

INSTRUCTOR: Thomas McWilliams
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Office hours: Mon & Wed, 2-3pm; Thu, 1-4pm or by appointment

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Radio, TV and film work is collaborative: Writers, actors, designers, technicians and crew all work together to produce a film, sitcom, instructional video, or radio program. Regardless of whether you hope or expect to write professionally, upon successful completion of this class you should:

- 1) demonstrate an understanding of the role of the writer in providing the foundation for virtually all film and electronic media production.
- 2) demonstrate an understanding of the various Radio, TV and film script formats.
- 3) demonstrate an understanding of the principles that underlie screen storytelling.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUTION: There will be several writing assignments. These are to be typed or computer printed using the correct font (12-point Courier) on good-quality paper.

- **All assignments must be carefully proofread for spelling, grammar, typos, and errors in script format.**
- **Use a cover page and number all pages unless otherwise specified.**
- **Short assignments are to be stapled together; on longer scripts use three-hole punched paper and bind with brads.**

REQUIRED TEXT: Writing for Visual Media, by Anthony Friedman,
Focal Press, 2006.
Media Writing Handbook.

The class will begin with four (4) short projects. The instructor will screen examples from each genre or program format to illustrate the structure of scenes written for each type of media. Each project will be approximately two (2) pages and will be commented on and graded by the instructor.

In the second half of the class the students will be working on a final project based upon one of the formats studied earlier in the semester. Each student will write a treatment along with a thirty-minute film-story for the final grade.

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.

If you do not want your writing read aloud, do not take this course.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

1.	<u>SHORT PROJECTS</u>	<u>20 points</u>
	• Radio	5 points
	• Documentary/Corporate Instructional	5 points
	• Sitcom	5 points
	• Film	5 points
2.	<u>MIDTERM</u>	<u>10 points</u>
	• In-class exam	5 points
	• Script synopsis	5 points
3.	<u>PARTICIPATION</u>	<u>20 points</u>
	• Prompt attendance	10 points
	• In-class exercises/quizzes	10 points
4.	<u>FINAL PROJECT</u>	<u>50 points</u>
	• Treatment	5 points
	• Act 1	10 points
	• Act 2	10 points
	• Revised Act 1, 2, 3	25 points.

NO ASSIGNMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED BEYOND TWO WEEKS LATE.

THE FINAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT WILL BE DUE *NO LATER THAN* WEDNESDAY, DEC 9, 2009.

THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM IN THIS CLASS, ONLY A FINAL SCREENPLAY PROJECT.

The grades will be based on the plus and minus system. Late scenes and papers will cost the students a penalty of 1/3 a letter off per day from the time the assignment is due. All excuses such as sickness, death, or amnesia will be treated sympathetically but will not effect the final outcome of the grade penalty. There is no extra credit available.

Three (3) unexcused absences will reduce your overall grade by 1/3 of a letter grade.
Six (6) unexcused tardies will reduce your overall grade by 1/3 of a letter grade.

I reserve the right to penalize excessive tardiness, absence or disruptive behavior beyond the allotted 20 “participation” points.

CTVA 220 is required of all CTVA students for admission to the major. Students must receive a C for admission to the major and a B- for admission to the writing area of emphasis. Good luck and Keep Writing!

CLASS SCHEDULE (Unless amended)

Week 1 – Aug 24 - Aug 26	Course introduction and overview. Writing description, exposition, and commentary. (Radio lecture, Friedman Chap 1-2).
Week 2 – Aug 31 - Sep 2	Radio format. <u>Assignment #1-due Sep 9.</u> (Friedman Chap 3-4).
Week 3 – Sep 7 - Sep 9	2-column video format. Documentary & Corporate Program. (Friedman Chap 6, 8) <u>Assignment #2-due Sep 16.</u>
Week 4 – Sep 14 - Sep 16	NO CLASS MONDAY Film Format. Conflict. Character functions. The Dramatic Scene. (Friedman Chap 9,10,12) <u>Assignment #3-due Sep 23.</u>
Week 5 – Sep 21 - Sep 23	Sitcom format. Comedy elements. Sitcom viewing. Sitcom rules. <u>Assignment #4-due Sep 30.</u>
Week 6 – Sep 28 - Sep 30	Premise and pitch. (Friedman Chap 13) <u>Premise for final project-due Oct 7.</u>
Week 7 – Oct 5 - Oct 7	In-class pitches. Treatment and idea sequences.
Week 8 – Oct 12 - Oct 14	MIDTERM. In-class pitches. Treatment and idea sequences. <u>Treatment for final project-due Oct 21.</u>
Week 9 – Oct 19 - Oct 21	Midterm grade report. In-class pitches. Treatment and idea sequences.
Week 10 – Oct 26 - Oct 28	Character functions. Short Film Festival begins.
Week 11 – Nov 2 - Nov 4	Treatment meetings. <u>Act I due Nov 16.</u>
Week 12 – Nov 9 - Nov 11	Screenplay workshop. NO CLASS WEDNESDAY
Week 13 – Nov 16 - Nov 18	Screenplay workshop. <u>Act II due Nov 25.</u>
Week 14 – Nov 23 - Nov 25	Screenplay workshop.
Week 15 – Nov 30 - Dec 2	Screenplay workshop. Format review.
Week 16 – Dec 7 - Dec 9	Career day. Final script due. Wednesday, Dec 9, 2009