TV Ad Concepting and Production
May term 2019 Course
FILM 4301 or ADV 5301 (3 credits)

Faculty: Mark Kerins (FILM) and Mark Allen (ADV)
Class meetings: May 16-31, 2019, 11 class days total, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Location: Umphrey Lee 117 (in basement)

Course overview:
The class will create and develop short-form commercial ideas (for TV or web) for predetermined clients selected by the instructors. The class will then complete all necessary preparation for producing up to three of these concepts, shoot the necessary footage for up to five ads (i.e., one campaign of three ads and a single one-shot for two other concepts), and create rough cuts of each commercial. The focus is on real-world commercial-style production, emphasizing how to address clients’ specific needs while maintaining the creative elements of design and production.

This course broadens the education and expertise of students majoring in Film & Media Arts and/or Advertising by providing valuable, real-world-style opportunities not otherwise available through SMU. For many graduating film students, their first production jobs will be on low-budget television or web commercials, yet many of them do not have the chance to experience the peculiar elements of commercial production, where the goal is not just to make an engaging short movie but also to address the particular needs of a client. This course gives them a chance to work in this fashion and understand what it takes. For advertising students, this course is an opportunity to learn how designing and executing commercials differs from working in print, the principal focus of their college curriculum. And since few graduating seniors have professionally-done commercials in their portfolios, this course also helps these students stand out from the competition post-SMU when they are seeking their first jobs in the advertising field.

While all students will come in with some experience in Advertising or Film, most of them will have little experience working with their counterparts from the other area – despite the fact that for most of them, their careers will require this interaction throughout their careers. This course gives students practical experience and understanding about how commercial collaborations work and how to bring out the best and most creative work both in concepting and production.

Prerequisites:
In general, FILM students must have successfully completed at least Basic Video and Audio Production (FILM 1304) to enroll; priority will be given to students who have successfully completed higher-level production courses. ADV students must have successfully completed Concepting (ADV 2322) or a higher-level course in the Method Creative program. Students not meeting these requirements but wishing to enroll (particularly from other departments) may, at the sole discretion of the instructors, be granted permission to enroll.

Benefits to students:
(bullet points, 5-7)
- Students have the unique opportunity to put their training and skills to work in a format they will be expected to know after graduation
- All students will come out with completed commercials for their reels on which they were key creative contributors
- Those in the class will gain a network of colleagues across advertising/film that will help them not only while at SMU but in the professional world post-SMU
Advertising students will have the chance to see ad concepts turned into commercials and executed at a high level with professional equipment and processes.

Film students will get to practice their craft and creativity on concepts created to serve a client’s needs rather than the filmmaker’s, a crucial skill for success in the industry.

All students will gain an understanding of a different discipline and how its work relates to, enhances, and can be enhanced by their own skills and expertise.

**Course Objectives:**

By taking this course, students will:

- Gain experience developing concepts for television or web commercials.
- Improve teamwork and collaborative skills.
- Learn to develop ideas that match client priorities as detailed in a creative brief, and maintain these priorities beyond the concept through the production and post-production phases.
- Learn how to be creative in a way that still satisfies specific commercial interests.
- Learn to produce proper documentation of creative concepts in the form of taglines, treatments, storyboards, scripts, etc.
- Understand and be able to complete all pre-production, production, and post-production tasks required to turn concepts into finished ads. This will include learning technical skills, overcoming logistical challenges, and effectively and efficiently documenting and communicating ideas.
- Improve efficiency in managing time, money, and other resources.

**Faculty bios:**

Mark Kerins teaches all aspects of film/video production and post-production, from intro-level videomaking through thesis films. His particular expertise is in sound design and editing. Professionally, he has been involved in various areas of filmmaking, including directing music videos (much like commercial production in that it requires matching the desires of the client musician with the creative aims of the filmmaker), short films, and most recently a feature. He has team-taught this course four times before, and was the film mentor for the student team whose commercial for Chipotle won a national award leading to it showing on the Times Square jumbotron and on Frontier Airlines flights.

Over the course of his career, Mark Allen has worked as an art director and designer for clients like the History Channel, the New York Yankees, Norton/Symantec, Martha Stewart, The Walking Dead, A&E, American Airlines, HBO, U.S. National Parks Service, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and the Smithsonian Channel. His work has been recognized for creative excellence in the *Print Regional Design* Annual and *Applied Arts* magazine, as well as by the Promotion Marketing Association, the Illustrators Society of Los Angeles and the Dallas Society of Visual Communications. He teaches beginning and advanced advertising courses in concepiting, design, creativity, art direction and portfolio development—all of which are important aspects of compelling commercials. Under his direction, his classes have conceived, scripted, storyboarded and produced successful student commercials for clients like YETI, Lyft, Old Grandad Whiskey, Orajel and others. He previously team-taught this class in 2017.
Schedule:
• March – April 2019 – pre-class preparation / meetings, schedule TBD
• April 30 – May 15 – class will brainstorm, critique, and develop concepts via out-of-class meetings, a course blog, conference calls, and/or email communication as available

