

UCLA DEPARTMENT OF FILM AND TELEVISION

UCLA FILM & TELEVISION TV WRITING SUMMER INSTITUTE

FTV 133B, INTERMEDIATE TV WRITING DRAMA/DRAMEDY SERIES

EXAMPLE SYLLABUS. *The syllabi posted are general syllabi for students and alumni who wish to find out the topics generally covered in these courses*

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The goal for this class is for you to create an original one-hour original drama/dramedy or half-hour dramedy pilot.

COURSE GOALS:

Students will learn how to:

- Service the franchise of your original series
- Fit into the network, cable, or streaming "wheelhouse" and meet their expectations
- Develop and deepen your characters
- Create a Beat Sheet and Outline for your pilot
- Write the First Draft of an effective pilot for your original series
- Develop a Pitch for your original series

You'll also be expected to provide notes on your fellow writers' material. This includes: verbal/written notes, participation in table discussions, and active contribution to the work of others. Please post assignments in PDF format, on the class Bruin Learn site.

RECOMMENDED (NOT REQUIRED) READING:

Writing the TV Drama Series, by Pamela Douglas

The TV Showrunner's Roadmap, by Neil Landau

TV Writing On Demand: Creating Great Content in the Digital Era, by Neil Landau

Plus, read every successful pilot you can, especially in the genre, style, and tone that relate to your script.

WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE:

WEEK ONE (Class Meetings 1&2): Introduction to the course and syllabus. Student pitches and feedback. Review of: one-hour drama and half-hour dramedy structure; A, B, and C story-lines; premise, theme, conflict, characters; the difference between writing screenplays and episodic TV; episodic pilot vs. "premise pilot" vs. hybrid. Lecture on servicing the "franchise" and story arcs; breaking story; beat sheet and outline formats; effective pitches and loglines.

Assignment #1: Refine chosen pitch and come up with two potential A and B stories. Due for next class.

Assignment #2: Orally pitch two possible A and B stories for your pilot. Discussion of Beat Sheets and how to write a Teaser. Write a Beat Sheet for your pilot. Due for next class.

***SATURDAY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP: SCRIPT COVERAGE**

WEEK TWO (Class Meetings 3&4): Discussion and feedback on Beat Sheets. Discussion about writing an Outline based on Beat Sheets. Unifying theme, character arcs, network "story area documents," and compelling act breaks. Character development.

Assignment #3: Write first half of outline (5 pages), due for next class. Discussion about outlines in progress.

Assignment #4: Revise first half and write second half of Outline (5 more pages). Completed Outline due for next class.

WEEK THREE (Class Meetings 5&6): Discussion and feedback on Outlines. Discussion about how to segue from Outline to First Draft. Scene structure. Writing memorable scenes. Discussion about series bibles. The studio and network notes process.

Assignment #5: Begin writing first draft of your script. Goal is complete rough draft of the Teaser, due for next class.

Assignment #6: Continue writing script. Goal is to complete Teaser and Act One. Due for next class.

WEEK FOUR (Class Meetings 7&8): Read selected pages in class and discuss. Discussion of issues that have emerged from Outline to script. Writing great dialogue.

Assignment #7: Continue writing script. Turn in pages for table read in next class.

Assignment #8: Continue writing scripts. Goal for this week is to complete Acts Two and Three, due for next class.

***SATURDAY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP: HOW TO PITCH**

WEEK FIVE (Class Meetings 9&10): Read selected pages in class and discuss. Discussion on establishing the world of your show, tone, and voice.

Assignment #9: Acts 4 and 5 (depending on format). For half-hours, please revise all acts. Discussion about rewriting strategies, editing, and polishing. Solving story issues.

Assignment #10: Complete and revise first draft of script. Develop a pitch.

WEEK SIX (Class #11): **First draft of all teleplays due in PDF format, to be posted on the class Bruin Learn site.** Discussion about what happens in the real world with the draft to be "published" and distributed to the director, actors, assistant directors, and all department heads for pre-production. The pre-production, production, and post-production processes: the production board and call sheet. Breaking into the industry. Practice pitches.

Assignment #11: Refine your pitch for Pitch Session.

