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## **Preditors: Producing and Editing for Film & Digital Media**

**COMM 374: Predator: Producing and Editing for Film and Digital Media**

**Fall 2020, asynchronous, online**

Instructor: Elizabeth Coffman, producer/director/editor for FLANNERY

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Description--A "preditor" is a new title in film and television that describes producers who generate ideas and assist with developing and editing documentary and nonfiction formats—often reality television but other kinds of projects too. For this course, we are using the term to cover what the independent filmmaker often finds themselves doing—writing/finding/clearing a script, writing loglines and budgets, pitching for money, and directing/editing a trailer or scene to



help raise money. This course covers idea development for scripts, writing loglines and proposals, raising funds, archival research and clearance, editing footage, producing trailers and an overview of final post-production needed for distribution.

Students are encouraged to bring existing audio and/or video footage to edit for a project with this lab-based course.

### **Course Objectives:**

Producing Film and Digital Media examines how to create, budget, finance, visualize and translate knowledge into accessible media formats to sell and distribute. Students will research story topics, develop proposals, pitch decks, practice 'pitching', research casting, identify financial support, potential distributors and translate their ideas into a prospectus and related formats. Students will produce and deliver (both individually and as groups) presentations, web sites, short videos and/or 'teasers' while learning standard software for producing/editing feature films. Students will each propose their own project, but may work in groups for a final project—as long as you follow COVID safety guidelines--to deliver materials. We will review relevant films, interactive sites, games, educational materials and other media opportunities.

### **Learning outcomes:**

Story development for multi-media environments, prospectus/preproduction work, "public" speaking, movie budgeting basics, collaborative skills, fundraising, persuasive writing techniques, networking techniques, impact design, broadcast requirements

### **Required Readings and Materials:**

- Articles, available on Sakai
- Computer with Wifi access; back-up hard drive for media

- Adobe Premiere Pro CC, available via LUC

If you have questions, concerns or documented disability, please see me and/or the Wellness Center before there is a problem. Turn in documentation to Wellness Center.

### **Assignments:**

Logline/Landscape Survey	10 points
Lookbook/Pitch deck, Pitch session ( recorded presentation)	20 points
Schedule, Budget, Prospectus	10 points

### **Final Project:**

Final script/prospectus/ budget/schedule/teaser/ distribution plan	30 points
Online Presentation (Individual or Group)	20 points
Participation (Group updates--5 on Forum)	10 points

### **Grade Requirements and Course Expectations:**

Work must be turned in on time. Expectations are by Wed, before midnight of the week assignment is due. Speak with me *before* the deadline if you have a conflict. A late grade results in a 10% reduction per week. Always Backup a copy of your work for yourself (outside of Sakai) in case my copy disappears. Written work must be typed and must be done for this course. Plagiarism (the copying of material without appropriate acknowledgement) results in an “F” for the course. Syllabus may change during the semester. You are responsible for checking Sakai site every week. Grade scale is standard but based on numerical scores. There is no final exam in this class.

### **Course Outline:**

<b>Week 1</b>	Producing in a Pandemic	Aug. 27th
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Producing for the 21<sup>st</sup> century web, television and feature film industry</li> <li>• What are the responsibilities of the independent producer?</li> <li>• Infrastructure of the broadcast media business; transmedia and interactive possibilities for entertainment, information &amp; education</li> <li>• Good proposal writing and outlines; Designing impact plan first.</li> <li>• Do a landscape survey—What else is out there.</li> <li>• Identifying story ideas, magazine or published writing to option and research opportunities</li> <li>• <b>HOMEWORK:</b> Identify script, documentary story, or transmedia/web project to produce/develop (does not have to be 100% done); <b>READ:</b> Resources/Articles in Week One; <b>WATCH:</b> Films Weeks 1-3</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 2</b>	LOGLINE DESIGNING FOR IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCES	Sept.. 2nd
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The acquisition of underlying material – book options, scripts, etc..</li> <li>• Legal necessities</li> <li>• How to put a financial value on your project. Preparing a proper budget, for financing purposes</li> <li>• Sources of financing – Private Equity Investors, state tax incentives, grants, foundations, loans</li> <li>• Digital fundraising—Kickstarter, Indie GoGo—weary audience?</li> <li>• <b>HOMEWORK:</b> Work on logline, 100 word description, landscape survey—what other films are out there that have a similar story? How successful have they been?; <b>READ:</b> Resources/Articles in Week Two; <b>WATCH:</b> Films Weeks 1-3</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 3</b>	TRAILER OR SCENE SCRIPT/OUTLINE/BEAT SHEET DUE	Sept. 9th

