

The Producer's Craft – Schedule

Day One — Where Stories Come From: IP, Rights & Story Development

Time	Session	Details
9:00 – 9:30	Welcome & The Producer's Mindset <i>Discussion</i>	Introductions and seminar goals, plus a warm-up conversation: what does a producer actually do, and how does that change depending on who owns the underlying rights? Frames development as a producer's job, not just a studio executive's.
9:30 – 10:15	The IP Landscape: Where Stories Really Come From <i>Lecture</i>	A tour of the sources producers mine for material — novels and short fiction, journalism and true crime, comics and graphic novels, podcasts, video games, life rights, and format/remake rights. Why journalism and nonfiction have become a scalable IP category in their own right.
10:15 – 10:30	Break	
10:30 – 11:15	Rights & Deal Basics: Options, Life Rights & Chain of Title <i>Lecture + Case Study</i>	How option and purchase agreements work in practice — term, price, turnaround, reversion — and why a clean chain of title can make or break a deal. Case study: packaging and selling a New York Times story to Tom Cruise and Paramount, then signing the paper itself.
11:15 – 12:15	Exercise: Rights Triage <i>Small-Group Exercise</i>	Each team receives a stack of real headlines, articles, and loglines. In 45 minutes they choose one, build the case for why it's optionable IP, and structure a one-page hypothetical deal (price, term, attached elements). Teams pitch their deal to the room for rapid-fire notes.
12:15 – 1:15	Lunch	
1:15 – 2:00	Packaging 101: Attaching Talent & Why It Drives Greenlights <i>Lecture</i>	Why a producer's job is often less about writing checks and more about assembly — writer, director, cast, financier — and how each attachment changes a project's value and risk. Agency packaging vs. independent producing vs. tech-enabled marketplaces.
2:00 – 2:45	Exercise: Elevator Pitch Bootcamp <i>Exercise</i>	Each student pitches a piece of IP — assigned or their own — in 90 seconds to a 'buyer panel' of instructor and peers. The panel responds in character: pass, option, or 'come back with X.' Fast, high-repetition pitch training.
2:45 – 3:00	Break	
3:00 – 3:45	Deal Structures & Money: Negotiating with Authors, Journalists & Agents <i>Lecture + Discussion</i>	What backend, credit, and reversion actually mean at the negotiating table, and how to negotiate fairly with the person whose life or work you're optioning — often a first-time deal-maker with very different incentives than a studio.

Time	Session	Details
3:45 – 4:30	Adaptation Case Studies: Journalism, True Crime, Books & Podcasts <i>Group Discussion</i>	A working session analyzing real adaptations across formats — what made the source material work on screen, what changed, and why. Students bring a favorite adaptation to defend or critique.
4:30 – 5:00	Day 1 Wrap: Common IP Mistakes New Producers Make <i>Discussion</i>	Instructor debrief on the most common rights and development mistakes early-career producers make, open Q&A, and a preview of Day 2.

Day Two — On the Ground: Producing in Motion

Time	Session	Details
9:00 – 9:15	Recap & Framing: From Page to Set <i>Discussion</i>	Quick recap of Day 1 and a reframe: once IP is secured and packaged, the producer's job shifts to logistics, people, and money under pressure.
9:15 – 10:00	Preproduction Fundamentals: Budget, Schedule & Above/Below-the-Line <i>Lecture</i>	A working producer's crash course in top-sheet budgeting, one-liner and stripboard scheduling, and the above-the-line/below-the-line divide — enough fluency to sit in and run a real prep meeting.
10:00 – 10:45	The Producer's Toolkit: Call Sheets, DOOD & Chain of Command <i>Lecture + Workshop</i>	How a call sheet and day-out-of-days actually get built, who reports to whom on a set, and how a producer reads these documents to spot problems before they happen.
10:45 – 11:00	Break	
11:00 – 12:30	ROLE-PLAY BLOCK 1: The Set Fire Drill <i>Rotating Hot-Seat Simulation</i>	On-your-feet simulation. One student sits in the 'producer' hot seat and faces a rapid sequence of real on-set crises — actor no-show, weather day, safety incident, budget overage, an angry financier on the phone — played live by the instructor and volunteers. The seat rotates every 3–4 minutes so most of the class gets a turn; the group debriefs after each round.
12:30 – 1:30	Lunch	
1:30 – 2:30	ROLE-PLAY BLOCK 2: Mock Production Meeting <i>Team Role-Play</i>	Teams are assigned roles — line producer, UPM, 1st AD, director, financier rep — for a short scene with a built-in scheduling and budget conflict. Teams run a live prep meeting to solve it, then present their solution and defend it under questioning.
2:30 – 2:45	Break	

Time	Session	Details
2:45 – 3:15	Working the Room: Directors, Talent, Financiers & Diplomacy Under Pressure <i>Discussion + Case Study</i>	How a producer manages competing agendas — creative, financial, and personal — without losing the relationship or the schedule. Drawn from real negotiation and set experience.
3:15 – 3:45	After the Shoot: Post, Festivals, Sales & Distribution <i>Lecture</i>	What happens after wrap — post workflow and delivery, festival strategy, and how a finished project actually gets sold and distributed.
3:45 – 4:45	Capstone: The Greenlight Pitch <i>Team Exercise + Role-Play</i>	Teams combine both days: starting from a piece of IP, they build a short pitch covering the story, the attached elements, and a bare-bones production plan (budget tier, schedule, key risks). Each team pitches to a mock 'greenlight committee' (instructor + guests) and fields real questions.
4:45 – 5:00	Wrap-Up: Takeaways, Resource List & Next Steps <i>Discussion</i>	Closing thoughts, a leave-behind resource list, and how to keep building a producer's network and reputation after the seminar ends.