INTERMEDIATE CLASS PITCH PANEL

Darren Star Theater

Class #12: Individual Script Conferences. Receive notes on your completed draft in a one-on-one script consult. You will also have the opportunity to discuss feedback from the Pitch Session.

CLOSING CEREMONY AND RECEPTION

James Bridges Theater

STATEMENT OF GRADING:

The Screenwriting Department has a strict policy of zero unexcused absences, which includes being absent for any reason other than documented illness or emergency. One or two excused absences are acceptable with documentation from a doctor or other health care professional, or due to a documented personal emergency. One or two excused absences will not impact your final grade, provided all assignments are successfully completed and turned in on a mutually agreed upon due date, approved by the instructor. One unexcused absence will result in a drop in your grade. Two unexcused absences will result in a failing grade in the course.

Showing up late to class is disruptive and will impact your final grade. Habitual lateness - late to more than 2 class sessions, without prior approval from the instructor, will result in lowering the final grade by at least half a letter grade.

Assignments must be turned in on time. Please carefully spell-check and proofread your work. Late delivery of an assignment will also impact grading, unless it's with prior approval by the instructor.

Below is the weight given to each component of the final grade: Please note that **ALL COURSE GRADES ARE FINAL.**

| | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Participation | 20% |
| Series Pitch | 5% |
| A/B Stories | 5% |
| Teaser | 5% |
| Acts 1 & 2 | 10% |
| Acts 3,4,5 | 15% |
| Beat sheet | 10% |
| Outline | 10% |
| First Draft | 20% |
| Total: | 100% |

Final Course Grade: 100%

- A (90-100%)
- B (80-89%)
- C (70-79%)
- D (60-69%)
- F (≤ 59%)

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION:

If you're going to be late/absent, please send instructor an email. No eating during class. No use of electronic devices, unless it's for class purposes. Please follow all required UCLA COVID safety protocols.

All ideas discussed in class are strictly confidential and should not be discussed with others outside of class.

Industry professionals are partially defined or rise and fall by their interactions with other Industry professionals. As such, you will be graded on your interactions in class. That means that class attendance is mandatory, as is class participation. Your feedback is invaluable to your colleagues. Therefore, you are expected to actively listen, contribute, and analyze during class discussions.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND STUDENT CONDUCT:

With its status as a world-class research institution, it is critical that the University uphold the highest standards of integrity both inside and outside the classroom. As a student and member of the UCLA community, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors. Accordingly, when accusations of academic dishonesty occur, The Office of the Dean of Students is charged with investigating and adjudicating suspected violations. Academic dishonesty, includes, but is not limited to, cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, multiple submissions or facilitating academic misconduct. Plagiarism is a serious offense. It is the presentation of another author's words or ideas as if they were your own. If you have any questions about documentation, quotations, and related matters, please do not hesitate to ask your instructor before submitting your work. Please also refer to the UCLA Rules of Student Conduct at the below website: <http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Student-Conduct>

Statement of Diversity and Inclusion

The diversity of the people of California has been the source of innovative ideas and creative accomplishments throughout the state's history into the present. Diversity - a defining feature of California's past, present, and future - refers to the variety of personal experiences, values, and worldviews that arise from differences of culture and circumstance. Such differences include race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, abilities/disabilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, and geographic region, and more.

UCLA Department of Film, Television and Digital Media

FTV 104: Summer Institute Speaker Symposium

Example Syllabus. *The syllabi posted are general syllabi for students and alumni who wish to find out the topics generally covered in these courses*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to demystify various aspects of film, television, and digital media and give students the confidence to find their talents and pursue their passions.

Guest speakers, from different career paths, will participate in a lightly moderated, comprehensive dialogue with the students about their areas of expertise. Students are encouraged to ask questions that will enhance their understanding of the entertainment business's ever-evolving landscape.

LEARNING GOALS

This course will help students (1) strengthen their understanding of the industry as a whole, (2) understand how the many jobs in film and television all connect, (3) determine which paths fit their talents and passions, and (4) provide them with insight on the current state of the business as they plan their next steps.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

Coursework will consist of attending weekly class meetings, actively listening to and participating in class discussions and Q&A sessions with Guest Speakers, and writing a brief paper at the end of the course.

