

## Commerce 3J03 The Business of Entertainment Winter 2021 Course Outline

### DeGroote School of Business McMaster University

#### COURSE OBJECTIVE

Today's business environment presents graduates with increasingly complex problems, opportunities, and the ongoing need for current imaginative, out-of-the-box information, tools, and a restructured style to effectively work with customers, competitors, and markets that rely on the new, varied aspects of media in which they operate.

This course will: Prepare and equip students with practical tools and a realistic understanding why every business needs to think like an entertainment company.

Steer the student through the techniques used throughout the competitive Hollywood and international film and television industry that are essential for real world success across any business platform.

Successfully identify and navigate 'real life' obstacles all business students will face day-to-day using imaginative modes of creativity specific to the entertainment industry.

Students will learn how the high-level, competitive, Hollywood entertainment machine truly works in real time, today.

#### INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

**Instructor**  
Harris Goldberg  
[goldbh2@mcmaster.ca](mailto:goldbh2@mcmaster.ca)

**Teaching Assistant**  
TBD  
Email

I am your professor, Harris Goldberg. You will find everything to do with the course here. You can also learn more about my background in the Hollywood film and television industry these past thirty years from the links and attachments below.

Hollywood Reporter: [Common to Star in Revenge Thriller 'Quick Draw'](#)

Chicago Tribune: [Common to star in revenge action-thriller 'Quick Draw'](#)

"Numb" #13: [30 Most Underrated American Movies of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century](#)

NPR: [Matthew Perry, Going Uncomfortably 'Numb'](#)

YouTube: [Matthew Perry and Harris Goldberg talk "Numb"](#)

Wikipedia: [Harris Goldberg](#)

Sizzle Reel: [Harris/Director](#)

The List – News: [Harris Goldberg Puts ‘The List’ Into Production](#)

[Patrick Fugit to Star in ‘The List’](#)

## COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value: 3	Leadership: Yes	IT Skills: Yes	Global View: Yes
Avenue: Yes	Ethics: Yes	Numeracy: Yes	Written Skills: Yes
Participation: Yes	Innovation: Yes	Group Work: Yes	Oral Skills: Yes
Evidence-based: Yes	Experiential: No	Final Exam: No	Guest Speaker(s): Yes

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

In a nutshell, the course will peel away the layers of perception outside the industry to reveal the core realities inside the industry.

### THIS COURSE WILL:

- Prepare and equip students with practical tools and a realistic understanding...why every business needs to think like an entertainment company.
- Steer the student through the techniques used throughout the competitive Hollywood and international FILM & TELEVISION industry that are essential for real world success across any business platform.
- Successfully identify and navigate ‘real-life’ obstacles all business students will face day-to-day using imaginative modes of creativity specific to the entertainment industry.
- Students will learn how the high-level, competitive, Hollywood entertainment machine truly works in real-time. Today.
- They will be introduced to the good, the bad and the ugly of the industry from someone who has lived it, survived it, succeeded in it.

### BY THE END OF THIS COURSE STUDENTS WILL:

- Acquire the basic understanding of a business career within the television and feature film world that will apply to whatever business venture they enter.
- Understand how to find and create stories and ideas, (i.e. business content), to enhance sell, pitch and brand in today’s complex, commercial marketplace.
- Acquire and demonstrate a good understanding to convey new ideas, new methods of interaction and how to present this content in a business world where entertainment media is an integral part of business growth.
- Learn to develop a critical dialogue through group discussions and online class interactions.
- Understand the historical and contemporary practice of entertainment content in order to contextualize and locate their own interests, style and practice in contemporary business.

