

Course Title:	Producing for Film & Digital Media (Lecture)
Course Number:	COMM 350 001 5186 FA23
Prerequisites:	COMM 135, 274, or Instructor Permission
Instructor Name:	Professor Alex Damarjian, PhD
Instructor Email:	adamarjian@luc.edu
Office Phone:	TBD
Office Location:	55 E Pearson (SOC), Room 900
Office Hours (Zoom):	Wednesdays, 9:00a to 11:00a Please email to schedule appointments. https://luc.zoom.us/j/7936162599
Location:	School of COMM - Room 003
Course Dates:	Thur, Jan 16 - May 4
Course Times:	4:15pm to 6:45pm
Program Directors:	Ayesha Abouelazm aabouelazm@luc.edu

Course Description:

Aesthetic choices meet the ethics and business of filmmaking in COMM 350. Producing covers how to develop story ideas from conception to writing, financing, production and distribution. Relevant issues in script breakdowns, safety, communication and contracts are covered. Students create pitch decks, basic budgets and a longer prospectus for potential investors.

Outcome:

Taking into consideration DEI issues, students will gain an understanding of strategies for choosing stories to produce, hiring and managing performers and crew, budgeting and fundraising, deploying tactics for enforcing best practices for on-set safety, and creating engaging pitch decks and treatments.

Attendance Policy and Impact on Grades

Regular attendance and participation are crucial components of your success in this course. To foster a productive learning environment and ensure that each student gains the most from the course content, the following attendance policy is in place:

Maximum Allowable Absences: Each student is permitted to miss up to two (2) classes during the semester without penalty. These absences can be used at your discretion, whether for illness, personal emergencies, or other reasons.

Consequence of Exceeding Absence Limit: Exceeding the maximum of two (2) absences will have a significant impact on your ability to successfully complete the course. Upon the third absence (and any subsequent absence), your overall course grade will be adversely affected, potentially leading to a failing grade for the course.

Responsibility for Missed Work: It is your responsibility to catch up on any missed coursework or materials. Please consult with classmates or use the course resources to stay abreast of any missed lectures, discussions, or assignments.

Special Circumstances: If you have extenuating circumstances that may affect your attendance, please communicate with me as soon as possible. Accommodations will be considered on a case-by-case basis, with appropriate documentation.

This policy underscores the importance of engagement and consistent participation in our course. Your success is directly linked to your active involvement, and regular attendance is key to achieving the learning outcomes of this class.

Required Items and Materials (Student Purchase Responsibility):

- Access to a computer or tablet capable of running spreadsheet, word processing, and basic design software. \$65-\$100 for Copyright and WGA registration fees/expenses. Memory card 256gb gold roughly \$30.

Recommended Software options:

- Budgeting
 - EP Movie Magic Budgeting, Excel, or equivalent
- Scheduling
 - EP Movie Magic Scheduling, Celtx, Studio Binder, Excel, or equivalent
- Layout Design
 - Adobe InDesign, PowerPoint, Adobe Photoshop, or equivalent
- Screenwriting
 - EP Movie Magic, Final Draft, Celtx, Studio Binder, or equivalent

Grading Scale:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
100-94	93-90	89-88	87-83	82-80	79-78	77-73	72-70	69-68	67-63	62-20	59-0

Projects, Assignments, Requirements, and Points:

Attendance	Presence & Punctuality, Contribution & Attitude Participation	100	2pts-Present 1pt-Tardy 0pts-Absent
Impact Planning	Vet and assess idea viability	100	
Property Acquisition	Tangible basis for the idea.	100	
Script Breakdown	Sheets and Marked-Up Script	100	
Schedule/Stripboard	Organized Production Schedule	100	
DOOD	Identify days cast is needed	100	
Budget	Estimate the cost of production	100	
Comps/Landscape Survey	Know the market	100	
Deal Memos	Proof of rights and ownership	100	
Sizzle Reel First pass presentation	Dynamic pitch tool	100	
Sizzle Reel final pass presentation	Dynamic pitch tool	100	
Pitch Deck	Graphic pitch tool	100	
Pitch Presentation	In-class full pitch of project.	100	

