

(Winter 2022) Section: 801  
In-person  
Class number: 28636  
Meeting time: M 5:45PM - 9:00PM  
Location: 14EAS 00801 at Loop Campus

## CP 310/410

### Film Production Company Development / Creative Producing

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#### INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Adjunct Professor: Brian Khan  
Email: [bkhan13@depaul.edu](mailto:bkhan13@depaul.edu)  
Phone: 773-717-4808  
Office Hours (Zoom): Tuesdays/Thursdays 12pm-12:45pm

Attending office hours is preferred to emails. Emails will be answered within 48hrs.

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#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the role of the Creative Producer. Students will learn how to develop a feature film and understand what makes it a viable business venture. There will be an emphasis on pitching, packaging, teambuilding, optioning material, and fundraising. The course is taught through lecturing and hands-on learning; working in teams, students will complete all aspects of packing a film project. The intersection of making movies and racial equity/social justice will be explored weekly through class discussions.

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#### COURSE GOALS:

- Students will analyze the four phases of creative producing defined by the PGA for the "Produced By" credit.
  - Students will become familiar with the importance of a clear chain of title for film distribution and how to option a property.
  - Students will understand the use of state incentives for film financing.
  - Students will learn how to package a film project to attract distribution and financing.
  - Understand the role of the producer in combating harmful depictions of non-dominant identities on the screen.
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## CLASS SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1 - Jan 3, 2022: The Creative Producer

Introduction to the course and each other. Review syllabus and assignments.

LECTURE: The role of the Producer

ASSIGNMENT: 1. Story Pitch 2. Listen to [Seeing White Ep.1](#)

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### WEEK 2 - Jan 10, 2022: Packaging the Feature Film

Student Story Pitch Presentations / Group Introductions.

[Seeing White Ep.1 Discussion](#)

LECTURE: The role of Director/Writer/Actors in selling the film

ASSIGNMENT: 1. Pitch: Package 2. Listen to [Seeing White Ep. 2](#)

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### WEEK 3 - Jan 17, 2022: NO CLASS - School Holiday (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)

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### WEEK 4 - Jan 24, 2022: Where are we shooting the movie?

[Seeing White Ep. 2 Discussion](#)

LECTURE: Tax incentives

ASSIGNMENTS: 1. Pitch: Package + Shooting Location 2. Deck: Package & Shooting Location  
3. Listen to [Seeing White Ep. 3](#)

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### WEEK 5 - Jan 31, 2022: Making a movie is teamwork.

Student Pitch: Package Shooting Location + Team Check-ins

[Seeing White Ep. 3 Discussion](#)

ASSIGNMENTS: Listen to [Seeing White Ep 4.](#)

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### WEEK 6 - Feb 7, 2022: Distribution

[Seeing White Ep. 4 Discussion](#)

LECTURE: Festivals + Distributors

ASSIGNMENTS: 1. Pitch: Festivals + Distributors 2. Deck: Festivals + Distributors 3. Listen to  
[Seeing White Ep. 5](#)

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### WEEK 7 - Feb 14, 2022: Distribution pt 2.

Student Pitch: Festivals + Distributors

[Seeing White Ep. 5 Discussion](#)

LECTURE: Film Life Cycle

ASSIGNMENTS: Listen to [Seeing White Ep. 6](#)

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**WEEK 8** - Feb 21, 2022: Making Films in Chicago.

[Seeing White Ep. 6 Discussion](#)

PANEL DISCUSSION

ASSIGNMENT: Listen to [Seeing White Ep. 7](#)

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**WEEK 9** - Feb 28, 2022: Pitch Practice

Student Pitch: Rehearsal for the final pitch of the project.

[Seeing White Ep. 7 Discussion](#)

ASSIGNMENT: 1. Peer Feedback 2. Listen to [Seeing White Ep. 8](#)

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**WEEK 10** - Mar 4, 2022: Open Topic

[Seeing White Ep. 8 Discussion](#)

LECTURE: TBD Topic by Students

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**FINAL EXAM - Mar 11** - Final Pitch Presentations & Final Deck

Attendance Mandatory - All students will participate in the final presentation.

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## CLASS ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

In general, most assignments are working towards the final pitch and deck, and are done with your group. The purpose of the assignments is to create learning opportunities for you to continuously improve the work and walk away from the course having a decent understanding of what it means to think about the business of making films.

**WHY GROUPS:** Producing films is a team effort and as a producer you will constantly have to work with people you get along with and people that you don't. The reason we will be doing groups in this class is to teach you how to manage working relationships. Although mid-point team check-in is built in, the instructor will be available throughout the quarter to facilitate work dynamic conversations or help navigate difficult working relationships.

### PITCHES (35%)

The purpose of the pitches is to get you comfortable talking about your film as a business product. All pitches will be done in class by 1-2 members of the group. At the end of the pitch, the group will receive feedback from the instructor and classmates that should be incorporated into the deck typically due later that week.

Grading. 50% of the total points will be granted if the pitch is complete, meaning it covers all of the required aspects. The remaining points are granted if the following conditions are met: 10% if the pitch invites others to interact with the presenters, 30% if the pitch is supported by citable research, 10% if the ideas are presented in a clear and orderly manner. Specific grading details will be provided for each assignment.