- **The next great content convergence** will prove even more revolutionary, bringing together a host of next-generation technologies such as virtual and augmented reality, AI, the internet of things, and haptic, multi-sensory, and interactive technologies. How will these apply to business?
- **Virtualization:** In a physical world of scarcity and distance, discussing the power of making being there online a reality.
- **Forming virtual communities:** How to effectively work online. Immersive technologies will increasingly combine elements of community and real-time business interaction.
- **Discovery:** Today consumer search and comparison shopping are still largely considered a time-consuming chore. But the next great content convergence will enable much more stimulating ways for consumers to explore new products, services, and locations.
- **Imagination and storytelling:** If a picture is worth a thousand words, then how much more powerful must be the combination of sight, sound, touch, and agency that virtualization brings.
- **Learning from the World of Entertainment:** To be successful in this world, companies will need to think much more like an entertainer than a producer or retailer. What should they keep in mind?
- **Have the best material:** How to forge the right partnerships—with media companies, production, and design—to create the immersive experiences consumers will demand.
- **Get people talking:** Successful entertainment generates a buzz—it gets people excited about what’s coming next. Similarly, companies will need to combine elements of storytelling, real-time feedback, and sensory experiences to capture the attention of consumers in immersive environments.
- **How to know your audience:** In many markets, consumers are likely to become divided into the active, immersive users of content and those who are content to remain passive spectators. Will your audience want to just watch or take part?
- Entertainment can be more powerful than cold efficiency. In an age defined by immersive and interactive experiences, how will your company win the crowd?
- Why entertaining customers should be part of every business.

Are You Not Entertained? Exploring the Increasing Importance of Entertainment in Developing Relationships with Customers.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to complete the following key tasks:

- Acquire the basic understanding of a business career within the television and feature film world that will apply to whatever business venture they enter.
- Understand how to find and create stories and ideas, (i.e. business content), to enhance sell, pitch and brand in today’s complex, commercial marketplace.
- Acquire and demonstrate a good understanding to convey new ideas, new methods of interaction and how to present this content in a business world where entertainment media is an integral part of business growth.
- Learn to develop a critical dialogue through group discussions and online class interactions.
- Understand the historical and contemporary practice of entertainment content in order to contextualize and locate their own interests, style, and practice in contemporary business.

- The next great content convergence will prove even more revolutionary, bringing together a host of next-generation technologies such as virtual and augmented reality, AI, the internet of things, and haptic, multi-sensory and interactive technologies. How will these apply to business?
- Virtualisation. In a physical world of scarcity and distance, discussing the power of making being there online a reality.
- Forming virtual communities: How to effectively work online. Immersive technologies will increasingly combine elements of community and real-time business interaction.
- Discovery: Today consumer search and comparison shopping are still largely considered a time-consuming chore. But the next great content convergence will enable much more stimulating ways for consumers to explore new products, services, and locations.
- Imagination and storytelling: If a picture is worth a thousand words, then how much more powerful must be the combination of sight, sound, touch, and agency that virtualisation brings.
- Learning from the World of Entertainment: To be successful in this world, companies will need to think much more like an entertainer than a producer or retailer. What should they keep in mind?
- Have the best material: How to forge the right partnerships—with media companies, production, and design—to create the immersive experiences consumers will demand.
- Get people talking: Successful entertainment generates a buzz—it gets people excited about what is coming next. Similarly, companies will need to combine elements of storytelling, real-time feedback, and sensory experiences to capture the attention of consumers in immersive environments.
- How to know your audience: In many markets, consumers are likely to become divided into the active, immersive users of content and those who are content to remain passive spectators. Will your audience want to just watch or take part?
- Entertainment can be more powerful than cold efficiency. In an age defined by immersive and interactive experiences, how will your company win the crowd?
- Why entertaining customers should be part of every business.
- Are You Not Entertained? Exploring the Increasing Importance of Entertainment in Developing Relationships with Customers

