

SCWR 441-961 Industry and Pitching Seminar

When: Tuesdays · 6:30pm – 9:45pm
Where: LA Campus

Instructor: Cory Carroll · ccarro31@depaul.edu · 323-829-0588
Office Hours: By appointment · Email to set a time

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 (live or via Zoom) 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.

Prerequisites

None

Course Objectives

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

- Craft professional-level pitches across multiple platforms.
- Find and develop an original feature film take based on existing IP.
- Devise original ideas and hone in on their place and value within the current marketplace.
- Workshop and apply feedback to original pitches based on in-depth class discussions.

Grading

Attendance & Participation	20%
Producer + Writer Team Pitch	15%
Midterm: IP Feature Film Pitch	20%
TV Series Story Pitch	15%
Final: Original Feature Film Pitch	30%

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.

Textbook

Note that we will discuss the below titles in our week 1 meeting and choose one complementary text that will be part of our weekly Industry Roundup.

Pictures at a Revolution: Five Movies and the Birth of the New Hollywood by Mark Harris
ISBN-10: 0143115030

Red Carpet: Hollywood, China, and the Global Battle for Cultural Supremacy by Erich Schwartzel
ISBN-10: 1984878999

You'll Never Eat Lunch in This Town Again by Julia Phillips
ISBN-10: 0399590900

Additional reading material provided by Instructor.

Course Outline

Week 1 – March 29

Lecture: Course Intro, Pitch Your Favorite Film, Pitching Basics
Reading: OWA/Rewrite Script, Textbook Chapters (TBA)
Assignments: Industry Roundup, Producer + Screenwriter Pair-up

Week 2 – April 5

Lecture: Story Pitch, Crafting Your Pitch to the Buyer, OWA/Rewrite Pitch, Producer + Screenwriter Pitch Workshop
Reading: Textbook Chapters (TBA)
Assignments: Industry Roundup, Producer + Screenwriter Pitch + One Pager

Week 3 – April 12

Lecture: Pitch Deck 101, Packaging Your Idea
Presentation: Producer + Screenwriter Team Pitch
Reading: Textbook Chapters (TBA)
Assignments: Industry Roundup, IP Brainstorm: Find 2-3 ideas to pitch in-class for group discussions to help you identify your topic for the midterm

Week 4 – April 19

Lecture: Guest Speaker - Feature Film Executive
Presentation: IP Brainstorm
Assignments: Industry Roundup, Midterm Presentations + Pitch Deck

Week 5 – April 26

Presentation: Midterm IP Feature Film Pitch
Reading: Textbook Chapters (TBA)
Assignments: Industry Roundup, Television Series Brainstorm: Bring 2-3 original ideas to pitch in-class for group discussion

Week 6 – May 3rd

Lecture: Pitching for Television, Guest Speaker - Television Executive
Presentation: Television Series Brainstorm
Reading: Textbook Chapters (TBA)
Assignments: Industry Roundup, Television Series Pitch + Deck, Original Feature Film Brainstorm: Bring 2-3 original ideas to pitch in-class for group discussion to help you identify your topic for the final

Week 7 – May 10

Lecture: Television Series Pitch Workshop
Presentation: Original Feature Film Brainstorm
Reading: Textbook Chapters (TBA)
Assignments: *Industry Roundup, Original Feature Film Pitch*

Week 8 – May 17

Lecture: Original Feature Film Pitch Workshop
Reading: Textbook Chapters (TBA)
Assignments: *Industry Roundup, Final - Original Feature Film Pitch + Deck*

Week 9 – May 24

Presentation: Final - Original Feature Film Pitch

Week 10 – May 31

Industry Panel Feature Film Pitch

Assignments

Attendance & Participation/Industry Roundup (20% of final grade)

Each class we will start with a group discussion about the assigned textbook(s) through the lens of contemporary Hollywood, an analysis of the weekend box office report, film releases from the previous weekend, and an industry recap of the past week. Each student is encouraged to bring their own findings to the discussion, as well as be prepared to discuss at least one new film or television series each week.

Producer + Screenwriter Team Pitch (15% of final grade)

Following the week 1 lecture, students will be paired up for a producer + screenwriter team pitch to learn and practice the basics of pitching as a creative unit. For this in-class pitch, teams will be given a script to review and use as their template for their pitch as an OWA/rewrite assignment pitch. In addition to the pitch, each team must submit an accompanying one-page document that outlines the basics of their pitch. Guidelines will be discussed at length in class.

Midterm: IP Feature Film Pitch (20% of final grade)

Over the course of the first half of the class, we will explore intellectual property (IP) that now dominates the Hollywood marketplace and we will look at available material (e.g. public domain, historical/public figures, etc.) that can be developed into an original contemporary film. For the midterm project, each student will first select 2-3 potential IP ideas, present them to the class for feedback and discuss their merit in the current marketplace, and then choose one of them to focus on for their midterm pitch (~10 minutes). Each student will also be required to submit a corresponding pitch deck that further builds out and sells their original take. Guidelines will be further discussed at length in class.

Television Series Pitch (15% of final grade)

Each student will first select 2-3 potential television series ideas, present them to the class for feedback and discuss their merit in the current television landscape, and then choose one of them to focus on for an in-class pitch workshop. Each student will also be required to submit a corresponding pitch deck that further builds out and sells their original take. Guidelines will be discussed at length in class.

Final: Original Feature Film Pitch (30% of final grade)

For the final project, each student will first select 2-3 potential original feature film ideas (either based on an original script that they have written or one that they have the rights to, or an original idea), present them to the class for feedback and discuss their merit in the current marketplace, and then choose one of them to focus on for their final pitch in-class (~15 minutes) and in front of an industry panel. Each student will also be required to submit a corresponding pitch deck (*to the instructor only*) that further builds out and sells their original take. Guidelines will be further discussed at length in class.

Changes to the Syllabus

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change is to be made, it will be thoroughly addressed during class and disseminated via email.

COVID Social Distance and Mask Policy

Keeping our DePaul community safe is of utmost importance in the pandemic. Students, faculty and staff are expected to (1) wear a mask as required at all times while indoors on campus; (2) refrain from eating and drinking in classrooms; (3) keep current with their COVID-19 vaccinations or exemptions; (4) stay home if sick; (5) participate in any required COVID-19 testing; (6) complete the online Health and Safety Guidelines for Returning to Campus training; and (7) abide by the City of Chicago Emergency Travel Advisory. By doing these things, we are Taking Care of DePaul, Together. The recommendations may change as local, state, and federal guidelines evolve. Students who do not abide by the mask requirement may be subject to the student conduct process and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office. Students who have a medical reason for not complying with any requirements should register with DePaul's Center for Student with Disabilities (CSD).

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.

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.

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>

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>

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>

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.