

**DC 485 801 Producing the Feature Film  
Winter Quarter 2013  
Tuesday 5:45 – 9:00  
CDM Center 708 - Loop**

**Instructor: Steven A. Jones, Adjunct Professor/Producer in Residence**  
**Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:00 – 5:30 Room 472**  
**Email: [sjones@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:sjones@cdm.depaul.edu)**  
**Phone: 773-929-4173**

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### **Course Description**

Producing the Feature Film is designed to bridge the gap between creative storytelling and the business aspects of producing a feature film. The course will expose students to the role of the contemporary producer from idea origination and script development through financing, production and distribution.

Through case studies of Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer, Mad Dog and Glory, Wild Things, The Promotion, Normal Life and The Merry Gentleman, films produced by Steven A. Jones, and a final project in which students work in teams to produce a virtual feature film, students will be provided with a comprehensive overview of all aspects of producing a feature, including: developing a project, choosing material and preparing it for production, assembling a creative team and overseeing the collaborative process, production management, basic accounting, breaking down a script and scheduling, entertainment law and contracts, completion bonds, finding and negotiating with vendors, utilizing unions and guilds, casting, clearance and releases, location scouting, effects, and post production.

### **Course Objectives**

This course is designed to introduce and expand students entrepreneurial and business skills to accomplish creative and filmmaking goals.

At the end of the term, a student will be expected to: articulate orally and in writing the job of the producer, define the job responsibilities of a production team, understand the breakdown, budget and scheduling process, locate resources to assist with financial, copyright, and legal issues, locate resources to assist with production and casting, research and distribution of a film.

### **Required Texts**

Honthaner, Eve Light The Complete Film Production Handbook, (3rd Edition)  
Litwak, Mark Contracts for the Film and Television Industry, (2nd edition)

### **Recommended Software**

EP Budgeting 6.1  
EP Scheduling 4.4

Both software programs are installed on computers at CTI in Lab 400 CTS. The PDF User Guides are available online at [www.entertainmentpartners.com](http://www.entertainmentpartners.com).

### **Required Screenings**

Keaton, Michael	<u>The Merry Gentleman</u>
McNaughton, John	<u>Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer</u>
McNaughton, John	<u>Mad Dog and Glory</u>
McNaughton, John	<u>Wild Things</u>
Conrad, Steve	<u>The Promotion</u>
McNaughton, John	<u>Normal Life</u>
Wexler, Tanya	<u>Finding North</u>
McNaughton, John	<u>The Borrower</u>
McNaughton, John	<u>Speaking of Sex</u>
McNaughton, John	<u>Sex, Drugs, Rock &amp; Roll</u>

### **Recommended Websites**

Illinois Film Office: [www.illinoisbiz.biz/dceo/Bureaus/Film/ProductionGuide/](http://www.illinoisbiz.biz/dceo/Bureaus/Film/ProductionGuide/)  
Screen Actors Guild: [www.sag.org](http://www.sag.org)  
Writer's Guild of America: [www.wga.org](http://www.wga.org)  
Independent Feature Project: [www.ifp.org](http://www.ifp.org)  
Illinois Secretary of State: [www.sos.state.il.us/services/services\\_business.html](http://www.sos.state.il.us/services/services_business.html)  
U. S. Copyright Office: [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov)  
IRS: [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)  
Internet Movie Database: [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)

### **Course Requirements**

You are expected to: get to class on time; participate in class; prepare your assignments completely and on time; respect each other; develop a positive and professional work environment; and be responsible and attentive to the demands of working with the group.

### **Course Policies**

**Attendance:** Class attendance is mandatory. Participation in class is essential. You are permitted one unexcused absence. More than one absence will result in your grade being dropped one grade. Excessive late arrivals will affect your grade.

**Assignments:** Assignments must be completed by the date to which they are assigned in the syllabus. Consequently, late work will not be accepted without prior consent of the instructor.

### **Grading**

Concept and Pitch Assignment	25%
Final Project	50%
Class Participation and Personal Growth	25%

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.

## **Course Outline**

### **Tuesday, January 8**

Introduction to Course and Requirements

Student Introductions

Discussion Topics: The Role of the Producer, Types of Producers, Final Project

Assignment: Prepare written and spoken “pitch”

Reading: Litwak pg. 25- 32, 52-80, 124-146

Screen: “Henry – Portrait of a Serial Killer”

### **Tuesday, January 15**

Discussion Topics: Development- creation of and acquisition of material, the Director and Screenwriter.

Class Presentation: Final project “pitch” – Submit written summary.

Assignment: Rank all Concept and Development Ideas – Email [sjones@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:sjones@cdm.depaul.edu) your rankings- (1-5) by Monday, January 17.

Reading: “The Merry Gentleman” screenplay.

Litwak pgs. 147-182, 270, 421

Honthaner pgs. 55-66

Screen: “Mad Dog and Glory”

### **Tuesday, January 22**

Discussion Topics: Pre-production – The Merry Gentlemen - Script Breakdown, Budgeting, Scheduling, and Finance

Student final teams are assigned.

Assignment: Work with team and begin producing your project

Reading: Litwak pgs. 239-248, 263, 267

Honthaner pgs. 90-110, 256-267

Screen: “The Merry Gentleman”

### **Tuesday, January 24**

Discussion Topics: - The Merry Gentleman- Pre Production – insurance, accounting, casting, Hiring dept. heads.

Assignment: Continue producing your project  
Read: Hothaner pg. 66-89, 133-142  
Screen: Wild Things

### **Tuesday, January 29**

Discussion Topics: Wild Things, Pre-Production – Crew, Transportation, Production Office  
Assignment: Work with team on your project  
Reading: Hothaner chapters 7 and 10  
Screen: The Promotion

### **Tuesday, February 5**

Discussion Topics: The Promotion, Production – Shooting start- schedule variables, overall approach, on set attitude.

Assignment: Work with team on your project

\*\*\*Reading: Contracts for the Film and Television Industry, pgs .251 - 294 Review text, come to next class prepared with questions pertaining to your project.

Screen: Normal Life

### **Tuesday, February 12**

Discussion Topics: Normal Life Production - Unions and Guilds, Locations, Extras  
Assignment: Work with team on your project

Reading Honthaner chapter 15

Screen: “Speaking of Sex”

### **Tuesday, February 19**

Discussion Topics: “Speaking of Sex” Production – Stunts, SFX, Wrap.

Assignment: Work with team on your project

### **Tuesday, February 26**

Discussion Topics: Post- production- Editing, Picture lock, Composer,

Assignment: Work with team on your project  
Reading: Litwak pg. 295-298, 311-317  
Honhaner pg. 235

### **Tuesday, March 5**

Discussion Topics: Post-Production – Mix, Distribution, Previews, Delivery requirements.

Assignment: Prepare for Final Presentation

**Tuesday, March 12**

Final - Team Title Sequence Screening and Presentation/Discussion of each project