

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

- A. Department Information:
Division: Humanities
Department: Radio/Television Film
Course ID: RTVF 106
Course Title: Writing for Television and Film
Units: 3
Lecture: 3 Hours
Laboratory: None
Prerequisite: None
- B. Catalog and Schedule Description: This course is designed to introduce students to the various formats of scripting for television and film, including interviews, news-style packages, commentaries, commercials, and episodic comedy. Long form script writing will include creating treatments, plot outlines, character development, and writing dialogue.

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: One

III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- A. Identify and write for a specific target audience
- B. Write an interview script with an introduction, appropriate questions, and closing
- C. Write a news-style package
- D. Write a thirty second television commercial
- E. Write a news commentary
- F. Write a treatment for a television program or motion picture
- G. Write a plot outline for a television program or motion picture
- H. Develop main characters for a new situation comedy
- I. Write dialogue for a television program or motion picture
- J. Demonstrate a personal, creative writing style
- K. Demonstrate copy editing skills
- L. Demonstrate improved vocabulary and spelling skills

IV. COURSE CONTENT:

- A. Analyzing interviews: what elements make up a good or bad interview script?
 - 1. Research
 - 2. Pre-interviews
 - 3. Quality of writing
 - 4. Background material
 - 5. Target audience
 - 6. Topic
 - 7. Guest's credentials
- B. Interview scripts
 - 1. Types of interviews (e.g., personality, opinion, informational)
 - 2. Parts of the interview (introduction, questions, outro/close)
 - 3. Writing teases and promos
- C. Commentaries
 - 1. Opinion vs. fact
 - 2. One person writing BOTH sides
 - 3. Fairness and Bias
- D. Leads and Endings
- E. News-style vs. magazine style
 - 1. Hard news vs. soft news
 - 2. Information vs. entertainment

- F. Communicating Interculturally
 - 1. Communicating in a culturally diverse society
 - 2. Ethnic origin
 - 3. The influence of culture on television and film
 - 4. Guidelines for becoming a successful multicultural communicator
- G. Commercials
 - 1. Ads vs. promos vs. teases
 - 2. Advertising techniques
 - 3. Say it with words AND pictures
- H. Long-form scripts
 - 1. Treatment
 - 2. Proposals
 - 3. Character development
 - 4. Plot outlines
 - 5. Writing dialog
 - 6. Scripting camera cues
 - 7. Scripting action

V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

The course is designed under the lecture/discussion format. The instruction methods to be used may include:

- A. Lecture
- B. Read text and Other Sources
- C. Class and Group Discussion
- D. Writing scripts
- E. Critical Evaluation of Videotapes and/or audiotapes and/or scripts
- F. Oral and Written Group Projects and Presentations

VI. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Research a local person and write an interview script for a local television program; include an introduction to the person and topic, at least 5 interview questions, and closing remarks which summarize the interview
- B. Write a news-style package on an assigned topic
- C. Write two commentaries on a controversial topic, each commentary taking opposite sides
- D. Write a thirty second commercial for a local nonprofit organization
- E. Write a treatment for a situation comedy
- F. Create at least five characters for the situation comedy
- G. Write a plot outline for the pilot episode
- H. Write dialogue for at least one scene of the situation comedy

VII. EVALUATION(S):

- A. Methods of Evaluation
 - 1. Objective and subjective examinations (for lecture and text assignments). Typical questions include:
 - a) What are the major parts of a commercial?
 - b) What are the major parts of an interview script?
 - c) Name three types of interviews and give examples of each.
 - d) Write a one-page description of a character from a current television program.
 - e) Write a one-paragraph treatment for a current television program.
 - f) Define and give examples of the main elements of a script plot.
 - 2. Discuss the methods in which message flow is distorted within organizations.
 - 3. Subjective evaluation of student scripts. Students are graded on their ability to apply course material to the content and clarity of their writing.
- B. Frequency of Evaluation
 - 1. Each student will be graded on writing assignments at least once every other week.

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2. Students may be graded on one or more written examinations or quizzes throughout the semester, at the discretion of the instructor.

For on-line classes, lectures will be delivered via computer with the same course content as classroom lectures; students will participate in on-line discussions that will also parallel traditional classroom discussions. Written assignments will be identical in content. Tests will be given in proctored exam situations, during on-campus scheduled class periods, or on-line as open book essay tests, at the discretion of the instructor.

VIII. TYPICAL TEXT(S):

Scriptwriting for the Screen (Media Skills)

by Charlie Moritz Routledge; ISBN: 0415229111; (June 2001)

Writing for Television, Radio, and New Media by Robert L. Hilliard, 7th edition (August 1999)
Wadsworth Pub Co; ISBN: 0534561241

The Insider's Guide to Writing for Screen and Television Ronald B. Tobias .Writers Digest Books
March 1, 1997, ISBN: 0898797179

Elements of Style for Screenwriters by Paul Argentini, (August 1998) Lone Eagle Publishing
Company; ISBN: 1580650031

IX. OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: None