

CTVA 220 FOUNDATIONS OF MEDIA WRITING

MONDAY & WEDNESDAY, 9:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

FALL 2009

MZ 113

INSTRUCTOR: Amanda Alvarado EMAIL: amanda.alvarado.317@csun.edu

OFFICE: MZ 323 OFFICE HOURS: Monday 11-12 a.m. and Thursday 5-6 p.m.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Great editing, cinematography and directing all begins with a superb script. A script unites a group of professionals in search of a cohesive, visual story. Thus, understanding the art of media writing proves crucial when honing your skills within your desired craft, even if you're not a screenwriter. Knowing the fundamentals of media writing remains essential within the industry. This course's design seeks an appreciation and understanding of media writing through the active act of writing and analysis of different forms.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, you should:

1. demonstrate an understanding of the industry formats: Radio, TV and film
2. demonstrate an understanding of the role of the writer within each of these forms by discovering the technical and aesthetic components inherent to each type
3. demonstrate a proficiency and understanding of narrative fiction screenwriting through the development and completion of a thirty (30) paged script.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Writing for Visual Media, Second Edition, by Anthony Friedmann.

Media Writing Handbook by Donald Wood.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

Throughout the semester there will be several written assignments.

These assignments should be:

- Typed or computer printed using 12-point Courier on good paper
- Proofread for spelling, grammar, typos and errors in script format
- stapled together or (for longer works) three-hole punched and bind with a brad

All assignments must be written in the correct format and handed in the class period due. E-mailed assignments will not be accepted. If work is handed in outside of class (for late credit) it must be submitted in the CTVA office in Manzanita Hall.

All work turned in late will be penalized 1/3 of a grade for each class period late.

The midterm will be based upon class readings and information covered in class.

Prompt attendance is crucial. Class begins at 9:30 a.m. Excessive tardiness and absences will lower your participation grade, which is 25% of your overall grade!

Since this class also functions as a script workshop, students will be expected to share and comment upon other student's work in a respectful manner. This component is part of class participation.

Please do not recycle work from another course that has been previously developed or written, unless permission is given by the instructor.

This course requires strict compliance with the Academic Honesty Standards contained in the University Catalogue.

GRADING

Punctuality, attendance and class participation	25 Points
TV commercial script	5
Screenplay format assignment	5
Journal assignments (10 @ 1pt each)	10
Midterm Exam	10
Treatment	5
Act I	10
Act II	10
Final, Polished Draft	20

As you can see, there are many assignments - usually one due each class. Please don't fall behind, especially on the journal assignments. I'm here to help you in anyway possible, but approach me with any problems early and not at the last minute.

GRADE STRUCTURE

90 to 100 = A
80 to 89 = B
70 to 79 = C
60 to 69 = D
0 to 60 = F

Plus and minus will be added for the top 3 points, and bottom 3 points of the percentile. A+ is not given at CSUN. No extra credit will be offered.

NOTE: You must receive a C or higher to proceed in the CTVA department. A grade of B or higher is required for students who wish to pursue the screenwriting option.

No assignments will be accepted beyond two weeks late.

The final writing assignment is due **DECEMBER 19th** by 5:00 p.m. No exceptions.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities must register with the Center on Disabilities and complete a services agreement each semester. Staff within the Center will verify the existence of a disability based on the documentation provided and approve accommodations. Students who are approved for test taking accommodations must provide a proctor form to their faculty member signed by a counselor in the Center on Disabilities prior to making testing arrangements. The Center on Disabilities is located in Bayramian Hall, room 110. Staff can be reached at 818-677-2684

CLASS SCHEDULE (unless otherwise amended)

Week 1

Monday 8/24 Course & Class Introductions. Who is the writer?

Assignment: Friedmann Chapters 1-3

Wednesday 8/26 Multimedia writing – The art of communication.

Structure, structure, structure...everywhere.

Looking at the structure inherent to story.

Assignment: Journal exercise – Analyzing a song

Week 2

Monday 8/31 Narrative writing elements: plot, theme, genre and structure

Wednesday 9/2 Narrative writing elements continued

Assignments: Friedmann Chapter 4

Radio handout

Journal exercise – structure analysis

Week 3

Monday 9/7 Labor Day. No Classes.

Wednesday 9/9 Discuss Radio in today's society.

Radio writing.

Assignments: Friedmann Chapter 5

Week 4

Monday 9/14 Discuss commercials. View a few examples.

Two column video writing.

Assignments: TV commercial

Friedmann Chapter 8

Wednesday 9/16 Film Script Format

Assignment: Format exercise

Week 5

Monday 9/21 Dramatic writing: character

Assignment: Friedmann Chapter 10

Journal exercise – character sketch

Wednesday 9/23 Dramatic writing: conflict

Assignment: Journal exercise – premise

Week 6

Monday 9/28 Dramatic writing: dialogue

Assignment: Journal exercise – dialogue exercise

Wednesday 9/30 Dramatic writing: description and transitions
Assignments: Journal exercise – scene without dialogue
View – Majority choice of four titles
***Gladiator *When Harry Met Sally**
***Thelma & Louise *Terminator 2**

Week 7

Monday 10/5 Structure Review
Assignment: Journal Exercise – Act I of a script analysis

Wednesday 10/7 Structure Review
Assignment: Study for Midterm

Week 8

Monday 10/12 Midterm Exam
Assignment: Journal Exercise – story outline and notes

Wednesday 10/14 Screenplay – stages of development and the art of the short
Assignments: Develop pitch
Journal Exercise – view a short film (on reserve) and write a one paged analysis of structure

Week 9

Monday 10/19 Treatment writing
Assignment: Write a treatment – Due 11/9

Wednesday 10/21 Pitches

Week 10

Monday 10/26 Pitches

Wednesday 10/28 Pitches

Week 11

Monday 11/2 Pitches

Wednesday 11/4 Pitches

Week 12

Monday 11/9 Treatment meetings and Story problems
Assignment: Work on Act I, Due 11/18

Wednesday 11/11 Treatment meetings (Class will not meet this day)
Veteran's Day

Week 13

Monday 11/16 Workshop – Act I
Assignment: Act II, Due 12/5

Wednesday 11/18 Workshop – Act I

Week 14

Monday 11/23 Workshop – Act II

Wednesday 11/25 Workshop – Act II

Week 15

Monday 11/30 Episodic TV
Sitcom Script Format
Assignment: Journal – TV show analysis

Wednesday 12/2 Episodic TV

Week 16

Monday 12/7 **FINAL, REVISED SCRIPTS DUE**