

CP 382/482

Distribution and Exhibition

Winter 2024

Wednesday 5:45 PM – 9:00 PM
CDM 00708 Loop

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Office Hours: Fridays 10:00am – 12:00pm, by appointment

Course Description

Conventional and emerging modes of motion picture distribution with special emphasis on digital streaming and exhibition.

Course Goals

The purpose of this class is to introduce the student to how film distribution and exhibition operations, focusing on the following objectives for the quarter:

1. Students will be able to analyze the various revenue streams a film generates through its life cycle.
2. Students will develop a solid understanding of the vernacular and business models associated with film exhibition and distribution.
3. Students will become familiar with key deal points of film distribution and sales agreements.

Course Overview

This class will consist of a hybrid of lectures, individual assignments, and guest speakers. As the quarter proceeds each class will begin with a discussion of the weekend box office results and any current industry news and events. Each week the class will have a lecture covering the topics off the syllabus and readings. There will be guest speakers to discuss the industry and their areas of expertise. The guest speakers are TBD subject to their schedule and availability.

Class Schedule

Note: This schedule is subject to change. Please review weekly D2L updates.

Week 1 – January 10th

- Introduction to the course and each other. Review syllabus and class requirements.
- Weekend Box Office Report
- **Lecture:** Overview of current state of the business versus historical norms, exhibition and distribution channels, and terminology.

Week 2 – January 17th

- Weekend Box Office Report
- Weekly Trades Discussion
- **Lecture:** Film Festivals & Markets

Week 3 – January 24th

- Weekend Box Office Report
- Weekly Trades Discussion
- **Lecture:** The Distribution Deal
This lecture will include an overview of common deal structures as well as common contract terminology.

Week 4 – January 31st

- Weekend Box Office Report
- Weekly Trades Discussion
- **Lecture:**
 - Sundance Update
 - Impact of Academy Awards (and others) on contract negotiation and finances

Week 5 – February 7th

- Weekend Box Office Report
- Weekly Trades Discussion
- Sundance Film Festival Tracking Assignment Due today by 11:59pm
- Lecture: Theatrical and non-theatrical exhibition
- Midterm Exam Review

Week 6 – February 14th

- **Midterm Exam in Class via D2L**
- Weekend Box Office Report
- Weekly Trades Discussion

Week 7 – February 21st

- Weekend Box Office Report
- Weekly Trades Discussion
- Lecture: Film Marketing (P&A)

Week 8 – February 28th

- Weekend Box Office Report
- Weekly Trades Discussion
- Lecture: Home Entertainment Platforms – Traditional Models

Week 9 – March 6th

- Weekend Box Office Report
- Weekly Trades Discussion
- Lecture: Home Entertainment Platforms – New and Emerging Models
- Berlin Tracking Assignment due by 11:59pm

Week 10 – March 13th

- Weekend Box Office Report
- Weekly Trades Discussion
- Lecture: Alternative Means and Markets for Exhibition and Distribution

Week 11 – March 20th

- Weekend Box Office Report
- Weekly Trades Discussion
- Lecture: DIY

- Final Exam review

Week 12 – March 27th

FINAL EXAM in D2L

Evaluation

Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Sundance film Festival Tracking Paper	15%
Berlin Film Festival Tracking Paper	15%
Weekly Trades Presentation and Discussion	15%
Class Participation, Weekend Box Office Reports, and Class Assignments	15%

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.

Textbooks

Recommended Text/Kindle Digital Edition: The Movie Business book 4th Edition, Jason E. Squire

And A Great Book On Legal: Clearance & Copyright 4th Edition, Michael C. Donaldson

Required Websites

Box Office Mojo
 Deadline Hollywood
 Hollywood Reporter

Course Management

This course is housed and managed on D2L. There you will find required reading material, checklists, a calendar, and all assignments. Also posted on D2L will be a weekly discussion forum for questions and thoughts concerning the films, the lectures, and assignments.

Course Policies

Attendance: classroom attendance is MANDATORY. More than one “excused” absence 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 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 work 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 doubt 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>.

