

# CAPILANO UNIVERSITY COURSE OUTLINE

## MOPA 319 – THE INDEPENDENT PRODUCER

Fall 2016

Division	School of Motion Picture Arts	
Course Name	MOPA 319 – The Independent Producer	Credits: 3
Instructor	<a href="mailto:x@capilanou.ca">x@capilanou.ca</a>	604.986.1911 local xxx

### VISION STATEMENT

The School of Motion Picture Arts is dedicated to inspiring a new generation of independent Canadian filmmakers through the fostering and mentoring of emerging talent utilizing progressive learning environments and authentic production experiences, such that graduates make valued contributions to the global media culture.

### COURSE FORMAT

Four lecture hours per week, for 15 weeks.

### COURSE PREREQUISITES

28.5 credits of 200 level MOPA.

### STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

#### General

This course is an exploration of the multi-faceted nature of the independent producer from an entrepreneurial, creative and industry perspective

#### Instructional

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

- Describe the “Four Pillar” approach to producing; 1) The Artist 2) The Industry 3) The Investors and 4) The Audience;
- Identify what type of projects appeal to them as potential producers;
- Determine the legal risks and responsibilities of various business structures and the industry necessity for incorporation as a preferred structure;
- Identify the necessary industry agreements to secure and develop scripts and underlying properties;
- Distinguish the varied approaches involved in developing projects for film, television and new media;
- Apply market analysis to identify the appropriate markets and distribution channels for their projects;
- Define the professional relationships and business issues involved in producing during development, financing and distribution; and
- Create a marketing plan and distribution strategy.

<b>PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>
<b>Program Mission</b>
To provide the encouragement, equipment, training and setting for a vital experience of creation and collaboration. Student filmmakers will expand and refine their practical, professional, artistic and social skills in order to acquire craft excellence and successfully integrate into the increasingly complex and diverse industries of filmed entertainment, digital communications and new media.
<b>Program Goals</b>
<p><b>Knowledge:</b></p> <p>To enable students to articulate and apply their knowledge of story and story development to documentary and narrative projects on all platforms; to combine and apply both practical and theoretical knowledge; to investigate and interpret a broad range of theoretical perspectives.</p> <p><b>Skills:</b></p> <p>To orchestrate a detailed industrial process; to manage time and budget on large projects over extended periods of time; to use technology as a tool to create innovative and authentic stories; to develop a convergent approach to creative content; to collaborate creatively.</p> <p><b>Value:</b></p> <p>To conceptualize, research, develop and produce projects from initial idea through to final product; to market and distribute projects; to develop innovative business models and strategies to build sustainable companies; to understand the role of film and the film industry in Canada's culture and economy; to identify potential areas/sectors of employment; to identify opportunities for further study; to articulate and pursue a unique and personal voice and vision through the artistic and technical means of filmmaking and visual communication, and, in particular, to use the tools and resources at their disposal with clarity, intelligence, resourcefulness and professionalism.</p>

<b>PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>
<p>Students successfully completing this program will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyze historical, technological, philosophical and theoretical trends in the national and global cinemas;</li> <li>2. Acquire a range of skills and applications of visual communication in order to expand their potential to realize and create meaningful career opportunities;</li> <li>3. Contribute their technical skills, creative skills, and personal vision to the art of filmmaking;</li> <li>4. Consult, liaise and negotiate in a professional manner in all aspects of the filmmaking process;</li> <li>5. Develop industry relationships and create authentic learning environments in order to provide opportunities to expand their potential as independent filmmakers;</li> <li>6. Be able to analyze market trends and identify sources of financing;</li> <li>7. Have a strong understanding of the assets needed to approach investors; and</li> <li>8. Understand the significance of the Producer as the key creative driving force in projects, as well as the responsibilities, risks and rewards therein.</li> </ol>

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** Resource material is provided by the instructor.

**WEEKS 1-15****WEEK 1:**

\*The independent producer-the role of key driver and creator, the 'Four Pillars' approach to producing, producer credits and job descriptions, producer responsibilities throughout the production process, working with the line producer/co-producers/associate producers and assistants, pitching to industry, creating preliminary marketing materials, writing the short synopsis/logline and creating your Development Pitch for the 4<sup>th</sup> Year Development Project.

