

FA 342 MARKETING MOVIES IN TODAY'S HOLLYWOOD- Spring 2006

Location: Loop Campus, Wednesdays, 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., March 29 through June 7
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Course Description

The course will be an entertaining and insightful look into how the current movie business operates, concentrating on what drives the marketing of both studio and independent films and the marketing techniques utilized. The course will begin by examining how students can apply the basic fundamentals inherent in movie marketing to better market themselves and their careers in today's world. Marketing topics include how to create buzz for your project, the process of what's involved in the creative and economic decision making process, creating posters and trailers on a budget, the cost of buying media, the creation of web-sites and how new technologies are bringing dramatic change to the motion picture industry

About the Instructor

David Sikich is a lifelong resident of Chicago who graduated from Columbia College in 1972 with a Bachelors of Art in Film. The year 2006 marks his 33rd year working in the Film Industry. He began his career in 1973 managing movie theatres, then spent the next twenty years in film distribution, including ten years as head of the Chicago Branch Office for Orion Pictures. In 1993, he joined forces with John Iltis Associates to form Iltis Sikich Associates, a producers rep firm established to help independent filmmakers market and find distribution for their films.

"Hoop Dreams" became their first success in 1994 when they helped the local documentary achieve national prominence and the following year they distributed the documentary "Tie-Died: Rock n' Roll's Most Deadicated Fans" under the banner of ISA Releasing. Recently ISA marketed and distributed the Chicago independent film "Lana's Rain." In addition to always being on the look-out for small, quality films to help take to the next level, Sikich books films for the Town Theatre in Highland, Indiana.

Competencies Offered

A-5 Can define and analyze a creative process by being able to identify the key elements involved in creating a motion picture campaign. One way to accomplish this is to do a case study of at least one studio film or one independent film currently in release or set to open and discuss the strategy and execution that defines the distributor's creative approach in selling the film.

H-1-C Can explain the emergence, maintenance, or evolution of an economic or political system. Different examples are: analyze the evolution of the marketplace from one mass movie market to many niche markets: the role of audience research studies in determining what movies the public sees; the role of film critics and the media and its effect on boxoffice; the politics and purpose of film festivals; and the emergence of the American Independent Film Industry over the last 20 years.

H-4 Can analyze power relations among racial, social, cultural or economic groups in the United States. Discuss the challenges and strategies of marketing to one of the niche markets such as African-American, Hispanic, Teen, Art Specialty, Gay/Lesbian, etc. and the perceptions that Hollywood has of these groups and the methods distributors use to reach these audiences.

F-X Can create the mechanism and structure of a marketing campaign for a project you may be associated with or you can create one from scratch. Any pure creative venture you are interested in regarding the marketing process is encouraged, including creating your own website.

The Learning Experience

Each week we will start the class by discussing the new films that are opening in Chicago and any hot topics coming out of Hollywood. You will be asked to focus your attention on each of the new releases by being aware of these films, what the ads look like and what the critics are saying about them so you will be able to offer your opinions on them. In this regard, you are required to read the Friday Tribune or Sun-Times movie section and bring it to each class so you can be prepared to discuss what movies are playing and being marketed to the public. The class sessions will be a combination of lectures and group discussions in an effort

- To acquaint you with the workings of today's motion picture marketing techniques and practices and

how they work together with distribution in attracting audiences to see movies in a number of different mediums.

- To educate any of you who may aspire to work in the movie industry by showing you how the business works and how various marketing tools are created.
- To give you an understanding of the emergence and maintenance of the motion picture marketing infrastructure and how it has evolved into multiple niche markets over the years.
- To inspire the class as moviegoers to question and recognize the role the media plays in determining what movies you are influenced to see.
- To supply basic fundamentals of marketing that can be applied to students' lives and careers.

Textbooks and Other Required Reading Materials

- Marketing to Moviegoers: A Handbook of Strategies Used by Major Studios and Independents by Robert Marich
- Various articles and handouts to be distributed in class.
- Outside readings that will be necessary to complete a final paper specifically tailored to the competency you have chosen. A separate listing of books and resources is attached to the back of this syllabus.
- Each weekend's Tribune or Sun-Times movie section.

Attendance and Participation

A portion of the final grade is based upon class attendance and participation. You need to attend class regularly to make this course a meaningful and rewarding experience for you. If you miss more than two class sessions, you will not be eligible for a passing grade, and you will be asked to drop the course.

It is expected that you to come to class on time prepared to participate in discussions concerning current films playing, articles you may have read outside of class, and previous lectures and readings. You are also expected to attend the full class session each week.