- Story Pitch (10%) - In class week 2
  - Each student will present a 3 minute pitch on a story idea they would like to use for their group's project. A successful pitch will not only explain the story of the film, but will explain why now is the time to make this movie and present the success of similar comps.
- Package & Location Pitch (10%) - In class week 5
  - 1-2 members of each group will pitch the story idea of the group and present the proposed creative team package and the shooting location as explained in class.
    - Package: Identify a Director, Writer, and 1-2 Cast members
    - Location: Identify a State that has a tax incentive that aligns with you package.
- Festivals and Distributor Pitch (10%) - In class week 7
  - 1-2 members of each group will pitch the story idea of the group and present the proposed festival and distributor plan as explained in class.
    - Identify Festivals that would most resonate with your film.
    - Identify a distributor that has distributed works like this.
- Practice Final Pitch 5% - In class week 9
  - All members of the group will pitch the story idea of the group and present the complete business case for funding this film as explained in class.

## DECK DRAFTS (25%)

The purpose of the Deck Drafts is to get you comfortable communicating the business ideas of the film in written form. All deck drafts will be due end of day on the Friday after a pitch. The goal is to give you time to incorporate the feedback from the pitch into the deck and to continue to refine the idea.

Grading. 50% of the total points will be granted if the deck is complete, meaning it covers all of the required aspects. The remaining points are granted if the following conditions are met: 10% if the deck is aesthetically aligned with the persona of the film idea, 10% if the pitch is supported by citable research, 10% if the ideas are presented in a clear and orderly manner, and 20% if a significant portion of the feedback received in class was incorporated. Specific grading details will be provided for each assignment.

- Packaging & Location Deck (10%) - due end of week 5
  - A PDF of the deck must be submitted via D2L and should incorporate the proposed creative team package and the shooting location as explained in class.
- Festivals and Distributor Deck (10%) - due end of week 7
  - A PDF of the deck must be submitted via D2L and should incorporate the proposed festival and distributor plan as explained in class.
- Final Deck Draft (5%) - due end of week 9
  - A PDF of the deck must be submitted via D2L and should incorporate all aspects discussed over the course of the term.

## PARTICIPATION (20%)

In the spirit of learning through iterative discourse, active participation is expected from all students throughout the quarter. For grading purposes, two specific aspects of the class will be monitored for participation.

- Weekly racial equity and social justice conversations (10%)
  - As filmmakers, we have a responsibility to combat harmful depictions of non-dominant identities on the screen. To this end, each week the class will engage in a reflective dialogue. An episode of the podcast *Seeing White* will be used as the launching pad for the discussion. Each student is expected to participate at least once every two weeks. This is also an opportunity to practice [step up, step back](#). If you participated the week before, make space for others to participate in the discussion.
    - NOTE: In the case that the student does not feel comfortable engaging in these conversations with the group, alternative ways to earn these points can be explored so long as this is agreed upon in writing with the professor no later than at the end of week 3.
- Peer Review final decks (10%) - due end of week 10
  - Once the first drafts of the final pitch decks have been submitted, you will have to provide feedback on at least 3 other decks via D2L. Once you have done this, submit the assignment by indicating which 3 pitch decks you reviewed.

## FINAL EVALUATION (20%)

The term will culminate with final presentations from each group and the submission of the deck.

- Practice Final Pitch (10%) - In class week 11
  - All members of the group will pitch the story idea of the group and present the complete business case for funding this film as explained in class.
- Final Deck Draft (10%) - due prior to the time of the final exam
  - A PDF of the deck must be submitted via D2L and should incorporate all aspects discussed over the course of the term.

## EVALUATION SUMMARY

PITCHES: 35%	DECK DRAFTS 25%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Story Pitch 10%</li><li>• Creative Team Package + Location Pitch 10%</li><li>• Festivals and Distributor Pitch 10%</li><li>• Practice Final Pitch 5%</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Packaging &amp; Location Deck 10%</li><li>• Festivals and Distributor Deck 10%</li><li>• Final Deck Draft 5%</li></ul>
PARTICIPATION 20%	FINAL 20%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Racial Equity Conversations 10%</li><li>• Peer Feedback 10%</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Final Pitch 10%</li><li>• Final Deck 10%</li></ul>

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.

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## COURSE MATERIALS

### **Suggested Text / Kindle Digital Edition**

The Movie Business Book 4rd Edition, Jason E. Squire

### **Required Websites**

[Deadline Hollywood](#)

[Hollywood Reporter](#)

[Variety](#)

[Box Office Mojo](#)

### **Required Podcast:**

[Seeing White](#) - Scene on Radio - Producer and host John Biewen

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## COURSE POLICIES

### **Attendance**

Classroom attendance is MANDATORY. More than one “excused” absence (doctor’s note, Bears game, etc) will result in a lowering of grade per each absence.

### **Deadlines**

Strict Adherence to deadlines is expected. Materials presented or posted late will result in a negative grade for the particular assignment.

**Other:** Screenings, script readings, and handouts as assigned by the instructor TBD per class.

### **School policies:**

### **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 sent via email.

### **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:

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 Fax: (773)325.3720

TTY: (773)325.729

Class Discussion: Student participation in class discussions will be measured in two ways. First, students are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the day's topic. Participation allows the instructor to "hear" the student's voice when grading papers. Secondly, students will be called upon by the instructor to offer comments related to the reading assignments. Students must keep up with the reading to participate in class discussion.

Attitude: A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Measurable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitude include but are not limited to: talking to others when the instructor is speaking, mocking another's opinion, cell phones ringing, emailing, texting or using the internet whether on a phone or computer. If any issues arise a student may be asked to leave the classroom. The professor will work with the Dean of Students Office to navigate such student issues.

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.

Cell Phones/On Call: If you bring a cell phone to class, it must be off or set to a silent mode. Should you need to answer a call during class, students must leave the room in an undistruptive manner. Out of respect to fellow students and the professor, texting is never allowable in class. If you are required to be on call as part of your job, please advise me at the start of the course.