

# ADVANCED WRITING FOR ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Spring 2023

RTV 3101



*(And So Put Goldfish In the Pool. Makoto Nagahisa. 2017)*

**Instructor****Daliso Leslie**

College of Journalism

Department of Media Production, Management, and Technology

[dnaleslie@gmail.com](mailto:dnaleslie@gmail.com)**Office hours****By appointment****Description of the course**

This course is designed to provide an overview of the principles of storytelling and scriptwriting, and to provide students a practical sense of how stories operate across a host of audio-visual domains including television commercials, documentaries, and short and feature narrative films. The course will be comprised of lectures, presentations, in and out-of-class exercises, film screenings, analyses, and discussions.

Unless otherwise stated, assignments are to be printed/presented in-person, as well as submitted on Canvas.

**Course Contents**

Screenings/Readings and Responses

Photography/Look-book

Logline/Synopsis

Commercial/Commercial RFP/Treatment

Narrative One Pager

Feature Film Presentation

Short Film

**Note:** Punctuality is vital in this industry. **Late assignments will be not be accepted without prior notice.**

**Attendance**

Attendance and participation are required. No Incompletes will be given without a medical reason.

**Readings and Screenings**

This class is about writing for film and other audiovisual mediums. In order to write for such spaces, we must also be accustomed to regularly reading and watching media made for these spaces. As such, readings and screenings will be as much a part of this course as writing. Expect readings to generally be assigned each Monday, and screenings to follow on Friday, as well as feedback exercises on both. Also know that this is not a hard and fast rule.

### **Course Tools/Expenses**

While most **readings** will be provided for you, please be aware that in lieu of a textbook, you will occasionally be expected to access films online or through your school library. Please note that as UF students, you all have access to a service called [Kanopy](#), which provides free access to most films you could ever want. Where possible, please do your best to avoid watching films on services like Pluto and Plex, which sometimes offer free films, but with advertisements that generally interrupt the flow of what the artists intended.

Up to now, I imagine that most of your writing has been in the form of word documents. In this class we will start with word documents and move to screenwriting software. We will discuss this further at the appropriate time in the semester.

We will also be taking photographs. Your phone is a great tool for that, but if you have access to a camera, this is a good class in which to start using it.

### **University Honor Code**

The University of Florida has a standardized code for instructors which states:

*We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.*

As students, you have a commitment to academic honesty as well, and it is as follows:

*I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all of their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from the university.*

There are six specific types of violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines: cheating, plagiarism, bribery, misrepresentation, conspiracy and fabrication.

I hope you take this commitment to academic honesty and integrity seriously.

### **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

### **Course Evaluations**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

### **Prerequisites**

To take this course, you must have a grade of C or better in RTV 2100 and RTV 3000 and have junior standing in Telecommunication.

### **A note on Canvas and the Digital World**

This class is likely the least digital of the classes you've taken in this department. For the most part, we will have no computers in class in order to facilitate person to person sharing, and proactive note taking. These both require eye contact, both of which are difficult when you're staring at a computer screen.

Buy a notebook. Buy a pen. Take notes in class. Label your work. Buy a stapler. Staple your work. Remember, you won't write because you take this class. You'll write because you write.

### **A Note on the Syllabus As A Whole**

Don't worry...  
about learning all the ins and outs of writing in this class. It won't happen. Focus on writing the stories that you want to tell and taking my feedback as it relates to the stories you want to tell.

Proofread.

Valuing your work means checking it, seeing whether or not what you thought you were saying in your mind is in fact on the page. Proofreading shows that you respect yourself and that you respect your reader.

### Course schedule

|         |        |   |
|---------|--------|---|
| WEEK 1  | Jan 9  | <b>Introductions. What's your WHY?</b>  |
| WEEK 2  | Jan 16 | <b>HOW does it make you feel?</b><br>What are the techniques that make you feel a thing?<br><br><b>FILM STUDY: <i>I Am Not Your Negro</i></b><br><b>WEEKEND: Find a photobook. Check one out from the library. Buy one if your really dig one. Bring it in to share.</b>  |
| WEEK 3  | Jan 23 | <b>HOW does it make you feel? (Continued)</b><br>Monday: Go over scenes from <i>I Am Not Your Negro</i><br>Return papers.<br>Assign: <i>Selma</i> .<br><i>How does it make you feel?</i><br>Wed and Friday: Go over photo-books and photographs.<br>What's in a frame?<br>Friday: <i>Selma</i> responses due<br><br>Weekend Assignment: Photo Walk. Capture a series of photos inspired by the photos in your photo book. Try to make us feel. Start thinking about a story you want to tell. Take notes on it. |
| WEEK 4. | Jan 30 | <b>HOW does is it make you feel? (Continued)</b><br>Monday: Go over scenes from <i>Selma</i><br>Return Papers.<br>Assign: Commercials<br>Wed and Friday: Go over photos.<br>Friday: Commercial responses due.   |

