



## Music 198

# Music Business Masterclass

### Course Facilitators

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### Course Description

The Music Business Masterclass has a sole purpose: **to empower the next generation of UC Berkeley undergraduates pursuing careers in the Music Industry.**

As UC Berkeley's *first* academic program dedicated to analyzing and engaging with the modern-day industry, this 2-unit DeCal aims to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of key aspects of the business, including but not limited to: Record Labels, Digital Streaming, Artists & Repertoire, Startups in Music, New-Industry Media, Artist Management, The Live Experience and D.I.Y for Creatives. Through weekly discussion sections, relevant case-studies and visits from notable industry-insiders, we will explore the interrelations between music as an art, a business and a space for tech-innovation.

### Course Objectives

Upon completion of the Music Business Masterclass, students will be able to answer the following questions for further topic exploration:

About me, the **ambitious student**:

- Which roles are directly and indirectly related to the music business?
- How has Silicon Valley disrupted traditional industry practices?
- How can I best pursue an internship / career in the music business?
- How can other career paths (i.e. finance, law) intersect with music?

About the **music business**:

- In which areas is the music business shrinking and growing?
- How does a record labels implement 360 and distribution deals?
- How has streaming impacted the industry's overall health?
- In which ways are live tours and music festivals financially viable?

About me, the **creative / manager / agent**:

- What is the process of an artist getting signed to a record label?
- What do the roles of an artist manager, lawyer and A&R involve?
- How has the role of A&R developed across decades and between labels?
- What is the D.I.Y process of creating music from conception to release?

**Method of Instruction**

During each 2-hour session, we will analyze a unique topic in the music industry. Discussions will involve coverage of relevant topics examined through assigned readings, industry news and op-ed pieces. Furthermore, highly-esteemed guest speakers from record labels, technology companies, academia and other music-related initiatives will be invited to share knowledge and experience gained from working in the industry, as well as to facilitate opportunities for discussion / Q&A.

**Reading Materials**

1. Core Reading: Each week, we will read short excerpts from Donald Passman's *All You Need to Know About the Music Business* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.) – a book widely regarded as a crucial source of industry expertise for creatives and businesspeople alike.
2. Optional Reading:
  - Rolling Stone Magazine ([rollingstone.com/](http://rollingstone.com/))
  - Music Business Journal ([thembj.org/](http://thembj.org/))
  - Hypebot ([hypebot.com/](http://hypebot.com/))
  - Billboard Magazine ([billboard.com/](http://billboard.com/))
3. Supplementary materials may be introduced in the form of freely-accessible audio and visual media (sources include but not limited to: YouTube, Spotify, Beats 1 Radio, Netflix and HBO) to enhance analysis of core and optional readings.

## **Grading Rubric (100 points)**

### **Participation and Attendance**

42 Points (3/class)

Student attendance and participation will be vital for overall success in the course. This is a collaborative, peer-driven environment, and each engagement with the subject matter and discussion topics will no doubt bring a unique perspective. We want to hear yours!

You will receive **2** points for attendance and **1** point for participating in class discussions. Additionally, each student must write **1** short blog post on topic of their interest, to be posted on the class website and Facebook group. This portion of the participation grade is designed to encourage students to reflect on their own interests in detail and share their knowledge and experiences with their current (and future!) peers.

### **Midterm Case-Study**

28 Points

For the midterm case-study, students will choose an industry player (a startup or streaming service, record label, content creator, talent agency, event organizer) and complete a case project involving creative recommendations for a **new product, service** or **feature** that the industry player should implement in 2018. Groups will present the cases to the class during Week 7. Presentations are to be 8-10 minutes, with an additional Q&A from classmates and facilitators. The guidelines will be distributed during Week 4.

### **Final Case-Study**

30 Points

For the final case-study, students will be given the chance to work in groups of 4-5 to ideate, design and prototype a detailed marketing campaign for a specific artist or brand based on a product briefing. Groups will then present the details of the marketing campaign to the rest of the class (aka the C-Suite label and product managers). The exercise will encourage students to explore industry practices from the angles of a record label, artist/producer, brand and target demographic.

\*Students will be taking the course on a **P/NP** basis and will need to achieve a cumulative **70/100 points** across all three graded items in order to pass the course.

