

PRODUCING CONCENTRATION FAQs

Q: If I am not a Producer, can I take the 2nd year Producing Classes?

A: That depends. You will no longer HAVE to take the classes. However, it is unlikely that you would be able to get into all of them as a non-Producer. Business of Film is a large lecture class and easy to get into. The smaller workshops are more difficult. The number of non-Producers let in each semester depends on the number of Producing Concentrates (and thus the number of open slots.) As a Writer/Director, there is no guarantee that you will be able to take any of the Producing Classes.

Q: If I am a Producer, can I take Directing? Do I have to?

A: Yes. You can take Directing 3/4 if you wish. You are not required to take any further Directing. The section you can be assigned to will be limited because some sections conflict with required producing classes.

Q: If I am a Producer, can I take Screenwriting? Do I have to?

A: Yes. You can take Screenwriting 3/4 if you wish. You are not required to take any further Screenwriting. The section you can be assigned to will be limited because some sections conflict with required producing classes.

Q: If I am a Producer, can I take Directing the Actor?

A: Yes, but it is not guaranteed. Unlike Screenwriting and Directing (which are available for all Film Students to take), Directing the Actor is limited in the number of sections and students. Producers (and Screenwriters) have taken it in the past, but they are not given priority -- so a Producer may not get into the class or may not get their first choice teacher. Directors have priority for and must take this elective (like Producers have priority for and must take the Producing Classes.)

Q: If I am a Producer, can I take TV Writing? Comedy Writing? Cinematography? Character? (Add any other elective here.)

A: Yes. You can take any elective (unless Hannah tells you otherwise), but you are only given priority for the Producing Classes. All electives give priority to the students in the concentration for which it was designed. Producers do get into many electives.

Q: What are the required 2nd Year Producing Classes?

A: Pre-Production of a Motion Picture, The Business of Film, Financing/Development Seminar, Film Producing, No-Budget Filmmaking, Producing Thesis Advisement.

Q: What do I have to do to graduate as a Producer?

A: In simple terms, you must: 1) have enough credits and fulfill all Film Div. requirements; 2) pass all required Producing classes; 3) work on two films, Dir. 3 or above, in some sort of producing/production capacity (YOUR Non-Thesis films); 4) do an approved industry internship; 5) be the sole producer (with the only Producer screen credit) of an approved project (YOUR Thesis film); 6) present and defend your Thesis in front of select Producing faculty and students.

Q: I'm confused. What do you mean by "producing/production capacity" on my Non-Thesis films?

A: You do not have to produce your Non-Thesis projects. But, you must be a part of the Producer's team. Line Producer, AD and Locations Manager are possibilities; AC, Craft Service and Wardrobe Asst. are not. Any questions should be run by Ira.

Q: I'm interested in Producing but also in Writing/Directing. What do I do?

A: Well, ultimately each person must make their own choice. But, don't feel like a freak -- that's natural. Columbia is a school based on the integration of the disciplines (something UCLA, USC, NYU and AFI don't do.) Many of you are undoubtedly here because of that very feature. There are Producing Concentrates who consider themselves Writer/Producers. There are others very interested in Directing. Conversely, there are Screenwriting/Directing Concentrates who take Producing Classes and produce films while at Columbia. The concentrations are not meant to limit anyone -- they are merely paths of study.

Q: As a Producer, can I direct a Non-Thesis? Can I direct two?

A: Yes. Like Screenwriting concentrates, you may direct ONE Non-Thesis (subject to the applicable Film Division requirements.) But, you may NOT direct any film that you are using towards your Producing Requirements. So, if you direct a Non-Thesis, you may produce it...but it will NOT count as one of your Producing requirements. Also, you may not direct two films at the Non-Thesis level -- only Directing Concentrates can direct a Non-Thesis and Thesis Film.

Q: Can I double-major?

A: Not technically. It is possible (fairly easy, in fact) to fulfill the requirements for any two concentrations. Ultimately your choice of concentration has to do with making sure you have fulfilled all the requirements of that concentration, and your choice of a thesis. In the long run, it really doesn't matter all that much. As a Producing Concentrate, you can emerge with three films you've produced, one film you've directed and as many screenplays as you care to write. In the real world, no one asks

what your concentration was, and it doesn't state it on your diploma. But technically, you cannot be a double concentrate (wow...that sounds like a dishwashing soap...softens hands while preparing script breakdowns....) You have to choose what you are going to call your thesis. It's painful, but you must choose. That's why you're getting all this lovely information. And one more thing...Don't even think about trying to change concentrations if you haven't taken all the required courses for the concentration you are thinking about.

Q: Does my Non-Thesis Project have to be a Non-Thesis? Or, does my Thesis project have to be a Thesis?