*\*Assignment #1 (Pillar 1-the Artist's Creative) assigned: Create your Development Pitch for a project of your choosing (i.e., short, feature, documentary, TV series, web series, short film, business plan etc.)*

**WEEK 2:**

\*Business structures- risks and advantages of sole proprietorship/partnership/incorporation, entertainment industry standards, steps for setting up a corporation, selecting and protecting your business name, federal vs. provincial incorporations, private vs. publicly held corporations, and business ethics.

*\*Pitch Assignment #1 Development Pitch DUE in class, including handing in a written Short Synopsis/Logline for your Development Pitch.*

**WEEK 3:**

\*Developing projects- obtaining development monies, legal responsibilities and timing of development repayment, development timelines, working and negotiating with co-writers, chain of title agreements including assignments/writer agreements/option-purchase agreements/subject agreements/life rights agreements, obtaining the legal opinion, protecting your 'ideas', registering written material with writers' guilds and obtaining official copyright registration for your projects.

**WEEK 4:**

\*Financing- traditional and non-traditional models, creating a financial structure, international co-productions, tax credits, completion bonds, interim/gap financing, recoupment schedules, drawdown requirements, working with investors and managing the investor relationship.

*\*Assignment #2 (Pillar 2/3) assigned: Create a Financing Research Report using traditional industry financing sources.*

**WEEK 5:**

\*'Disruptive' financing models- crowd funding, designing and maintaining a successful campaign, the emergence of equity crowd funding, national crowd funding organizations and advocacy, legal requirements, producer risks and challenges with disruptive models, the use of crowd funding to create marketing/distribution databases, building a fan base, managing donor relations and professional communications.

*\*Assignment #2 Financing Research Report DUE at the beginning of class/presentation to class.*

**WEEK 6:**

\*The negotiating process, standard contract terms/representations/warranties, amending contracts, creating deferral deals, finding the right lawyer for your project, navigating the producer/lawyer relationship, standard legal billing practices and remedies, 'making the deal', talent offers, working with unions/employees/contractors, employment standards requirements and payroll taxes, insurance and sponsorship/product placement deals.

*\*Assignment #3 (Pillars 2 and 3) assigned: Create a New Financing Research Report using 'alternative' financing sources.*

**WEEK 7:**

\*Business planning- the components and format of the business plan, research tools including futurpreneur.ca and smallbusinessbc.ca, sourcing appropriate business mentors, basic business bookkeeping, working with accountants, registration for business numbers and the GST, tax returns, networking and industry organizations.

*Assignment #3 (Pillars 2 & 3) DUE at beginning of class/presentation to class.*

**WEEK 8:**

\*Clearances- defamation, privacy/publicity rights, copyright and trademark, music licensing, music cue sheets, SOCAN registrations, publisher's royalties and reporting requirements, obtaining errors & omissions insurance, broadcast/distributor requirements and rationales, creating clearance charts, assessing risk, industry standard release forms and licensing agreements.

**WEEK 9:**

\*Marketing- terminology, marketing elements and hooks, components of the marketing plan, identifying and creating appropriate marketing tools including: stills/trailers/posters/production diaries/bios/reviews/awards/merchandise/contests/a public relations plan, creating contractual promotional requirements for talent and key creative in your agreements, protecting your strategy and business through confidentiality agreements, with the role of festivals and international markets and formulating a festival/market strategy.

**WEEK 10:**

\*Marketing- formulating a comprehensive marketing strategy, conducting market research and analyzing similar/analogous projects, identifying your core audience, community outreach, creating grassroots marketing strategies and alliances/special events, conducting audience surveys and test screenings.

*\*Assignment #4 (Pillar 4) assigned: Conduct a Market Analysis.*

**WEEK 11:**

\*Distribution- the traditional hierarchy, exclusivity and windows, the distributor-producer relationship, the distribution agreement, negotiable and non-negotiable terms, delivery requirements and schedules, conducting the audit and producer responsibilities.

\*Discussion of your Market Analysis and how to incorporate the analysis into a comprehensive marketing and distribution plan.

*\*Assignment #5 (Pillar 4) assigned: Create a Marketing and Distribution Plan.*

**WEEK 12:**

\*Digital distribution- online distribution platforms, the use of distribution aggregators, Video-On-Demand (VOD), mobile content, advantages and disadvantages of current social media platforms and incorporating a social media strategy as part of your Marketing/Distribution Plan.