/course officially starts 05/16/19/)

**Week 1:**
- **05/16/19** – first day of class. Students will arrive ready to pitch ideas developed during the spring semester. Class and instructors will select a small number of concepts to pursue. Instructors will then break class into small groups (one for each concept) to develop into specific commercial ideas. Small groups will come back together to pitch their ideas to the whole group.
- **05/17/19** – Small group work interspersed with large group critiques will continue, with ideas being honed down to final concepts. By end of day final concepts and rough scripts for up to three ads will be approved by instructors. HW: revise/finalize scripts, begin tentative pre-production (location scouting, general production design, rough schedule for all ads making it this far)

**Week 2:**
- **05/20/19** – Pitch each ad with polished shooting script, potential locations/design and schedule. Students and instructors will decide on which ads will go into production. Students rearranged into production groups, with designated students in charge of specific tasks for each ad to be shot. HW: groups finalize plans, storyboards, shotlists, continue pre-production.
- **05/21/19** – Present draft storyboards, shotlists, budgets, and schedules for each ad. Group critique and revisions of all these details. Conduct necessary camera/wardrobe/effect tests. Make sure all copy, logo designs, etc. are finalized and locked.
- **05/22/19** – Pre-production day. Students and instructors scout locations, arrange for necessary actors, food, props, equipment, permits, etc. Casting sessions if needed.
- **05/23/19** – Go over final plans for each ad, including all creative and logistics. Production training – safety, terminology, equipment basics. Practice shoot with simple commercial idea (pre-existing).
- **05/24/19** – Production (ALL DAY – likely extending beyond normal class hours). Entire class on set. HW: continue/finalize pre-production for remaining ads.

**Week 3:**
- **05/27/19** – **MEMORIAL DAY – NO CLASS**
- **05/28/19** – Production (ALL DAY – likely extending beyond normal class hours). Entire class on set.
- **05/29/19** – Production (ALL DAY – likely extending beyond normal class hours). Entire class on set. HOMEWORK: put together first cuts of all ads.
- **05/30/19** – Screen and critique rough cuts. Break into small groups to improve edits. Simultaneously begin sound, color, FX, titles work. End class with critique of second version of edits.
- **05/31/19** – Last day of class. Screen polished fine cuts, finish work on titles, sound, color. End class (ideally) with all ads completed or nearly so.
- Last day of class. Debrief from shoots, screen footage and rough cuts of ads. Critique rough cuts and push through to a second cut of the ads.

/course ends 05/31/19/)
- remainder of summer 2019 – complete post-production work on ads (as needed)

*Grading:*
  - 5% - thinking/brainstorming ahead of time, as demonstrated by ideas presented first day
  - 25% - concept / development (raw ideas, brainstorming, small group work, polishing / improving ideas)
  - 20% - pre-production (scripts, storyboards, budgets, shotlists, crew lists, releases, scouting, etc.)
  - 20% - on-set work (as assigned/scheduled, all shoots)
  - 25% - post-production work/effort (potentially including additional work between end of the term and ads being completed)
  - 5% - homework / out-of-class activities

*Attendance policy:* Given the condensed (11 days) nature of this course, it is expected that everyone is in attendance every day for the full class day. In an extraordinary circumstance explained to instructors, you may be allowed to continue in the class after missing one day. Missing more than one day (or significant parts of more than one day) will result in failing the class.

*University Policies*

*Academic Honesty and Misconduct:* You are bound by the Honor Code and the SMU Student Code of conduct. For complete details, see [http://www.smu.edu/studentlife/PCL_01_ToC.asp](http://www.smu.edu/studentlife/PCL_01_ToC.asp).

*Disability Accommodations:* Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) at 214-768-1470 or www.smu.edu/alec/dass.asp to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements (See University Policy No. 2.4).

*Religious Observance:* Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class must notify the professor in writing by the third class session, and should discuss in advance acceptable ways of making up any work missed (see University Policy No. 1.9).

*Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities:* Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the professor, prior to any missed classes, to make up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalog)

In accordance with Texas Senate Bill 11, also known as the “campus carry” law, following consultation with entire University community SMU determined to remain a weapons-free campus. Specifically, SMU prohibits possession of weapons (either openly or in a concealed manner) on campus. For more information, please see: [http://www.smu.edu/BusinessFinance/Police/Weapons_Policy](http://www.smu.edu/BusinessFinance/Police/Weapons_Policy).