EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION

FILM AND VIDEO

School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design
Department of Cinema and Media Arts

FA / FILM 4230 3.0 SECTION M
THE BUSINESS OF FILM & TELEVISION
FALL 2019 / WINTER 2020

Last Modified Date: 09/26/2019

COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Provides a thorough overview of the business environment in which films, television programs, and other moving image productions are financed, developed, produced and distributed. Open to all Film Majors.
Prerequisites: FA/FILM 2200 3.00 and FA/FILM 2230 3.00.

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INSTRUCTOR(S)

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Section / Format / Term</th>
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SPECIAL FEATURES

This course provides a thorough overview of the real world business environment in which films, television programs, and digital/online productions are financed, developed, produced and distributed. Topics to be covered include: finance plans, budgets, development, pitching, funding agencies, co-production structures, calculation of tax credits, CAVCO requirements, legal issues (IP, optioning), the role of broadcasters and distributors, delivery elements, distribution options, social media, industry events, festivals and markets, among others.

LIST OF LEARNING OUTCOMES AND EXAMPLES OF

The future of the film and television industry in the digital age is being shaped by entrepreneurs who can build new businesses and new business models across different media platforms. This course will focus on current trends and strategies, the recent history of each sector of the entertainment industry, and where it is heading.

Within this context the course has three primary goals:
- To give a comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of the business environment in which films, television programs, and digital productions are financed, developed, produced and distributed.
- To gain an understanding of the available resources as well as the importance of research and networking in the producing marketplace.
- To arm students with real world tools and contacts – preparing them for the challenges they are likely to encounter in their first 3 -5 years after graduation and beyond.

Teaching Philosophy

I believe in preparing students for the “real world” of production and business affairs. There are times when this “real world” will bump up against the world of academia, and I’d like to use this class room and this time together to gently prepare you for this transition.
I expect participation. This course will be very difficult for all involved if I have to talk to the class for 3 hours straight with no interaction. It will also be very awkward for any visiting guest lecturers. I will hesitate to invite contacts in this industry if I think it will be an unpleasant experience for them. That means students must be engaged, must put their phones down and must genuinely participate in class. ESL and social anxiety are not good explanations for non participation. This classroom should be viewed as a safe place to practice. Participation - 10%- I will give 0 in this category if you don’t participate.

Professionalism: Students are either currently in the workforce, or will be shortly in their chosen career. Please treat this course as a job.

Organization of the Course

The course involves formal lectures by the Course Director, guest speakers (prominent and emerging individuals from key sectors of the film, television and digital media business), independent research and in-class discussion and presentation. Content will focus on current business and production issues with case studies and some history highlighted to provide a context for current practice.

Students are challenged to assess business models and prepare their own strategic plans for their own careers and ventures. As part of the course, students will present to the class on a chosen aspect of the business of filmmaking/ television/digital content.

Every class will include a news review and discussion of current events and trends in the business of television, film and digital media. Students are required to actively participate in this element of the class.

Assigned readings are essential to the course, and will serve to enrich, clarify and illustrate crucial issues pertaining to the subject matter. Readings will be assigned and will also be posted on the course website (Moodle). Students are expected to regularly visit the course website to remain up to date with course announcements, and also to access supplementary reading materials posted online.

Course Text / Readings

There is no required textbook, however students are required to read articles and watch videos that will be regularly posted on Moodle. Students are expected to read these articles prior to class. Staying on point with what’s happening in the film/TV/digital media industry is paramount to being a successful producer/director/screenwriter. Every class we’ll also have time for group discussion about additional articles/news/issues going on in the film/TV/digital industry that you’ve come across.

As such, students are encouraged to subscribe to the following industry trade publication: Playback – subscription is CAD $12.99/month. https://playbackonline.ca/subscribe/website/


Twitter: It is recommended that you follow others such as but not limited to - @THR, @THREsq, @Variety, @playbackonline. You may also elect to follow: @hotdocs, @imdb, @Variety_Film, @indiewire, @theblklst, @c21media, @thenfb, @slate, @Variety_StuartL, @guardianfilm, @fastcompany, @filmtthreat, @screendaily, @FilmiTV_CANary, @Telefilm_Canada

*You are only required to subscribe to these trades for the duration of this course, however if you wish to work in the entertainment industry and/or develop and produce your own projects, I would highly recommend maintaining your subscriptions.

EVERY CLASS YOU ARE EXPECTED TO COME PREPARED HAVING READ AND ASSESSED AT LEAST TWO ADDITIONAL FILM/TV BUSINESS NEWS STORIES FROM THE PAST WEEK. I WILL CALL ON STUDENTS IN CLASS TO TALK ABOUT - AND/OR PRESENT - THE ARTICLES THEY HAVE READ – PERCEPTIONS/QUESTIONS AND IMPACT ON INDUSTRY
BUSINESS TRENDS OR PRACTICES.
* STUDENT PREPAREDNESS WILL BE REFLECTED IN CLASS PARTICIPATION MARK.

GRADED ASSESSMENT

COURSE EVALUATION & ASSIGNMENTS
Research Funding Sources - 25%
Case Study - Research Project & In class presentation - 25%
Business Plan/Project Proposal - 20%
Final Test 20%
Participation - 10%

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

RESEARCH FUNDING SOURCES – 25% - INDIVIDUAL
DUE: THURSDAY SEPT 19– HARD COPY IN CLASS.
Each student will thoroughly research one production or development funding source/method other than broadcaster/distributor. Students will sign up with Course Director in class at the beginning of the semester. Include information on guidelines, deadlines, past projects that have received funding, key contacts, etc. Hand in hard copy to Course Director.

