

Instructor: George Pappy
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Office Hours: Fri 12:50-1:50 or by appointment
(hours subject to change)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Nearly every radio, film or video production depends upon a written script for successful execution and completion. Since you will eventually be working on such productions in some capacity, it is essential that you know and understand the fundamentals of writing for these media. Even if you do not intend to work as a writer, your command of media writing principles (both form and content) will put you at a distinct advantage relative to you peers and may even open some doors for you professionally.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of the course, you should:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the technical and aesthetic issues related to writing for radio, television, film and multimedia;
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental principles of narrative fiction screenwriting;
3. Demonstrate proficiency in writing in a variety of script formats, including the two-column video script, film script and sitcom script formats.

This course addresses CTVA Departmental SLO #2: research, structure, and write dramatic and non-dramatic scripts for cinema, television, and multimedia.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Writing For Visual Media, Second Edition, by Anthony Friedman.
Media Writing Handbook by Donald Wood.

RECOMMENDED TEXT

The Elements of Style, Fourth Edition, by William Strunk Jr., E.B. White and Roger Angell.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

All assignments shall be typed or computer printed using 12-point Courier font (you're reading 12-point Courier font right now) on good quality paper.

Excessive typos or errors in spelling and grammar will result in a lower grade (**PLEASE PROOFREAD YOUR WORK!**).

Late assignments:

- Turned in within 72 hours of due date will result in a %5 reduction in grade.
- Turned in over 72 hours late but within one week of due date will result in a %10 reduction in grade.
- Turned in more than one but no more than two weeks late will result in a %20 reduction in grade.
- **NO ASSIGNMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED BEYOND 2 WEEKS LATE!**

All assignments shall be in the appropriate format (as presented in class) and should include a title page (no covers or binders, please). Short assignments should be stapled, while longer ones should be on 3-hole-punched paper and fastened with brads.

The final assignment, a 24-30 page narrative film script, will be due in class at the last lecture of the semester. **There will be no final exam.**

An in-class midterm exam will be given based on readings from Friedman as well as the material covered in class. A take-home midterm will also be assigned in which you will choose and read any commercially-produced feature length script and write basic studio coverage (1-page synopsis and a page of commentary).

Prompt attendance is expected and class participation is encouraged. Each will be factored into your final grade.

Students are prohibited from presenting work that has been previously developed or written.

Also, please note: This course requires strict compliance with the Academic Honesty Standards contained in the University Catalogue.

GRADING

Punctuality, Attendance & Class Participation	20 points
Radio Public Service Announcement (PSA)	5 points
2-Column Video Script (TV Commercial)	5 points
Sitcom Scene (Multi-Camera Show)	5 points
Screen Story Premise	2 points
Character Bone Structure	3 points
Midterm Exam (In-Class Test)	5 points
Midterm Exam (Take-Home: Basic Script Coverage)	5 points
Screen Story Treatment	5 points
Act I of Script (first draft; 6-8 pages)	8 points
Act II of Script (first draft; 12-14 pages)	12 points
Final Script (revised Act I/II + Act III; 24-30 pages)	<u>25 points</u>

TOTAL: 100 points

Notice that class participation, punctuality and attendance account for 20% of your final grade. Take advantage of this fact: **SHOW UP AND PARTICIPATE!** Much of the class will run like a workshop, with students presenting their work. I strongly encourage you to offer each other your feedback, reactions, ideas and constructive criticism.

Plusses and minuses will be used for the final grades. There will be no extra credit assignments.

I reserve the right to penalize excessive tardiness, absence or disruptive behavior beyond the allotted 20 points. So, come early, don't miss class, and act like a professional. (This will be great practice for the real world, where they expect these things!)

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	Topics Covered	Assignments Due	Reading
1 (8/28/09)	Course overview; general media writing concepts		Friedman Chs. 1, 2 & 3
2 (9/4/09)	Writing for Radio; the Radio PSA		Friedman Chs. 4 & 5
3 (9/11/09)	Writing for Video; the TV Commercial	30 Sec. Radio PSA Script	Friedman Ch. 12
4 (9/18/09)	Writing for TV; the 30 Min. Sitcom & 1 Hr. Drama	30 Sec. TV Commercial Script	Friedman Ch. 9
5 (9/25/09)	Film Writing: Character, Plot, Structure; Premise	2-page Sitcom Scene (Script)	Friedman Ch. 10
6 (10/2/09)	Film Story: Char. Bone Structure, Pitch, Treatment; Script Coverage	Screen Story Premise (1 page)	Friedman Ch. 13
7 (10/9/09)	In-Class Pitches	Character Bone Structure	Friedman Ch. 14
8 (10/16/09)	In-Class Pitches	Screen Story Treatment	Friedman Ch. 15
9 (10/23/09)	Film Writing: Description, Dialogue, Exposition; Midterm Exam	Basic Screenplay Coverage	
10 (10/30/09)	Writing for "New Media"		
11 (11/6/09)	In-Class Script Workshop	Act I of Script (1 st draft)	
12 (11/13/09)	In-Class Script Workshop		
13 (11/20/09)	In-Class Script Workshop	Act II of Script (1 st draft)	
14 (11/27/09)	No Class (Thanksgiving!)		
15 (12/4/09)	In-Class Script Workshop; Writing Professionally; Final Thoughts		
16 (12/9/09)	No class, but Final Script due by 5 PM, Wed. Dec. 9, 2009 in CTVA Office (Manzanita Hall, Room 195)		