**COURSE OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT**

ACTIVITY	DELIVERY	DESCRIPTION	TOOL(S)
<b>Lecture Core Content</b>	Asynchronous	Recorded lecture videos (~10 minutes each)	Voiceover PPT in Echo360
<b>Readings</b>	Asynchronous	Tied to weekly discussion prompts	Readings linked in Avenue, from Course Pack, or in Assigned Textbook
<b>Tutorials</b>	Synchronous	1-hour live sessions with TA Discuss readings and participate	Zoom or WebEx
<b>Group Discussions</b>	Asynchronous & Synchronous	Synchronous: Breakout rooms during lecture Asynchronous: Microsoft Teams private groups	Synchronous: Zoom or WebEx Asynchronous: Microsoft Teams
<b>Live Lectures</b>	Synchronous	1-hour live session Opportunity to elaborate on content, present challenges, and engage discussion	Zoom or WebEx - will be recorded

**COURSE DELIVERABLES**

**COURSE WEIGHT**

**Participation** **20%**

**Assignments (Business Loglines)**  
2 at 20% each  
(Due in Dropbox) **40%**

**Verbal Pitch**  
2 at 20% each  
(Due during term) **40%**

**DETAILS**

(20%) PARTICIPATION: During each online lecture/discussion, students must respond regularly over the term in verbal form.

A student's FULL name must be displayed in their ZOOM profile and will be used to help give credit for participation. Students MUST always attend the same section in this course. If students continue to switch sections throughout the term, they will NOT be guaranteed any participation marks for those classes attended in other sections.

Attendance does NOT constitute participation. However, 100% attendance for each and every class is MANDATORY. All students must have their webcam VIDEO turned on, and MICROPHONE muted during ZOOM classes. When participating, students can UNMUTE themselves.

Students MUST adhere to proper ZOOM etiquette at all times during a virtual session.

Effective communication is a prerequisite to success in the business world. For that reason all marks in this course will be based on both the substance of your work and the quality of your written and oral communication. Particularly poor communication could result in a reduction in your overall final mark as great as one or two letter.

(20%) ASSIGNMENT 1: Business Pitch. Create an original business idea (max 2 sentences) that would make a great movie idea. This assignment helps the student develop the ability to come up with an original idea that can compete in the commercial marketplace. It will also test the ability to make a convincing argument in favor of this proposed idea.

(20%) BE EXPECTED TO PITCH THE IDEA IN CLASS.

(20%) ASSIGNMENT 2: Create a business pitch/story with a partner.

(20%) BE EXPECTED TO PITCH THE IDEA IN CLASS.

### COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. Emails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Area Administrative Assistants. All students must receive feedback regarding their progress prior to the final date by which a student may cancel the course without failure by default.

- *For Level 3 courses and above, this feedback must equal a minimum of 10% of the final grade.*

Instructors may solicit feedback via an informal course review with students by Week #4 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery.

### REQUESTING RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work” and the link below:

<http://ug.degroot.mcmaster.ca/forms-and-resources/missed-course-work-policy/>

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on

an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained
- improper collaboration in group work
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

### **AUTHENTICITY/PLAGIARISM DETECTION**

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster’s use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

### **COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT**

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course.

The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

## ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

## CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

## ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

## ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS, OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

## EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

## RESEARCH USING HUMAN SUBJECTS

All researchers conducting research that involves human participants, their records or their biological material are required to receive approval from one of McMaster's Research Ethics Boards before (a) they can recruit participants and (b) collect or access their data. Failure to comply with relevant policies is a research misconduct matter. Contact these boards for further information about your requirements and the application process.

McMaster Research Ethics Board (General board): <https://reo.mcmaster.ca/>

Hamilton Integrated Research Ethics Board (Medical board): <http://www.hireb.ca/>

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your enrolment in Commerce 3J03 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.**

Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

WEEK	WEEK OF:	TOPIC	DESCRIPTION
1	Jan. 13	The Crucial Idea	<p>Why this is the single most important tool in your arsenal.</p> <p>What makes a sellable idea?</p> <p>Who decides if it is sellable?</p> <p>What is sellable anyway and why?</p> <p>Where do you find your idea?</p> <p>Inspiration versus perspiration: Why both are essential.</p> <p>Protect your idea. What the studios and every producer do not want you to know.</p> <p>What really is a treatment for your idea, and do you really need one?</p> <p>How to turn your great idea into a sellable pitch.</p> <p>What is a pitch? Why selling your idea is as important as the idea itself?</p> <p>How to sell your idea without getting screwed.</p>
2	Jan. 20	What Part of the Business do you Love: Are you Sure?	<p>So, you want to be a Producer. Are you sure?</p> <p>So, you want to be a Director. Are you sure?</p> <p>So, you want to be a Writer. Are you REALLY sure?</p> <p>So, you want to be an executive: You better be sure.</p> <p>How to deal with each of the above.</p>
3	Jan. 27	Development and Finance – the Money behind Creativity	<p>How studios, networks, streaming services, production companies, foreign buyers and agencies really work.</p> <p>What they really do not want you to know.</p> <p>How the distribution of film and television really work: Everything you will ever need or want to know.</p> <p>Broadcast television versus cable television/streaming services and what that means in the big picture.</p> <p>Theatrical films versus non-theatrical films versus studio films versus independent films and the future of how the world will watch them all.</p> <p>Money. Where do you find it? Do you really want it from the studios, private finance, presales, banks, gap funding, or public investment? You better know.</p>
4	Feb. 3	Script Development: Why Nobody Reads	<p>Finding the perfect writer if you are not writing yourself.</p> <p>How to work successfully with a writer especially if it is yourself.</p> <p>How to grab them in five seconds.</p> <p>The art of the draft: The blueprint for EVERYTHING.</p> <p>The art of revision: Giving, taking, and fighting moronic notes. What wars to wage, why and when?</p> <p>The final draft: Sending your baby into the marketplace without getting eaten alive.</p>
5	Feb. 10	Agencies, Managers, and Lawyers	<p>Why everyone hates agents, managers, and lawyers yet desperately want one of each.</p> <p>What an agent, manager and lawyer really do.</p>

			How to work with, manipulate, and not want to murder your agent, manager, and lawyer.
<b>READING WEEK</b>			
6	Feb. 24	Packaging Financing	<b>Packaging</b> What the heck is packaging and what every agency does not want you know about it. Do I really need talent attached? Can't the material speak for itself? How do I make my package stand out? <b>Financing</b> You mean the studios do not put up all the money? How to understand your budget. How to navigate your production schedule.
7	Mar. 3	Pre- Production: The Real Deal	Casting: Why it is EVERYTHING... almost. Production design: So that is why it looks believable. Special effects planning: Not another green screen. Who is that person and what do they really do?
8	Mar. 10	The Shoot	1st day of principal photography: It is really happening. Camera: How to navigate film versus digital and everything in between. Lighting and sound: How much is enough to know? Acting: How to understand and control these mercurial creatures we all pay to see. Chain of command: Who does what and why.
9	Mar. 17	Post- Production: Oh My God. I Never Knew.	Rough-cut: How to turn coal into a diamond. Post-production sound: What are you listening for? Digital effects and titles: How to save a fortune? Grade and color: Here are all you need to know and why. Final mix: The most important technical factor in film and television. Final cut: Is this ready for the world?
10	Mar. 24	Sales	Selling the product: Who, what, where, when, and why. The trailer: How to grab fast and furiously. Taking the film to market: We are not in Loblaws anymore. Screenings: The scariest moment you will ever face and why. Closing the deal: The second scariest moment you will ever face and why.
11	Mar. 31	Marketing	The marketing team: Can I trust anyone? The audience: Can I trust anyone? Advertising: Can I trust anyone? Press and media coverage: The world we live in. The Internet and new marketing models: You want me to what? Selling the film to distributors: I definitely cannot trust them.
12	Apr. 7	Exhibition	The premiere: Where, why, and how. Box office performance: Your future depends on it and why.

			Revenues and recoupment: You better know this part.
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### **OTHER WINDOWS**

DVD, video, streaming, airlines, and broadcast: No wonder all these people are rich.

Profit: Everyone is out to steal it away from you. Do not let them.

Divided into 12 areas. One week on each. A test will be administered at the end of each heading, a pass or fail given toward overall grade.