

CP 511: Creative Producing Thesis I

When: Thursdays · 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 be required to complete a final thesis project that involves creating a film and television slate. Students will be required to create a professional package for three projects which will entail optioning and developing source material such as a book, script, or magazine article. The ultimate goal for the thesis projects is for the students to have viable projects upon graduation that they can set up at a studio or produced independently. Student also have the option to produce a festival quality short film for their final thesis project subject to approval by the Creative Producing Committee.

Prerequisites

None

Course Objectives

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

- Evaluate and identify screenplays that are viable for development.
- Create a development and production path for a feature-length screenplay.
- Craft professional-level pitches.
- Design marketing and distribution plans for a feature film project on your slate.
- Workshop and apply professional feedback to feature film projects in creative roundtables.

Grading

Attendance & Participation	25%
Weekly Assignments	20%
Midterm: Development Notes & Option	25%
Final: Thesis Pitch & Creative Report	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

Assigned reading material will provided by Instructor.

Course Outline

Week 1 – September 8

Lecture: Course Intro, Thesis Overview

Assignments: Industry Roundup, Material Search

Week 2 – September 15

Lecture: Finding the Script

Reading: Potential thesis scripts reads for workshop

Assignments: Industry Roundup, Weekly Assignment 1 - Producer Slate Project: Choose 1 producer/production company that you admire and prepare an overview document that outlines their company structure and their current and previous project slates (Due Wednesday, 9/21 by 7P via email)

Week 3 – September 22

Lecture: Creating Your Slate

Presentation: Producer Slates Overview

Workshop: Potential thesis script in-class feedback

Reading: Potential thesis scripts reads for workshop

Assignments: Industry Roundup, Weekly Assignment 2 - Coverage on classmates thesis script(s) (Due Wednesday, 9/28 by 7P via email)

Week 4 – September 29

Lecture: Optioning Material

Workshop: Potential thesis script in-class feedback

Reading: Potential thesis scripts reads for workshop

Assignments: Industry Roundup, Weekly Assignment 3 - Coverage on thesis script (Due Wednesday, 10/5 by 7P via email)

Week 5 – October 6

Lecture: Developing Your Project + Working with Writers

Workshop: Potential thesis script in-class feedback

Assignments: Industry Roundup, Midterm Assignment: Development notes on your chosen thesis script + signed option agreement (Hard copies of each due in class on 10/13)

Week 6 – October 13

Lecture: Packaging Your Project (Talent Lists), Pitching Your Project

Assignments: Industry Roundup, Weekly Assignment 4 - Written pitch, Weekly Assignment 5 - Talent Lists (Assignments 4 & 5 due Wednesday, 10/19 by 7P via email)

Week 7 – October 20

Lecture: Setting Up Your Project (Distributors, Financiers, Sales Companies)

Workshop: Thesis Script Talent Package

Assignments: Industry Roundup, Thesis Project Pitch, Weekly Assignment 6 - Distributors Report, Weekly Assignment 7 - Financiers Report (Assignments 6 & 7 due Wednesday, 10/26 by 7P via email)

Week 8 – October 27

Lecture: Marketing Your Project

Workshop: Thesis Script Distribution + Financing Plan, Thesis Project Pitch

Assignments: Industry Roundup, Weekly Assignment 8 - Marketing + Distribution Plan (Due Sunday, 11/6 by 11:59P via email)

Week 9 – November 3

No class

Week 10 – November 10

Workshop: Thesis Script Marketing Plan, Thesis Project Pitch

Assignments: Final Assignment: Thesis Project Pitch + Creative Report (Hard copy due in class on 11/17)

Week 11 – November 17

Presentation: Final Assignment: Thesis Project Pitch + Creative Report

Assignments**Attendance & Participation (25% of final grade)**

Each class we will start with a group discussion analyzing 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. Most classes throughout the course will also include group workshopping of potential thesis projects. Each student is required to read and discuss all materials distributed by their fellow classmates in each workshop session.

Weekly Assignments (20% of final grade)

There are 8 weekly assignments for this class. Due dates are noted in the Course Outline section of the syllabus. Guidelines will be discussed at length in class.

Midterm: Development Notes & Option Agreement (25% of final grade)

Over the course of the first half of the class, we will evaluate and analyze available, unproduced feature film screenplays for their viability for development and production for your slates. For the midterm project, each student will first select their feature film thesis screenplay, then prepare a set of development notes to be delivered to the writer(s) for a rewrite. In addition, each student is required to submit a signed option agreement with the writer(s) that grants them exclusive permission to develop the script with the writer(s). Guidelines will be further discussed at length in class.

Final: Thesis Project Pitch & Creative Report (30% of final grade)

For the final project, each student will craft and present a professional pitch (~10-20 minutes) based on their selected screenplay for their thesis project. Each student will also be required to submit a creative report for their selected screenplays that includes (but is not limited to): development notes, talent lists, distributor lists, financiers/sales companies lists, production plans, and marketing & distribution plans. 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.