## **Course Policies**

1. **Punctuality:** Class sessions will begin promptly at 6:10pm and end at 8:00pm. Please be punctual and respectful of your and your classmates' valuable time.
2. **Attendance:** Class attendance is **mandatory** – if you plan to be absent for any reason, contact your course facilitators via [berkeleymusicbusiness@gmail.com](mailto:berkeleymusicbusiness@gmail.com) before class with an explanation of your absence. Please refer to the Grading Rubric for a detailed breakdown of Participation and Attendance points.
3. **Assignments:** Midterm and final assignments are expected to be received on time. A missed assignment will result in a 0%. A late assignment will face a 10% grading deduction per day until submitted directly to course facilitators.
4. **Electronics:** *Please bring a working laptop or tablet to class.* While integral to our daily routines, mobile phones will NOT be permitted during class discussions or guest lectures. This is to cultivate a collaborative and productive atmosphere.

## **Weekly Schedule**

### **Week 1:** Introduction to the Music Business Masterclass

This week will involve student and facilitator introductions, as well as a detailed overview of the syllabus and class expectations.

### **Week 2:** Music Business History

This week will focus on the history of the business surrounding recorded music, with specific emphasis placed on the evolution of the record label, standard and new industry practices and key revenue streams between 1950 and 1990.

### **Week 3:** The “Big 3” Record Labels

This week will involve a deep-dive into the world of the three largest record labels in the history of music – Universal Music Group, Sony Music and Warner Bros. Records – as well as their key revenue/cost streams and financial/operational adaptations to new music ecosystems. We will also discuss their main objectives, challenges and label subsidiaries.

**Week 4: Streaming Platforms 101**

This week will introduce the idea of streaming-based distribution, as well as its effect on the record industry post-2012 through the likes of Spotify, Apple Music, SoundCloud and other players. We will discuss the new business model used by labels, the evolving nature of content release and the corporate and creative roles available at streaming platforms.

**Week 5: Branding for New Media**

This week will involve in-depth coverage of old and new media in music. We will look at the evolution of music media from terrestrial radio and printed publications to newfound avenues such as YouTube, Pandora ‘playlisting’ and online blogs that curate content.

**Week 6: Distribution & Publishing**

This week will focus on the music portion of entertainment law, specifically regarding content publishing, sample licensing and music distribution. We will take a look at notable licensing deals and the legal benefits and challenges that they bring to the creative ecosystem in musical hubs such as Los Angeles, New York and London.

**Week 7: Midterm Case–Study**

This week will entail the midterm case-study presentations (detailed on page 3), as well as a post-presentation debrief and a class party!

**Week 8: Making Your Mark**

This week will be dedicated to professional networking and personal branding utilizing social platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and professional platforms (LinkedIn) tailored to specific roles within the wider industry. We will focus on key strategies to enter the industry from university and avenues to explore while still an undergraduate.

**Week 9: The Live Experience**

This week will explore the brands, products and ideas behind the multi-billion-dollar live events industry, giving us financial perspective on the impact of touring and festivals as a proportion of wider industry revenues. Spanning from looks at Coachella to individual

record-breaking US and worldwide tours throughout the 1960s and 2000s, we will examine what it takes to create and promote long-lasting artist-fan moments.

### **Week 10: Music–Technology**

This week will focus on the technology startups disrupting traditional business practices within the music industry, specifically with regards to content creation, music events and content publishing. We will conduct an in-class case study on two Bay Area-based startups looking to revolutionize 3<sup>rd</sup>-party ticketing and event awareness respectively.

### **Week 11: Music Meets Film**

This week will be dedicated to exploring the intersection of music and film, specifically within Hollywood studios and across the spectrum of visual culture. We will dive into the process of songwriting for films via Hans Zimmer’s own medium, and learn about the ways in which royalties from hit movies are distributed across its creators.

### **Week 12: Creator’s D.I.Y. Bootcamp**

This week will involve a DIY boot-camp for content creators, with emphasis placed on local outlets for creativity, technical expertise on necessary software/equipment and relevant resources for aspiring student artists (in the Bay Area and beyond). We will also focus on the process of signing to a label or content distributor as an independent artist.

### **Week 13: Music Entrepreneurship**

This week will focus on the role of entrepreneurs, label founders and artist managers, and will address the benefits and challenges that arise from conventional financial, marketing and creative decisions taken with both the art and business in mind. We will learn about industry-revered professionals who have revolutionized the art of music.

### **Week 14: Final Case–Study & Class Party!**

This week will conclude the semester’s course content with student-led Final Presentations. We will debrief on the course objectives and offer further avenues of exploration for the Spring ’18 MBM Class, whilst enjoying some much-deserved snacks and classic tunes of our own!