- **DUE:** A logline, 100 word description of your story, Landscape survey
- Attaching directors, writers, experts, scientists or other relevant participants to a project
- Convincing participants to share the risk with financiers
- The difference between above-the-line and below-the-line fees
- Networking and social media
- Establish project teams
- Scheduling, budgeting the script
- **HOMEWORK:** Work on Budget, Schedule; WATCH: Films Weeks 1-3

**Week 4**                    BUDGETS DUE & CASTING FOR DOC OR NARRATIVE                    Sept. 16th

- **DUE:** Schedule, Budget
- Auditions, casting agents
- Media Distributors—educational, commercial; community screenings, Digital/VOD, self- distribution), supply chains, marketing, impact plan
- GUEST SPEAKER: Joe Winston
- **HOMEWORK,:** Prepare Pitch deck/lookbook

**Week 5**                    CALENDARS DUE - PRODUCTION DANGER ZONES                    Sept. 23rd

- Putting together a team – delineation of producer duties
- The collaboration between producers and the director (or others)– who’s the boss
- Choosing the proper department heads; location shooting, union crews
- Hiring an accountant and payroll service
- Post Production planning—closed captions, animation work, etc..
- Music and other clearances
- Producer’s representatives and film/media festival planning
- Acquisition deals, contracts and markets
- **GUEST SPEAKER:** Jessica Vitkin, LUC grad
- **HOMEWORK,:** Prepare Pitch deck/lookbook, finish prospectus

**Week 6**                    LOOKBOOK & PITCHING DUE                    Sept. 30th

- **DUE:** Final Prospectus; pitch deck/lookbook; Pitch over Voicethread
- Pitching a project to a studio or other potential partners
- Production deal versus negative pick-up
- Ins and outs of grant world; private donors
- GUEST SPEAKER: TBA

**Week 7**                    MIDTERM BREAK-WATCH SOME MOVIES                    Oct. 7th

**Week 8**                    MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION/TRAILER OUTLINE DUE                    Oct. 14th

- Press agents - The power and financial benefits of free publicity
- Educational components and support
- Test marketing and group research

- The power of the internet and alternative outreach
- **HOMEWORK:** Work on impact design and distribution plans
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**Week 9. EDITING LIKE A PREDITOR—EDITOR INTERVIEWS Oct 21st**

- How new technologies factor into the financing of creative content
- New platforms for distribution and marketing
- Creating and selling a reality TV or specialty series (science, travel, comedy, etc..)
- Overall review of the role of the independent producer as entrepreneur, and look to see what the future holds.
- **HOMEWORK:** Work on impact design and distribution plans

**Week 10 PRODUCTION WORK/PROF REVIEW Oct. 28<sup>th</sup>**

- **DUE:** Impact design and distribution plans
- **GUEST SPEAKER:** Lisa Trifone
- **HOMEWORK:** Work on trailer/teasers

**Week 11 ARCHIVES AND CLEARANCE Nov. 4th**

- **GUEST SPEAKER:** Pat Lofthouse
- **HOMEWORK:** Work on trailer/teasers

**Week 12 EDITING WORK/PROF REVIEW Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>**

- Meet one on one or small group with Coffman

**Week 13 DISTRIBUTION-FESTIVALS, THEATERS, VOD & OUTREACH PLAN Nov. 18th**

- Is it possible to run a sustainable and profitable business over a long period of time as a freestanding media producer?
- Educational examples

**Week 14 VOICETHREAD PRESENTATIONS Nov. 25<sup>h</sup>**

- **DUE:** GROUPS PRESENT PROSPECTUS, FINANCING, STORYBOARDS, OUTLINES, OUTREACH AND DISTRIBUTION PLANS 10 – 12 minute presentations via Voicethread

**Week 15 FINAL PROSPECTUS AND MEDIA PROJECTS DUE BY Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**HOMEWORK:** Leave comments on at least 5 of your classmates' Voicethread presentations.

