



Hothouse Productions at Boston University Producing Videos for Nonprofit and For-Profit Organizations

Program Overview and Application

Hothouse Productions at The College of Communication is an intensive semester long field and classroom based experience for talented graduate and undergraduate students at Boston University. Taught by Sheila Sitomer, an award-winning producer and a professor in COM's Film and TV department, Hothouse Productions provides students with an opportunity to put into practice what they have been learning in the classroom. Teams of students are created. The goal is for each team to complete a student-run, client-driven production by the end of the school semester. Final videos typically run 1 to 5 minutes in length. Nonprofit and for-profit organizations have sought out the creativity, professionalism and energy of the Hothouse Production teams for more than twenty years.

Hothouse Web Site at <http://sites.bu.edu/hothouse/>

Timeframe for Hothouse Production Projects

For the fall semester, productions begin in early September and are completed by early December. For the spring semester, productions begin in mid-January and are completed by early May.

Process of Communication

Students typically work in teams of four. The student assigned to be the producer will contact the client by phone, email and/or text to arrange a meeting with the team. Client meetings with students are a must. As Hothouse does not have an official office, those meetings will typically be at the client's office, a BU classroom, a mutually convenient location or by video conference.

As each video must be completed by the end of the semester, we respectfully ask clients to respond to requests for approval on each step of the process within a short time frame as indicated by the team.

Criteria for Hothouse Productions

Over the years, Hothouse Productions has learned that certain basic requirements are needed in order for a successful production and for the client to be pleased with the final product.

- Students and Clients need to be clear about long and short-term goals of the production. They should be defined in writing.
- The primary focus and mission of the client's organization must be specified before production begins. It's best if this is in writing.
- Both client and students need to be clear about the parameters of the production.
- Client/Staff of the organization must have **one** individual as the designated "yes" person who can say yea or nay to production goals, concept, budget, script, cuts, etc. This person could be the executive director or on staff, but it must be clear to everyone (client and students) at the start of the production who he or she is.
- No project will be accepted unless it can reasonably be completed during one semester.
- A fee of \$500 per project must be submitted by the client **before** production begins. This \$500 per project payment covers the cost of BU equipment for shooting and editing. This fee does NOT cover additional production expenses such as travel, props, music licensing, narrators, materials for the client's production book, etc. that are specific to the project. The client will receive a budget for

these expenses and once approved, is expected to provide those funds. Students are not paid for their services.

Student Teams

The students have taken courses such as producing nonfiction TV, line producing, documentary production, and have experience in scripting, shooting, and editing videos.

For Additional Information

For additional information or clarification regarding projects, please email Professor Sheila Sitomer at ssitomer@bu.edu.

The Pre-Production Process

Step One: Client Submits Application to Hothouse Productions. Applications for fall semester videos are due by July 15. Applications for spring semester projects are due by December 1. Please email completed applications to Prof. Sitomer at ssitomer@bu.edu.

Step Two: Prior to the start of the semester, Prof. Sitomer contacts the potential client to discuss their application. If both sides agree to move forward with the project, client provides the \$500 equipment fee. Payment may be made one of two ways: send a check made payable to Boston University (with Hothouse Productions in the Memo line) to: Aimee McCarron, Department Administrator, Film and Television, College of Communication, Boston University, 640 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, MA 02215. Or, pay through Hothouse Productions' online payment option: <https://sites.bu.edu/hothouse/payment/> Equipment fees must be received before the semester begins.

Step Three: Student Review of Project: During the first two weeks of each new semester, the professor and students discuss the concept for the video, the production needs, schedule and budget, and how the project can be properly completed in that semester. These fall discussions are in early September. The spring discussions are in mid-January.

Step Four: Initial Meeting between Students and Client: The producer assigned to the production will contact the client by phone or email to arrange an initial meeting between the students/professor and the client. This meeting must include the client's point person who will approval power during the entire production. The goals and timeline for the video will be discussed.

Step Five: Throughout Production: Students maintains contact with the client to provide concept proposal, shooting schedule, budget, initial and final scripts, rough and final cuts for client notes and approval.

Project Timeline

At the beginning of the process, the client and the students must clarify the schedule and any vacation/absence dates. There should NEVER a time when the project comes to a halt while school is in session. All projects must be completed by early December (for the fall semester) or early May (for the spring semester). Students will receive a grade of Incomplete (I) for Hothouse if the project is not completed by the end of the semester. Once the project has been submitted to the client and the client has signed off on it in writing with an evaluation, a grade will be given to the students. Hothouse commits to all projects being completed with the client's signoff.

** This is a sample, estimated schedule for a fall semester production. Every project's schedule will vary **

| Timeframe | Milestones/Activity | Please indicate if there are any conflicting events during this time– i.e. fundraiser, audit, vacation, retreat, religious holidays |
|------------------|--|--|
| 9/8 – 9/17 | Professor Assigns Teams and Projects. Students and professor have pre-production discussions. Producer reaches out to client to set up meeting | |
| 9/22 | Meeting with Client. Goals and Timeline determined. | |
| 9/29 - 10/08 | Concept proposal submitted to client for notes/approval before shooting begins. Estimated budgets submitted to client for approval. | |
| 10/11 | Shooting begins. Meetings continue. | |
| 10/29 | Rough draft of script submitted to client. Client gives notes within 3 days. Shooting continues. | |
| 11/3 | Shooting concludes. Logging and rough cut underway. | |
| 11/10 | Final budget submitted to client. Updated script with client notes submitted to client. Client gives approval. | |
| 11/19 | Rough cut submitted to client. Client gives notes within 3 days. | THANKSGIVING BREAK 11/24 - 28 |
| 11/29 – 12/2 | Editing changes made to reflect client notes on rough cut. Final technical details are made (audio mix, color correction). | |
| 12/3 | Final video project submitted to client for signoff and evaluation. | |
| 12/6 | Production book submitted to professor & client | |
| 12/8 | Screening of Hothouse projects in class | |
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Hothouse Project Client Application

Please email your completed application to Prof. Sheila Sitomer at ssitomer@bu.edu by July 15 for the fall semester or December 1 for the spring semester.

| Section One: Background Information | | |
|---|---|-------------------|
| Organization/Company Name: | Type of Business/Organization: (i.e. health care, etc.) | |
| Staff Size: | Board Size: | |
| Address: | | |
| Organization Phone : | Email address : | Website address : |
| Chief Executive Officer's Name: | | |
| Primary Contact Person Name and Title*: | | |
| <i>*Note: This person will need to be available for the duration of the project from September to December OR January to May depending on the semester.</i> | | |
| Primary Contact's Phone: | Primary Contact's Email: | |
| | | |
| Section Two: Project Information | | |

Please answer the following questions. Answers can be brief. Additional information will be requested if necessary.

1. Organization/Business Mission and Primary Activities:

2. Describe the video you want in a few sentences. How will it be used? Let us know the areas on which you would most want to focus in this video? How long do you imagine the final video to be?

3. Describe any materials you have on hand that you MIGHT want to include in the production. For instance, are there archival stills, film or videos?

4. Are there any people whom you believe must be interviewed on camera for this production? Please give their names, e-mails, phone numbers, and their relevant expertise.

5. What specific deliverables and in what format do you expect from this project?

6. Are there videos you have seen or like that you think might be good for the students to watch? Please make suggestions.

7. If there is written material or a website that has information or materials you think is important, please provide.

8. List any concerns, important dates, or issues that might be important to this production.