

RTV 4930

Special Topics: TV Development & Production Cycle

Fall 2025

M 1:55-3:50 (period 6-8)

Class Location: Weimer 1078

Instructor: Frank Sutura

Email: franksutura@ufl.edu

Office: 2093 Weimer

Office hours: Friday 4PM – 6PM or by appointment

Phone: 352 392-0966

Prerequisite:**Required Texts**

All readings will be provided on Canvas.

I will provide or assign additional reading materials (e.g. media articles or book chapters) over the course of the semester. Generally, assigned reading (book chapters or other articles) in the syllabus should be read in advance of the class for which they are listed. Be prepared for the professor to call on you in that class to discuss the assigned readings.

Quizzes will also be given based on assigned readings.

Course Goals

The goal of this course is to understand the Television Industry, specifically how to develop, pitch, sell and produce a television show, with a focus on unscripted television. Over the course of the semester we will identify the players involved in the various stages of development and production, and understand how a concept goes from idea to on-air. You will learn the difference between scripted and unscripted television, hear first-hand from current industry professionals what it takes to sell a show, and the various steps involved to produce a TV show.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon completing this course, students will:

- Have a thorough understanding of the entertainment industry as a whole
- Understand the various roles that factor into developing a TV concept
- Learn about the role of TV Production from various perspectives within the industry, hearing first-hand from current experts in entertainment, including Actors & Actresses, Show Runners and Executive Producers of hit television shows, On Air Talent (hosts), TV Production Company Executives
- Apply what is learned over the course of the semester to create a concept, including pitch materials, for a television show

College of Journalism and Communications Objectives

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that by graduation all students should be able to:

- apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located;
- demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts;
- present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work

KEY COURSE POLICIES

Instructor Interaction

Please feel free to stop by my office during office hours (Fridays 4PM – 6PM) or make an appointment to see me. The best way to reach me is by e-mail franksutera@ufl.edu. I check my e-mail account regularly, but please do not expect a response by e-mail after normal business hours/over the weekend. If I have not written back within 48 hours, please send your email again. As my email is considered a state public record, I do not discuss grades or any student records issues via e-mail. Please schedule a meeting with me to discuss these issues. The classroom is typically not an appropriate place for these discussions.

Late or Missed Work

Deadlines for each assignment will be given and students are expected to meet them. Late assignments will automatically lose a full letter grade for each day it is late (e.g. B to a C). Some consideration, however, might be given (at the discretion of the instructor) if there are extenuating circumstances such as prolonged hospitalization, family death, or extended individual sickness; however, you need to notify the instructor before the deadline is missed, not after the fact.

Attendance

This course focuses on class participation and group discussion. Your attendance is an important aspect of this course. Absences will harm your grade. You are responsible for notifying the professor in advance of the cause of your absence and, if it is due to illness, provide a note from your medical provider. For further information on attendance policy, please consult: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

Email Policy

Happy to answer questions via email. We're all busy, so if you shoot me an email I will do my best to revert ASAP. Use common sense when emailing.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." [The Honor Code](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with me

I will document and report all honor code violations, including cheating and plagiarism. The minimum penalty for a violation of the honor code is a zero on the assignment or exam, but may be higher depending on the severity of the violation.

Professionalism

As students I expect you to maintain a high level of professionalism in all of our interactions. This includes being courteous and respectful to all members of the course. Being respectful includes making sure you are not distracting to others via your cell phone or computer usage, talking with others during lecture, or arriving or leaving late – practice your professionalism. We will be having a number of guest speakers that you will be engaging with. These are not only professionals, they are my friends. I therefore expect your utmost respect and attention while they are giving us their time.

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc>) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals> ([Links to an external site.](#)). 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/> ([Links to an external site.](#))

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENT

Grading

I will be as fair and impartial as is humanly possible in the grading process. Each of you will be graded on the same criteria. Because of this, no extra work or special assignments will be given. Normally, by the time I return your graded assignment, I have looked at each person's work at least several times and feel comfortable with the grade assigned to it. Grades are earned; they are not gifts. Grades are awarded on the basis of quality, not the amount of time expended. I don't round up (e.g., if you get 89.9 points, you earn a B+ not an A-). I will keep grades posted on Canvas - it is your responsibility to check on your progress throughout the semester.

Grade components are

Attendance and Active Participation: 25%

- Attendance and active participation are mandatory. Students will be expected to participate in various interactive exercises and to be fully engaged at all times unless cleared in advance with the professor. Each absence after the drop/add period will result in reduction in the grade for attendance. After due warning, the professor may prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a lower or failing grade for excessive absences (please note: more than two unexcused absences during the semester will be considered "excessive absences." You are responsible for **notifying the professor in advance of the cause of your absence** and, if it is due to illness, provide a note from your medical provider. For further information on attendance policy, please consult: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

Individual Assignment: 25%

- Individual assignments will provide an opportunity for you to explore various aspects of Publicity in the entertainment industry. These will include:
 - Brief reports on selected topics (selected in consultation with professor) – these will be based on topics discussed in class, takeaways from presentations by speakers, and readings.
 - A brief precis on elements of assigned readings or topics covered in class
 - Segments of your Final Project
 - Speakers Questions: You will be expected to both listen to and engage with our guest speakers. This includes preparing questions for them, real-time, as they speak. You will at times be called upon to ask directly to the guest speaker, time permitting.