**WEEK 13:**

*\*Assignment #5 DUE: Present and hand in written Marketing and Distribution Plan, including Market Analysis, and present Final Pitch.*

\*Review.

**WEEKS 14-15:**

Final exam period

<b>ASSIGNMENTS*</b>	
Assignment #1 - Creative Development Pitch	10%
Assignment #2- Financing Research Report 1- traditional financing sources	10%
Assignment #3 – New Financing Research Report - 'alternative' financing sources	10%
Assignment #4 – Market Analysis	10%
Assignment #5 - Marketing and Distribution Strategy including Market Analysis and Final Pitch	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60%</b>

<b>EVALUATION PROFILE</b>	
Assignments *	60%
Final examination	25%
Participation/Attendance	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Grading Profile</b>			
A+ = 90-100%	B+ = 77-79%	C+ = 67-69%	D = 50-59%
A = 85-89%	B = 73-76%	C = 63-66%	F = 00-49%
A- = 80-84%	B- = 70-72%	C- = 60-62%	

<b>OPERATIONAL DETAILS:</b>
Capilano University has policies on Academic Appeals (including appeal of final grade), Student Conduct, Cheating and Plagiarism, Academic Probation and other educational issues. These and other policies are available on the University website.
<b>ATTENDANCE:</b>
Attendance will be taken daily and will form part of the final grade (See Evaluation Profile). When students are absent from class/production, their professionalism grade will be affected. Crew time sheets will be filled out each day during production. Lateness or unexplained absences will affect professionalism grade. Additionally, where lateness or unexplained absence prevents student from executing their designated crew responsibilities, term grade for that specific role will be impacted as well – up to and including overall course failure for substantially incomplete work.
<b>PUNCTUALITY:</b>
Punctuality is essential and forms part of the participation grade.
<b>LATENESS:</b>
All student work must be performed at the place and time authorized by the instructor. Lateness will only be accepted if prior approval for lateness has been given by the instructor.
<b>CHEATING/PLAGIARISM:</b>
Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's work or ideas as if they were one's own. Plagiarism is both dishonest and a rejection of the principles of scholarship. All students should familiarize themselves with the University Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism (See the University Website) as such behaviour can result in suspension from the University.
<b>INCOMPLETE GRADES:</b>
Grades of Incomplete "I" will be granted only if there is a valid reason for extending the evaluation deadline and if students have a reasonable chance of improving their grade to pass the course.
<b>ENGLISH USAGE:</b>
All written work submitted must use good academic English and follow the guidelines provided in the Capilano University Guide to Writing Assignments (available from the University Bookstore). It is the responsibility of students to proof-read all their writing for any grammatical, spelling and stylistic errors.
<b>STUDIO/FILMING DISCIPLINE:</b>
Students must be dressed appropriately. Wet and cold weather requires waterproof and warm clothing. Students are required to wear work clothes for technical and production sessions. Clothing may be subjected to dirt, paint and dust. Sturdy shoes are a must. No food or beverages are allowed on set during production activities and during technical classes.

<b>COMPUTER COURSE REQUIREMENTS/RESPONSIBILITIES:</b>
You are expected to abide by the Statement of Appropriate Use of Information Technology Facilities and Services in any use of computers at the University. This statement can be obtained from your department, the Library, Computer Services or on the University website.
<b>ELECTRONIC DEVICES/LAPTOPS:</b>
Use of electronic devices is not allowed during class time, except at the discretion of the instructor.
<b>COMPUTER LAB USAGE:</b>
No food or beverages are allowed in the University's computer labs at any time. Students must not abuse internet privileges by visiting inappropriate or illegal websites. Intentionally opening and/or altering other students' projects will not be tolerated. Respect for other students' work is of utmost importance. Offences regarding the above will result in the "0" mark in the participation grade, and restricted access to facilities.
<b>PARTICIPATION/PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR:</b>
Students are expected to demonstrate a professional attitude and behaviour towards their work, fellow-students, and their instructor. Students should demonstrate reliability, respect for and co-operation with colleagues. A willingness to work calmly and courteously under difficult conditions as well as a determination to achieve first-class work while meeting deadlines is necessary in this course. Students should have respect for equipment and systems, and a constructive response to criticism.
<b>EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:</b>
Students should familiarize themselves with emergency procedures posted in the classroom.