult and important content each week. If you would like more specific or personalized triggers identified throughout the course (especially ones that are not named above), please e-mail and I will do my level best to flag them.

**Plagiarism** – Plagiarism on assignments or cheating on exams are serious offenses and earn the student a failing grade for the class. This course will be subject to the academic integrity policy passed by faculty. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/π>

**Online Course 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.

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DePaul University will continue to update their [COVID-19 Updates and Guidance page](#). Please visit that page for the most current information and a list of [university FAQ](#).

### **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>.