You will be required to submit 3 questions, based on any in-class presentations, to the Professor at the end of that class.

Quizzes: 25%

- Quizzes will be designed to test the students' understanding of key concepts of entertainment communication essentials addressed in the course, textbook and/or in supplemental readings, and those discussed in class by the professor and/or guest lecturers.

Final Project: 25%

- You will be required to create a TV Show concept to pitch. This will be based on what is learned, and to some extent, created, over the course of the semester. You will be required to create written and visual materials, including editing your project's Sizzle Reel (or pitch tape).

Grading for the course follows current UF grading policies for assigning grade points (see [here](#)).

The grading scale for the course is as follows:

A = 93.0-100%
A- = 90.0-92.99%
B+ = 87.0-89.99%
B = 83.0-86.99%
B- = 80.0-82.99%
C+ = 77.0-79.99%
C = 74.0-76.99%
C- = 70.0-73.99%
D+ = 67.0-69.99%
D = 64.0-66.99%
D- = 60.0-63.99%
E = below 60%

Further information about grades and grading policy may be found [here](#).

Tentative Course Schedule

Aug 22 Course Overview

- TV Show Overview - Formats, Scripted vs Unscripted, Who Is Involved
 - Studio Role
 - Network Role
 - Production Company Role
 - Showrunner Role
 - Legal, Marketing, etc.

August 29 TV Agent's View of the Industry

- What Does A Producer Do?
- Production Company Structure and Role in the Industry
- Role of Agency / Agent
 - CAA, ICM, WME, Innovative,
- Guest Speaker – Rabih Gholam – Head of Unscripted, Innovative Artists

Sept 5 Development of a TV Show Concept

- New Idea – Original IP
- Acquired Format
- Process
- Attaching Talent / IP

Quiz #1 - Topics covered Aug 22, Aug 29 and Sept 5

Sept 12 Pitching & Selling

- Sizzle Reel & Pitch Deck
 - Purpose
 - Process to Make
 - Examples
- Pitching Schedule

Sept 19 A TV Producer's Perspective

- *Unscripted Television*
 - *Reality*
 - *Game Shows*
 - *Competition*
 - *Hidden Camera*
 - *Documentary / Follow*
- *Guest Speaker -Clay Newbill – Executive Producer and Showrunner – Shark Tank*

Sept 26 Development Deals for TV Show

- Casting
- Presentation
- Pilot
- Series Order

Quiz #2 - Topics covered Sept 12, Sept 19 and Sept 26

Oct 3 Pre Production

- Budgets
- Calendars
- Staffing
- Casting

Oct 10 Final Project Overview

Producing a TV Show

- *Production Timelines*
- *Departments*
- *Locations*
- *Creative*
- *Budgets/Legal*
- *Approvals*
- *Guest Speaker – Katy Farzanrad – Executive Producer – RuPaul’s Drag Race All Stars*

Quiz #3 - Topics Covered Oct 3, Oct 10

Oct 17 **UF Homecoming – NO CLASS**

Oct 24 **Post Producing a TV Show**

- What is Post Production
- Post Production Timelines
- What Companies are Involved in the Process
- Production Company and Network Relationship
- Guest Speaker – Editor TBD

Oct 31 On Air

- PR / Marketing Campaigns
- Ratings / Viewers / Views
- Post Mortem
- Wrap Out
- Show Bible

- Nov 7** **Season 2**
- Ratings / Viewers / Views
 - What makes a hit?
 - Prep

Quiz #4 - Oct 24, Oct 31 and Nov7

Nov 14 **Final Project Presentations Part 1**

Nov 21 **Final Project Presentations Part 2**

Standard UF Policy Information and Link

UF Grading Policy

<http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=2020#grades> (Links to an external site.)

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx> (Links to an external site.)

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Software Use

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Student Privacy

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see: <http://registrar.ufl.edu/catalog0910/policies/regulationferpa.html> (Links to an external site.)

In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Policy on Course Syllabi 3 UF, Academic Affairs, July 28th, 2021 Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Campus Resources

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care:

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc> ([Links to an external site.](#)), and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or <http://www.police.ufl.edu/> ([Links to an external site.](#)).

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu. <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml> (Links to an external site.).

Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. <https://www.crc.ufl.edu/> (Links to an external site.).

Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask> (Links to an external site.). Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/> (Links to an external site.).

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> (Links to an external site.).

Student Complaints

Campus: https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf (Links to an external site.).

On-Line Students Complaints: <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process> (Links to an external site.).