

Columbia University
Film Producing - Case Studies
Fall 2011
Pamela Koffler - Killer Films
pk@killerfilms.com
Thursday 6-9pm

Reading/viewing: watch "Mildred Pierce" 5-part mini-series
Part 1 by Sept. 15
Part 2 by Sept. 22
Part 3 by Oct. 6
Parts 4/5 by Oct. 13th
optional: read scripts for "Mildred Pierce"
optional: read Mildred Pierce the novel by James M. Cain

watch "Then She Found Me" feature film directed by Helen Hunt
by Nov. 17th
optional read script for "Then She Found Me"
optional read the novel "Then She Found Me" on which film was
based

Business of Film -- read chapter by David Putnam by Dec. 1

class by class hand-outs of budgets, contracts, schedules, legal
documents, press notes, etc.

Overview: We will discuss the case study of the production of "Mildred Pierce"
the 5-part miniseries for HBO. Over the course of the semester we will touch on all the
aspects of the series' creation from development and underlying rights to budgeting,
pre-production, production design, casting, music, post-production and marketing. By
examining the specific challenges and tasks of producing the mini-series, we will
explore the generalities of what it is to successfully produce a film project.

Additionally, we will break into smaller groups and each group will select a favorite film
and re-imagine that film as a smaller budget project. Over the course of the semester,
each group will create a pitch for the reconceived film, a production budget and an oral
presentation for the class outlining the approach for each stage of the smaller budgeted
production (re-writing, casting, budgeting, shooting, post production) This exercise is
meant to examine the role of the producer in shaping a project and it's place in the
market.

Guest speakers will be brought in to discuss their contributions to the production
process on Mildred Pierce and Then She Found Me.

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- Sept 8th Overview of class
General discussion of producing in today's marketplace
Begin discussion of development/writing of Mildred Pierce
- Sept 15th Production legal - guest Paul Brennan, entertainment lawyer

choose production teams and choose films for the "re-conceiving"
exercise
- Sept. 22nd Production Design on Mildred Pierce - Mark Friedberg guest

Discuss proposed films and start the re-imaging process
- Oct. 6 Physical Production of Mildred Pierce
Guest - Ilene Landress, co-producer

Project: Discuss production budgeting challenges
- Oct. 13 Music of Mildred Pierce - Randall Poster guest music supervisor

Project: Hand in draft of production budget
- Oct. 20 Production Management of Mildred Pierce
In the Trenches
Guest - Harvery Waldman production manager
discuss Unions, guilds, SAG, crews, schedules, bonds
- Oct. 27 Post Production on Mildred Pierce- Kendall McCarthy post
supervisor guest

Project: production budget discussions in class
- Nov. 3 Marketing - guest from HBO Marketing dept.

Project: Hand in second budget

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- Nov. 10 Mildred Pierce Casting - guest Laura Rosenthal

Project: Budget discussions in class
- Nov. 17th Then She Found Me - - more case studies discussions

Project: hand in second budget revisions
- Dec. 1 st Presentations and pitches for small group projects
- Dec 8 Presentations and pitches for small group projects