A: NO. Everywhere else in the Film Division, Non-Thesis and Thesis films usually refer to the DIRECTOR'S Non-Thesis/Thesis. This connotation is even used for Producers and Writers when they direct a Non-Thesis film (meaning, it's not their Thesis.) But, your Producing Non-Thesis Films and Producing Thesis Film refer only to the PRODUCER'S track. For example, a Producer's Thesis can be a Director's Non-Thesis. Or, a Producer's Non-Thesis can be a Director's Thesis. Same words. Different meanings.

Q: How do I make sure my thesis will be considered a thesis?

A: Get it approved. Before a project can be a thesis, a number of things have to happen, and they ALL must happen prior to the film being made. First, you have to have fulfilled ALL your other requirements, including submitting the paperwork for your non-thesis projects and your internship. Then you need to have an advisement meeting with Ira Deutchman to determine whether your proposed thesis fits the guidelines. If everything passes muster, your thesis proposal form will be signed, and you can move forward with the project knowing that it will be counted as your thesis once completed.

Q: Does my Producing Thesis have to go through PAB?

A: Probably. In order to qualify a film for the film festival and/or to use Columbia insurance, equipment or facilities, a film must go through PAB. There are some circumstances where you may not need Columbia facilities or don't care about the festival. In those cases, it may be possible to count as a thesis without going through PAB, but you should make sure by going through an advisement session with either Ira or Maureen.

Q: Can I produce a film by a non-Columbia director as my Producing Thesis?

A: Yes, but with limitations. In order to qualify the film for the festival, or for Columbia insurance, equipment or facilities, you need to show that it is indeed YOUR project. Requirements will include a signed contract between

you and the director guaranteeing that you are the sole producer and that you cannot under any circumstances be fired from the project. You also must put the film through the PAB process.

Q: What are graduation dates throughout the year?

A: They occur 3 times a year – October 1, February 1 and May (usually the 3rd Wednesday of the month).

Q: What are the steps I have to take to graduate?

A: You need to contact Ira Deutchman AT LEAST ONE MONTH BEFORE one of the above dates and make sure you are eligible to graduate. He will look in his files to determine that you have done the following:

- a) Two (2) Non-Thesis films
- b) One (1) Internship
- c) Received passing grades for all of your coursework
- d) Had your thesis proposal approved in advance
- e) One (1) Thesis film completed to at least a fine cut state

Q: Once I have received Ira's approval of the above, what is the next step?

A: You need to contact Maureen Ryan and let her know you plan to graduate and you need to complete your Thesis Binder and get it to the Producing office AT LEAST 2 WEEKS BEFORE the graduation date.

Q: What should the Thesis Binder include?

A: It should be in a binder with tabs for the following information:

- a) Thesis Analysis (15–20 pages double spaced)
- b) Script
- c) Budget with full actualization costs
- d) PO log for all invoices and cover sheet of all Petty Cash envelopes
- e) Production packets with all crew and cast names/numbers
- f) All Schedules
- g) All location and appearance release forms
- h) All SAG paperwork
- i) All permit paperwork
- j) All insurance paperwork
- k) All equipment paperwork
- l) Copies of headshots for all key actors

Q: What should be discussed in my Thesis Analysis?

A: Your Thesis Analysis is the heart and soul of your Thesis project. It is the culmination of all your work to date in the program and should reflect your thoughts and analysis of your work as a producer from start to finish on your thesis. Describe the important creative experiences, production

experiences and personal experiences during the producing of the project. Record insights and draw conclusions on what you learned and what you may wish to pass onto other producing students in the future. The more time you put into the narrative, the more useful it will be to you and to others. Don't leave this to the last minute. Give it the time it deserves. It should not just be a record of what happened on each shoot day and logistics. It needs to be an analysis of the film from your perspective and discuss the creative collaboration.

Q: What is the last step in the Thesis process?

A: Once you have handed in your binder, Ira and Maureen will review it and if all is in order, they will clear you for your Thesis Presentation.

Q: What is the Thesis Presentation?

A: You will screen your Thesis film for faculty and students in the Lifetime Screening Room and then share insights into the process of producing the project. Faculty and students will ask you questions about your work and the experience. After this step you will have completed all of your graduation requirements. You should present Ira with your graduation form and he and your Second Reader will sign it.

Q: Who can be my First and Second Readers?

A: Ira is the only person who can be your First Reader. Your Second Reader can be any professor you choose from the Adjunct and Full time faculty. Be sure to line up your Second Reader ahead of time so they can review your materials in time for the deadlines.

Q: What do I do with the graduation form after it is signed?

A: Ira will hand it to Hannah Lovejoy and she will do the administrative steps for you to graduate. Congratulations!