CASE STUDY - RESEARCH PROJECT – 25% - GROUPS OF 3-4
DUE: PRESENTATIONS IN CLASS –(2-3 groups per class) FROM OCT 3 - OCT 10’
PRESENTATION GROUPS WILL BE ASSIGNED ON THURSDAY SEPT 12: GROUPS MUST REGISTER THEIR CHOSEN PROJECT ON THE DEDICATED GOOGLE DOCS PAGE - BY SEPT 19
Find a recent (last two years) media project (TV show, movie, documentary or web project) - and research all things economic related to that project: how was it funded, and by whom, budget, cost overruns, ratings, advertising/marketing and how it compares with other similar projects, etc. You can use newspaper articles, trade journals, the web page for the project or the studios/production companies involved, interviews with industry professionals, etc. You may have to go back years to find the beginning of a project - so keep digging. Students are required to present their findings and analysis to the class in 7-10 minute presentations. Please prepare a PowerPoint or Prezi to accompany your presentation. Include a short video clip to demonstrate the project.

PROJECT - BUSINESS PLAN PROPOSAL – 20% - GROUPS OF 2
DUE: TBC IN CLASS. ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE DATE AND TIME STAMPED.
Produce a business plan/pitch package for your own proprietary film, TV or digital media project: research and prepare a final project proposal package; including finance plan, budget, pitch plan, timeline, and targets for meetings with industry.

FINAL TEST - LAST CLASS - 20% - multiple choice, short answers, in class. based on review of entire semester

PARTICIPATION – 10%

This mark will be based on both your presence in class AND your participation in class discussions, as well as whether you are prepared when called upon to present industry trade articles for group discussion. Presenting your case study to class does not count as participation.
Grading, Assignment Submission, Lateness Penalties and Missed Tests

Grading: The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ - 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and tests* will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 90, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.).

For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar at
http://calendars.students.yorku.ca

Assignment Submission: Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Accordingly, assignments for this course must be received on the due date specified for the assignment. Assignments are to be handed in as specified in each assignment outline/rubric. Assignment details will be presented in class and will also be posted on our class Moodle page.

Lateness Penalty: Acting reasonably, assignments received later than the due date AND DUE TIME will be penalized, with mark of ZERO. This class aims to prepare students for their post graduate careers where delivering a treatment, film, or business plan late means defaulting on a contract, detriment to reputation, losing a job, or litigation.

Missed Tests: Students with a documented reason for missing a course test or in-class presentation, such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., may request accommodation from the Course Instructor. If accommodation is granted, student and instructor will collaborate to find a suitable time for test or alternate presentation date. Further extensions or accommodation will require students to submit a formal petition to the Faculty.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

IMPORTANT COURSE INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Please note that this information is subject to periodic update.
All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information:

**Academic Honesty and Integrity**

York students are required to maintain high standards of academic integrity and are subject to the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty at http://www.yorku.ca/univsec/policies/document.php?document=69.

There is also an academic integrity website with complete information about academic honesty. Students are expected to review the materials on the Academic Integrity website at http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity.

- **Accessibility/Disability Services**

York provides services for students with disabilities (including learning, mental health, physical, sensory and medical disabilities) needing accommodation related to teaching and evaluation methods/materials. These services are made available to students in all Faculties and programs at York University.

Students in need of these services are asked to register with disability services in Counselling & Disability Services as early as possible to ensure sufficient advance notice so that appropriate academic accommodation can be provided. You are encouraged to schedule a time early in the term to meet with each professor to discuss your accommodation needs. Please note that registering with disabilities services and discussing your needs with your professors is necessary to avoid any impediment to receiving the necessary academic accommodations to meet your needs.

Additional information is available at www.yorku.ca/cds or by contacting the offices of the disability service providers:


**Physical, Sensory and Medical Disability Services** - N108 Ross Building, 416-736-5140, www.yorku.ca/cds/psmds


- **Ethics Review Process**

York students are subject to the York University Policy for the Ethics Review Process for Research Involving Human Participants at http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=94. In particular, students proposing to undertake research involving human participants (e.g., interviewing the director of a company or government agency, having students complete a questionnaire, etc.) are required to submit an Application for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants at least one month before you plan to begin the research. If you are in doubt as to whether this requirement applies to you, contact your Course Director immediately.

**Religious Observance Accommodation**

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community, and making accommodations for observances of special significance to adherents. Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for an in-class test or examination pose such a conflict for you, contact the Course Director within the first three weeks of class. Similarly, should an assignment to be completed in
a lab, practicum placement, workshop, etc., scheduled later in the term pose such a conflict, contact the Course Director immediately. Please note that to arrange an alternative date or time for an examination scheduled in the formal examination periods (December and April/May), students must complete an Examination Accommodation Form, which can be obtained from Student Client Services, Student Services Centre or online at http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/exam_accommodation.pdf. Further information on religious observance is available at https://w2prod.sis.yorku.ca/Apps/WebObjects/cdm.woa/wa/regobs.

**Student Conduct**

Students and instructors are expected to maintain a professional relationship characterized by courtesy and mutual respect and to refrain from actions disruptive to such a relationship. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the instructor to maintain an appropriate academic atmosphere in the classroom, and the responsibility of the student to cooperate in that endeavour. Further, the instructor is the best person to decide, in the first instance, whether such an atmosphere is present in the class. A statement of the policy and procedures involving disruptive and/or harassing behaviour by students in academic situations is available on the York website http://www.yorku.ca/univsec/policies/document.php?document=82.

Many courses utilize Moodle, York University's course website system. If your course is using Moodle, click here to access it.

*Moodle @ York University*