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ASSIGNMENT NAME	DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION
<p>Property Acquisition</p> <p>Impact Planning</p>	<p>Screenplays, books, comics, news articles, life stories and more are all properties that can be transformed into films. Identifying an underlying property that aligns with your values and is viable in the marketplace takes active investigation, analysis, and, even at the student level, legal documentation of your right, as a producer, to “exploit” that piece of intellectual property.</p> <p>In this assignment, you will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find, commission, create, or acquire a piece of intellectual property that you can produce as a short film within the scope of your undergraduate/graduate education or immediately upon graduation. • This underlying property must either be a screenplay or have been adapted into screenplay format. • Script page count should fall between 5 and 15 pages • Evaluate the property’s social value using an Impact Plan Form <p>Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of the Underlying Property • Completed Impact Plan Form • Proof of rights/ownership/chain of title
Script Breakdown	Identifying, assessing, and cataloguing the various elements of a screenplay allows for accurate planning, budget estimations, and crew management. In this assignment, you

	<p>will create a full breakdown of your script, noting key elements for use in scheduling and budget creation.</p> <p>Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All breakdown sheets required assessing each scene of your screenplay
Schedule/Stripboard	<p>Having a general understanding of the dates, locations, and duration of your shoot is vital to locking in cast, crew, equipment, craft services, locations, and more. Based on the elements from your breakdown sheets, create a Production Schedule/Stripboard that efficiently organizes your shoot. Note: Eventually, a 1st AD will create or revise the Stripboard as things change, based on their unique experience, and other factors. That said, you as the steward of the project must first have this information in mind so that the actions can be taken in the correct order and with sufficient information.</p> <p>Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production Schedule: A document generally outlining the scope of the production. This can be completed in a word processor and should give a full picture of the life of the project from Development to Exhibition. • Stripboard: Industry formatted layout of the general order of the scenes to be completed. This should take into consideration the clustering of like elements to maximize efficiency. This should be completed in a scheduling program such as EP Move Magic Scheduling, Celtx, Studio Binder, or manually in Excel.
DOOD Report	<p>To accurately book and schedule talent, we need to know when their scenes will be shot. The Day Out of Days Report is a tool for visualizing this information.</p> <p>Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DOOD Report spreadsheet.
Budget	<p>Estimating the cost of your film is an important first step in finding funding.</p> <p>Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry standard Budget with Top Sheet and detailed line items.
Comps/Landscape Survey	<p>Using movie budget reporting sites such as The-Number.com and BoxofficeMojo.com, students will find films comparable to their budget level. If the current project budget is too low to find comps, choose films that are similar in genre and style. Additionally, create a list of three film festivals that your project might fit into.</p> <p>Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document listing 5 comps to your film. • Document listing 3 film festivals that your film might fit into.

Deal Memos	<p>Contracting cast and crew, locations and vendors, is one of the many tasks of the producer. In this assignment, you will create templates for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crew Deal Memo • Personal Release • Location Agreement/Release
Sizzle Reel	<p>Movie images are compelling and engaging. Having a Sizzle Reel, a short summary video of your project, helps align the viewer with the vision you have for the film. This can consist of live action footage, pictures, text on screen, motion graphics or any combination of those elements and more. The goal of this assignment is for you to apply the techniques we've spoken about in class (Script Breakdown, Scheduling/Stripboard, Budget, etc) to the actual production of this video project. You are expected to secure crew, show chain of title, and guide the logistical (and creative, depending on the relationship you have with the director) aspects of getting the video from idea to exhibition. For this assignment, you will produce a 1–3-minute sizzle reel for your property/project. This video will be part of your final Pitch Presentation.</p> <p>Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 to 3-minute video • 1920x1080 Resolution • H.264 Compression
Pitch Deck	<p>Creating a graphical layout of the tone and content of your story provides a visual aid for the audience that helps get everyone on the same page. The Pitch Deck will be an 8-15 slide visual aid having the following headers, at the very least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title Page • Log Line • Story Summary • Characters
Pitch Presentation	Students will present their pitchbooks.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK INFO	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT AND DUE DATE
<i>WEEK1:</i>	<i>THE PRODUCING TEAM</i>	<i>HOMEWORK:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: Pitch Intros • Activity: The Business • Activity: Market Research Task • Movies for Change • Diversity in Movies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Introduction • Banter Discussion • Types of Producers • Duties of each producer • Full Production Cycle • Choosing a Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Website • Create Your Short Film Team's Bios Page Online • Acquire/create a script post on website