**Weekend Assignment: Go on another photo walk. Continue to take notes on movie concepts. Think about an organisation or a company you like, preferably one without much of a visual presence. Think about the kinds of visuals they might need to get their message to more people.**

**WEEK 5. Feb 6**

**HOW does it make you feel? (Final chapter)**

**Monday: Go over commercials and NYC honking piece.**

**Intro to RFPs and doc pitches.**

**Assign: RFPs and assign groups.**

**Wed: Discuss photographs.**

**Friday: RFPs due. How do we respond to an RFP?**

**LOOKBOOK and Proposal**

**Weekend: Commercial Groups Assigned for RFPs**

**Get together to plan text and visual responses the RFP's**

**Download FADE IN screenwriting software for scenes and character play.**

**Click around. Write the action of your commercial.**

**WEEK 6 Feb 13**

**The page is all we have.**

**FADE IN Screenwriting Software + SCREENPLAY FORMAT  
Showing vs Telling; Actions and reactions and visuals and sounds and nothing more.**

**Monday: Commercial visuals**

**Wed: Commercial scripts**

**Friday: Commercial Group Presentations.**

**WEEKEND: Watch *Son of Saul*.**

**Create a lookbook for it as if it hadn't yet been made, building on the same skills we used to create our commercial pitches.**

**As you do, think about a story you'd like to tell.**

**WRITE in detail about the characters, places, wants, and conflicts that you see.**

**BACK TO FICTION**

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|---------|----------|--|
| WEEK 7  | Feb 20   | <p><b>How did we get here?</b><br/> <b>Origins of Storytelling</b><br/> Cave paintings to the Sistine Chapel<br/> Hardship vs Conflict<br/> Monday: Go over <i>Son of Saul</i>.<br/> Continue to build the building blocks of your film.<br/> Wed: <i>Son of Saul</i> (cont)<br/> Throw your character up a tree.<br/> Friday: <i>Son of Saul</i> and characters, wants, and needs.</p> <p>WEEKEND: Watch <i>The Rider</i>.<br/> Identify key components like character and conflict vs hardship.<br/> Identify the same components for your film.<br/> Write a scene from your own film in FADE IN.</p> |
| WEEK 8  | Feb 27   | <p><b>Blurred (LOG) lines and synopses.</b><br/> Go over <i>The Rider</i> and our scenes. Give feedback.<br/> Monday: Write log lines and synopses.<br/> <i>The Rider</i> script assigned<br/> *Comedy wildcard<br/> Friday: Script Reading Due.</p> <p>WEEKEND: Watch films. Compare to scripts.<br/> Write a new scene from your film in FADE IN.</p>  |
| WEEK 9  | March 6  | <p><b>Sound and Color.</b><br/> Think About Visuals Differently<br/> Watch ZAMA<br/> Make a lookbook for your film. Write a scene with a focus on SOUND, not DIALOGUE.</p>   |
| WEEK 10 | March 13 | <p><b>SPRING BREAK</b><br/> Work on Lookbook and be able to pitch feature film concept upon return. Write a script if you feel led.</p>  |

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|---------|---|--|
| WEEK 11 | March 20                                      | LOOKBOOKS + PITCH DECKS<br>Feature film presentations<br>Group One synopses due at the end of the week.                                |
| WEEK 12 | March 27                                      | FEATURE IN BRIEF<br>Workshop: Narrative Synopses - Group One<br>Group Two synopses due at the end of the week.                         |
| WEEK 13 | April 3<br><br>(Feedback on scripts returned) | FEATURE IN BRIEF<br>Workshop: Narrative Synopses - Group Two   |
| WEEK 14 | April 10                                      | From the Feature to the Short. A Slice of Life.<br>What is and what is not a short?  |
| WEEK 15 | April 17                                      | From the Feature to the Short. A Slice of Life.<br>Short pitches and Feedback.<br>Workshop short script drafts if there are any ready. |
| Week 16 | April 24                                      | Table reads of rough drafts  |
|         | April 26                                      | LAST CLASS. SHORTS DUE   |
| WEEK 17 | May 2   | TABLE READS of SELECTED SHORT SCRIPTS  |