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 requirements 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 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.

Name & Pronouns

I use she/her pronouns and will gladly address you by the name and pronouns that you indicate. Please advise me of your name and/or your pronouns early in the quarter so that I may make appropriate notes in my records.

Additional Notes:

Class Discussion: Student participation in class discussions will be measured in a few ways. First, students are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the day's box office reports, trades presentations, and lecture topic. Participation allows the instructor to "hear" the student's voice when grading papers.

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.

Weekend Box Office Report

Evaluation:

This assignment goes toward your classroom participation grade.

Assignment Description

Review the Weekend Box Office report for the weekend prior to each class on boxofficemojo.com. With relation to the top 10 titles for that weekend, come prepared to discuss any observations you've made relating to openings, expansions, revenue, release patterns, or types of films that may or may not be trending that weekend.

Trades Distribution Presentation & Discussion Assignment

Evaluation:

This assignment is worth 15% of your final grade.

Assignment Description

The Professor will assign 2-3 students per week to choose a news article from the trades (Deadline Hollywood, Hollywood Reporter, Box Office Mojo, etc.) about breaking industry news relating to film distribution or the entertainment industry. What new projects are being bought/sold? What films are being set up at studios? What films are smashing the box office or tanking big time? How soon are these films expected to be on VOD after release? The students will then give a 5-minute presentation approximately at the beginning of class and open it up to discussion with the rest of the students and the Professor.

Please email the Professor **no later than the night before** class a link to the story, and a short paragraph as well as to why you have chosen it for class discussion.

A few helpful hints and examples:

- Be sure to check your spelling and grammar
- Be ready with questions for the class
- Avoid spending the presentation time parroting what you've read in your article of choice
- I've added 2 sample presentations from last year in case this is of use to you in D2L>Content>Sample Presentations
- **Do not** do your presentation on the same topic as your Sundance or Berlin tracking assignment

Sundance Film Festival Tracking Assignment

Evaluation:

This assignment is worth 15% of your final grade.

Due: February 7, 2023

Assignment Description

Over the next few weeks follow the various trades and internet sites covering distribution deals at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival (January 18 – 28). Afterwards, write up a two-to-three-page paper, double spaced, summarizing some of the major deals (3-5 films approx.) that

occurred at the festival. The paper should include details about what type of films (genre) were picked up, and were they first-time directors with unknown stars and great reviews/awards, or seasoned directors with established stars in the film? Who were the major buyers and how many films did they acquire at the festival? Find out any published details about the terms of the distribution deals such as how much did the film sell for, what territories (domestic, international), and any release/windowing information available. **An A paper will also include any overall impressions from this year's festival such as who were the award winners, and how did the buyers and critics feel about the quality of the films at the festival.**

Please post paper on D2L Dropbox section. If you have trouble with D2L, please feel free to send it via e-mail.

EFM/Berlin Film Festival Tracking Assignment

Evaluation:

This assignment is worth 15% of your final grade.

Due: March 6, 2023

Assignment Description

Over the next few weeks follow the various trades and internet sites covering distribution deals at the 2024 EFM (European Film Market)/Berlin International Film Festival (February 15 – 25). Afterwards, write up a two-to-three-page page paper, double spaced, summarizing some of the major deals (3-5 films approx.) that occurred at the festival. The paper should include details about what type of films (genre) were picked up, and were they first-time directors with unknown stars and great reviews/awards, or seasoned directors with established stars in the film? Who were the major buyers and how many films did they acquire at the festival? Find out any published details about the terms of the distribution deals such as how much did the film sell for, what territories (domestic, international), and any release/windowing information available. **An A paper will also include any overall impressions from this year's festival such as who were the award winners, and how did the buyers and critics feel about the quality of the films at the festival.**

Please post paper on D2L Dropbox section. If you have trouble with D2L, please feel free to e-mail it to me directly.

A note about the Berlin Tracking Assignment: If you are having any trouble finding coverage or deciding on films, please let me know right away. Do not wait until the paper is due.