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing an Entity 	Reading:
WEEK2:	SCRIPT BREAKDOWN	HOMEWORK:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity: The Business Activity: Scene Breakdown – Manual Activity: Demo MM Scheduling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Banter Discussion Intellectual Property Fair Use Law Resources Breakdown Concept Elements Breakdown Programs Impact Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Script Breakdown <p>Acquiring Rights</p> <p>Fair Use FAQ</p> <p>Lawyers for the Creative Arts</p> <p>Script Breakdown Reading</p>
WEEK3:	SCHEDULING AND TIMING	HOMEWORK:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity: The Business Activity: Assess a Stripboard’s efficiency Demo: Daily Production Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating an Impact Plan Banter Discussion Elements of Scheduling Stripboards Order of Cast/Crew Hires DOOD Reports Call Sheets Daily Production Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an Impact Plan DOOD Report <p>Production Schedule Wiki</p> <p>Production Schedule vs Shooting Schedule article</p>
WEEK4:	BUDGET AND FINANCE 1	HOMEWORK:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity: The Business Activity: Review the EP Pay Master 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Banter Discussion Budget Format Rates and Costs Crowd Funding Direct Fundraising Fiscal Sponsors Distribution Deals Gap Financing Deferred Payment Points Tax considerations 	DOOD Report Schedule/Stripboard
WEEK5:	BUDGET AND FINANCE 2	HOMEWORK:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: The Business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comps and Valuation • Private Placement Memorandum/Offering Summary • Working with Payroll Companies 	Budget
<i>WEEK6:</i>	<i>CASTING</i>	<i>HOMEWORK:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: The Business • Activity: Scenes from Casting By 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banter Discussion • Finding Talent • Casting Agents • Talent Agencies • IMDB Pro • Pay or Play • Letters of Intent • SAG Signatory Process • Process of Auditions 	PITCH DECK first pass
<i>WEEK7:</i>	<i>PITCH DECKS/PITCHING</i>	<i>HOMEWORK:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: The Business • Activity: Pitch Tips • Activity: View sample Pitch Decks and one-sheets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banter Discussion • Pitch Deck Purpose • Pitch Deck Components • One-Sheets • TV Conferences • Building Crew • Assisting Casting • Selling Investors • Pitching Tips 	Final PITCH DECK
<i>WEEK8:</i>	<i>CONTRACTS AND INSURANCE</i>	<i>HOMEWORK:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: The Business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banter Discussion • Anatomy of Contracts • Common terms • Common phrases • Enforcement • Arbitration v Small Claims Court • Production Insurance • The COI • Special Insurance • Lawyers for the Creative Arts 	Deal Memos

<i>WEEK9:</i>	<i>DISTRIBUTION</i>	<i>HOMEWORK:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: The Business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathways to Distribution • Festivals • Streaming • Traditional • Film Markets • TV Conferences • Broadcast • Public Access 	Comps/Landscape Survey
<i>WEEK10:</i>	<i>PRODUCER ON SET</i>	<i>HOMEWORK:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: The Business • Guest Speaker: Sug Shin • Gantt Template • Kanban Template 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency and Productive Atmosphere • Troubleshooting • Morale • Protect against Liability • Watching the Budget • Removing Destructive Elements • Delegation • Ensure Publicity is done • 	SIZZLE REEL First pass (Block out)
<i>WEEK11:</i>	<i>TEST SCREENINGS</i>	<i>HOMEWORK:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: The Business • Reading: Test Screenings, Referred Pain • Activity: Rough Cut Screenings of Sizzle Reel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating your film • Test Screening Forms • Gun Safety on set. 	SIZZLE REEL second pass (Music, ambient sounds, AFX complete editing, VFX, Color Grading)
<i>WEEK12:</i>	<i>LOCATION SHOOTING</i>	<i>HOMEWORK:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: The Business • Guest: TJ Berden, Producer • Permit Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chicago Film Office • Permits • Canvassing • Certificates of Insurance • Cash on Hand 	Final SIZZLE REEL
<i>WEEK13:</i>	<i>Spring Break</i>	<i>HOMEWORK:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest Up and work on your sizzle reel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No class session 	

<i>WEEK14: 11/29/23</i>	<i>FINAL PITCH DAY 1</i>	<i>HOMEWORK:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: Pitches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of Pitch Decks and Sizzle Reels 	
<i>WEEK15: 12/6/23</i>	<i>FINAL PITCH DAY 2</i>	<i>HOMEWORK:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: Pitches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of Pitch Decks and Sizzle Reels 	
<i>FINALS WEEK: 12/13/23</i>	<i>SCREENING</i>	<i>HOMEWORK:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Written Final 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue exploring all aspects of Producing!