Attendance...60%

Participation (Reflection/Introspection/Questions)... 10%

Final Paper...30%

Attendance/Participation

Please keep any information shared by our guests confidential. No recording or posting anything you hear on social media without prior consent.

To receive full credit for attendance and participation, you must attend all class sessions over the six-week program. If you are unable to attend any of the classes, please let me know in advance via email.

Final Paper

You will complete an essay (no more than 4 pages double-spaced) about your passions and all the things you would like to accomplish in your career. Please include the first step you will take in pursuing your goals. **Please submit via email in PDF format during the final week of class.**

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: *The order of panels is subject to change based on Guest Speaker availability.*

WEEK 1 – BREATHING LIFE INTO STORIES (BELOW-THE-LINE CREATIVES)

Have you ever been so immersed in an onscreen world that you forget everything else around you? The magic is in the details. This class will focus on below-the-line positions that breathe life into projects via costume design, production design, hair/makeup, cinematography, VFX, sound design, editing, etc.

WEEK 2

No class.

Homework for Week 3: *I encourage you to make a short list of what inspires you about film, television, and new media. These will be the pillars to which you return as you navigate the industry. You will NOT have to turn this in, but please come prepared to discuss for Week 3.*

WEEK 3 – THE ORIGIN STORY (WRITERS)

It all starts with the written word! This week, we will talk about the writing process, and how to transition from doing it alone at home to working under the pressure of producer, studio, and network deadlines.

WEEK 4 – PARTNERS ON THE BATTLEFIELD (AGENTS/MANAGERS)

They are long-time strategic and innovative partners who advocate for the creatives that inspire them. This week, we will talk about the symbiotic relationship between clients and managers/agents.

WEEK 5 – VISIONARIES (DIRECTORS)

A vision realized. During this week's discussion, we will revel in the magic that is filmmaking, through the eyes of the people guiding all the moving parts of a production.

WEEK 6 – PARTNERS IN STORY (EXECUTIVES/PRODUCERS)

Executives and producers guide projects through the studio system via collaboration and creative support. This week, we will discuss what it's like to develop projects alongside talent – from the notes process to the screen.

UCLA STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY & INFORMATION ON STUDENT CONDUCT

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UCLA STATEMENT ON EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The diversity of the people of California has been the source of innovative ideas and creative accomplishments throughout the state's history into the present. Diversity – a defining feature of California's past, present, and future – refers to the variety of personal experiences, values, and worldviews that arise from differences of culture and circumstance. Such differences include race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, abilities/disabilities, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and geographic region, and more.

Because the core mission of the University of California is to serve the interests of the State of California, it must seek to achieve diversity among its student bodies and employees. The State of California has a compelling interest in making sure that people from all backgrounds perceive that access to the University is possible for talented students, staff, and faculty from all groups. The knowledge that the University of California is open to qualified students from all groups, and thus serves all parts of the community equitably, helps sustain the social fabric of the State.

Diversity should also be integral to the University's achievement of excellence. Diversity can enhance the ability of the University to accomplish its academic mission. Diversity aims to broaden and deepen both the educational experience and the scholarly environment, as students and faculty learn to interact effectively with each other, preparing them to participate in an increasingly complex and pluralistic society. Ideas and practices based on those ideas, can be made richer by the process of being born and nurtured in a diverse community. The pluralistic university can model a process of proposing and testing ideas through respectful, civil communication. Educational excellence that truly incorporates diversity thus can promote mutual respect and make possible the full, effective use of the talents and abilities of all to foster innovation and train future leadership.

Therefore, the University of California renews its commitment to the full realization of its historic promise to recognize and nurture merit, talent, and achievement by supporting diversity and equal opportunity in its education, services, and administration, as well as research and creative activity. The University particularly acknowledges the acute need to remove barriers to the recruitment, retention, and advancement of talented students, faculty, and staff from historically excluded populations who are currently underrepresented.

UCLA DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION MANDATE

Students needing academic accommodations based on a disability should contact the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) at (310) 825-1501 or in person at Murphy Hall A255. When possible,

students should contact the CAE within the first two weeks of the term as reasonable notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. For more information visit www.cae.ucla.edu.