There will be no Incomplete Grades allowed in this class. If you choose to take the course on a Pass/Fail basis, please let me know early in the course.

Assignments and Tests

- A Final Paper tailored to your interests and relating to the competencies you've selected. The paper should be 7-9 pages in length for one competency, 12 – 14 pages for two competencies. Outside reading will be necessary and an Outline for your paper with a minimum of three references should be handed in by the 5th class on April 26.
- Two smaller writing assignments.
- A Take Home Final-Exam handed out May 31 and due on June 7.

Grading & Assessment

Grading will be determined in the following manner:

50% Final Paper

30% Final Exam

10% Other Writing Assignments

10% Class Attendance and Participation

For the writing assignments, you will be graded on your ability to clearly organize the content of the papers in a cohesive manner by incorporating information gathered in class discussions, course readings, personal experience and outside readings. Your ability to communicate your own ideas, insights and observations on the topic about which you are writing is crucial to evaluating your work. For the Final Paper, you will be required to make a short oral presentation of your work which will play a part in your final grade. Appropriate documentation of outside sources is required for this paper.

Policy on Plagiarism

Students are expected to observe the University's established guidelines regarding academic integrity, including the following statement regarding plagiarism, as quoted from the University's "Handbook for

Undergraduate Studies”:

Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one’s own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgement that is someone else’s.

Copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with acknowledgement.

Submitting as one’s own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.

The paraphrasing of another’s work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.

Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If an instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor’s discretion. Actions taken by the instructor do not preclude the College or the university taking further punitive action including dismissal from the University.

Class Schedule

March 29

Introduction to class; Where the Movie Industry is today; discussion of current films and movie going habits; what is marketing and why is it important? Defining key marketing terms and how they can apply to your own lives and careers.

April 5

Marketing independent films: how buzz is created; finding the right hook and defining your target audience; how to conceptualize and bring order to your ideas; creating an identity for the film and choosing a brand message.

April 12

Where publicity fits in today’s marketing puzzle; how to write a press release and put together a press kit; the strategy of creating awareness through the media and figuring out what’s newsworthy.

April 19

The high cost of movie advertising; deciding where to put the money; establishing objectives and strategies; setting advertising budgets; working with advertising agencies; reaching audiences in a fragmented and segmented universe.

April 26

The film industry and market research; the use of focus groups and tracking studies; the high concept film – giving the public what they want, but at what expense? How to conduct low cost research. **Outline for Final Paper Due.**

May 3

Coming attraction trailers; advertising boutiques; different styles of trailers will be shown during class; merchandising and product placement in movies; movie theatre advertising

May 10

Movie posters: classic tag lines, finding the right key images; costs involved in producing marketing materials. Many different styles of movie posters will be presented. Creating flyers and post cards.

May 17

How a movie website is created, the rising use of the internet in promoting a movie. Other more traditional movie promotions will also be discussed. GUEST SPEAKER

May 24

Oral presentation and discussion of Final Papers.

May 31

Oral Presentation and discussion of Final Papers. **Take Home Final Exam handed out.**

June 7

Final Exam returned; all Final Papers due by this date; final comments

Recommended Reading List

Movie Marketing: Opening a Picture and Giving it Legs Tiuu Luk

Open Wide: How Hollywood Boxoffice Became a National Obsession Dade Hayes

The Complete Independent Movie Marketing Handbook Mark Steven Bosko

Reel Exposure Steve Rubin

Immediate Seating: A Look at Movie Audiences Bruce A. Austin

High Concept, Movies and Marketing in Hollywood Justin Wyatt

Movie Wars: How Hollywood and the Media conspire to Limit What Films We Can See Jonathan Rosenbaum

Motion Picture Marketing and Distribution Fred Goldberg

Film and Video Marketing Michael Wiese

Step Right UP! I'm Gonna Scare the Pants Off America William Castle

The Gross Peter Bart

The Anatomy of Buzz: How to Create Word of Mouth Marketing Emanuel Rosen

A Separate Cinema: 50 Years of Black Cast Posters John Kisch & Edward Mapp

Marketing and Selling Your Film Around the World John Durie & Annika Pham

Off Hollywood: The Making and Marketing of Independent Films David Rose

Down & Dirty Pictures: Miramax, Sundance and the Rise of Independent Film Peter Biskind

Full Frontal PR: How To Get People Talking About You, Your Business or Your Product Richard Laermer

Periodicals:

Variety, Hollywood Reporter, Filmmaker Magazine, Entertainment Weekly, Premiere Magazine, USA Today, Wall Street Journal, Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times

Internet:

Indiewire.com

Eonline.com

IFP.org

Variety.com

Boxofficemojo.com

Moviestynews.com