On Artificial Intelligence

Please review the link below for information on the use of Artificial Intelligence in the classroom.

To maintain our culture of excellence and integrity, students are not to use AI assisted technology in the classroom unless they are specifically authorized to do so by their faculty for an assignment, a test, a quiz, or any deliverable that will be graded.

<https://loyolachicago.us.newsweaver.com/16kh6l6n2t/1fghp0dtu8510v45s5mar0?email=true&lang=en&a=6&p=13186292&t=645705>

School of Communication Statement on Academic Integrity

A basic mission of a university is to search for and to communicate truth as it is honestly perceived. A genuine learning community cannot exist unless this demanding standard is a fundamental tenet of the intellectual life of the community. Students of Loyola University Chicago are expected to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty.

Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. These examples of academic dishonesty apply to both individual and group assignments.

Academic cheating is a serious act that violates academic integrity. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, such acts as:

- Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher;
- Providing information to another student during an examination;
- Obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination;
- Using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor;
- Attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted;
- Taking an examination by proxy. Taking or attempting to take an exam for someone else is a violation by both the student enrolled in the course and the proxy.

- Unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work which is completed outside of the classroom;
- Falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines; or
- Any other action that, by omission or commission, compromises the integrity of the academic evaluation process.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.;
- Submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material;
- Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit; or
- Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.
- Submitting the same work for credit in two or more classes, even if the classes are taken in different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to submission of the work to make certain that such submission will not violate this standard.

The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or by neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. A more detailed description of this issue can be found at https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml.

Plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor's assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the Associate and Assistant Deans of the School of Communication. Instructors must provide the appropriate information and documentation when they suspect an instance of academic misconduct has occurred. The instructor must also notify the student of their findings and sanction.

The Associate and Assistant Deans of the School of Communication may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty, the Dean's office may convene a separate hearing board to review these instances. The student has the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the Dean of SOC. If the student is not a member of the SOC, the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled shall be part of the process. Students have the right to appeal the decision of any hearing board and the deans of the two schools will review the appeal together. Their decision is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean or deans.

Students have a right to appeal any finding of academic dishonesty against them. The procedure for such an appeal can be found at: http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicgrievance.shtml.

The School of Communication maintains a permanent record of all instances of academic dishonesty. The information in that record is confidential. However, students may be asked to sign a waiver which releases that student's record of dishonesty as a part of the student's application to a graduate or professional school, to a potential employer, to a bar association, or to similar organizations.

Student Accommodations:

Any student who needs special accommodation during exams or class periods should provide documentation from the Student Accessibility Center confidentially to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

Privacy Statement:

Assuring privacy among faculty and students engaged in online and face-to-face instructional activities helps promote open and robust conversations and mitigates concerns that comments made within the context of the class will be shared beyond the classroom. As such, recordings of instructional activities occurring in online or face-to-face classes may be used solely for internal class purposes by the faculty member and students registered for the course, and only during the period in which the course is offered. Instructors who wish to make subsequent use of recordings that include student activity may do so only with informed written consent of the students involved or if all student activity is removed from the recording.

Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

As Loyola's mission statement holds, "We are Chicago's Jesuit, Catholic University—a diverse community seeking God in all things." Together, as a community rich in diversity, we are called to "expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith."

Recognizing and appreciating the diverse collection of identities, experiences, perspectives, and abilities of the students, faculty, staff, and community partners with whom we collaborate, the School of Communication commits itself to enriching academic experiences through the advancement of diversity, equity, inclusion, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive practices.

Managing Life Crises and Finding Support : Should you encounter an unexpected crisis during the semester (e.g., securing food or housing, addressing mental health concerns, managing a financial crisis, and/or dealing with a family emergency, etc.), I strongly encourage you to contact the Office of the Dean of Students by submitting a CARE referral (LUC.edu/csaa) for yourself or a peer in need of support. To learn more about the Office of the Dean of Students, please find their websites here: LUC.edu/dos or LUC.edu/csaa; phone number 773-508-8840, email deanofstudents@luc.edu