

FEATURE FILM DEVELOPMENT

Spring 2010, THURS. 6:00-9:00pm

Prof. Ira Deutchman: Phone: (212) 245-6767, email: id3@columbia.edu

Office hours: appointments available before class or through phone # above

Class #	Date	Subject of Lecture (6-7:30pm)	Workshop (7:45-9 pm)
1	1/28	Introduction – Fundamentals of Pitching	Log Line Pitches & Script Swap
2	2/4	Option Deals, Copyrights and Chain of Title (full 3 hour session)	
3	2/11	Writing and reading Coverage	Short synopsis due & discussed in class
4	2/18	When is your script ready?/The notes process	Coverage due in class, oral script notes discussed
5	2/25	Working with Writers	Oral script notes discussed
6	3/4	Agents/Representation	Pitching Sessions
7	3/11	The Selling Process	Pitching Sessions
*	3/18	NO CLASS- Spring Break	
8	3/25	Development Hell: The studio process	Pitching Sessions
9	4/1	The Independent Model	Pitching Sessions
10	4/8	Working in Television: The Writer/Producer	Repeat Pitching Sessions
11	4/15	Current Trends – What Sells?	Repeat Pitching Sessions
12	4/22	Documentary Development	Repeat Pitching Sessions
13	4/29	Working with the Writers Guild	Repeat Pitching Sessions
14	5/6	Wrap up	(Pitching session if needed)
*	5/13	Possible makeup session	

Course Requirements:

You must complete the Short synopsis, the coverage and the pitching project in order to get credit for the course. Attendance in class is required. Two absences will result in an F for the class.

Project:

- Each student will bring to class a feature film project that they have written or have access to. They will pitch the log lines of those projects in the first class, and there will be a swap among the students to have someone else's project to base their semester-long work on.
- A written short synopsis will be due in the 3rd session, and the students should be prepared to discuss them in class.
- Coverage of the projects will be due in class in the 4th session, and students should be prepared to discuss problems with their scripts in class.
- Starting in the 6th session, each student will pitch their project to the class, as if we were potential financiers, co-producers or other potential participants. Feedback and class discussion will follow each pitch. Based on the feedback, the students should refine their pitch and be prepared to re-pitch it to the class starting in the 10th session.

Grading: Grades will be Pass or Fail for Arts students and letter grades for those from other schools. Incompletes and CPs will not be given except under dire circumstances.

Required Reading:

- *Weekly or Daily Variety* available on most newsstands or by home delivery, or on-line

- *Adventures in the Screen Trade*, by William Goldman
- *Clearance & Copyright : Everything the Independent Filmmaker Needs to Know* by Michael C. Donaldson
- *The Independent Film Producer's Survival Guide* by Gunnar Erickson, Harris Tulchin and Mark Halloran

Suggested Viewing:

- *The Player*
- *The Big Picture*