ADVANCED WRITING FOR THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA

FALL 2015
RTV 3101 03D4

Time periods 7-9 Wednesday
1:55 p.m.-4:55 p.m.
Weimer 3020

Instructor
Churchill Roberts
Professor of Telecommunication
3040A Weimer Hall
392-1545
371-7969 (home)  352-284-2557 (cell)
crobert@ufl.edu

Documentary Websites

http://www.pbs.org/harrymoore/
http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/negroeswithguns/
http://www.jou.ufl.edu/documentary/angelofahlem/angelofahlem.html
http://www.petrginz.com/

Office hours
Monday, 10-11 and 2-5 or any other day or time by appointment

Description of the course

This course is designed to provide an overview of the principles of scriptwriting, and to instruct students in how to apply these principles through practical exercises involving commercials, corporate videos, documentaries, feature films, and television genres such as comedy and drama. Another objective is to help students develop analytical skills for evaluating dramatic structure and presentation skills for pitching story ideas. The course will be comprised of lectures, in-exercises, screenings, analyses, and discussions.

Handouts
All materials are available on Canvas. No trees will be sacrificed!

**Grading**

- Television commercial/presentation 15%
- Corporate video script 15%
- Documentary visual treatment 10%
- Documentary proposal/presentation 15%
- Character sketch/dialogue exercise 15%
- Final project/presentation 20%*
- Attendance and in-class exercises 5%
- Readings reports 5%

*The final project, which will be presented and handed in at our last class meeting on Tuesday, December 16 from 3-5 p.m. in our regular classroom, 3020, will be either the beginning of an original screenplay or screenplay adaptation or a television drama/situation comedy.

Warning: Punctuality is most important in this industry. Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade per day.

**Attendance**

Students are expected to attend and participate in all classes. The only way to receive full credit for attendance is to have no unexcused absences. **Note: There is no such thing as an excused absence to do something for another course.** No incompletes will be given without a medical reason.

Information on current University of Florida grading policies can be found at: [http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html](http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html)

**Grade scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A- to A</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>B- to B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>C- to C+</td>
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Readings

Readings are posted on the Canvas website. Several years ago I replaced a textbook (and a test based on the textbook) with selected readings and an additional writing assignment. RTV3101 is, after all, a writing course. The good news was it saved students a considerable amount of money. The bad news was students for the most part ignored the readings. Feedback from previous classes suggested the remedy was to provide an incentive, so beginning last year completion of the readings counted up to five points toward the final grade. There are 12 readings, most of them quite short. To receive complete credit, you should e-mail me a short note (a paragraph or two will do) about each reading—what it was about and what you got from it. The e-mail is due the Tuesday after the reading is assigned. Students who complete all 12 readings will receive 5 points. Fewer completed readings will result in fewer points.

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](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](https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results).

**Prerequisites**

In order 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.

**Course schedule**

- **Week 1**  
  August 26  
  Introduction to course  
  Scripts, scripts, and more scripts  
  Stages of script development  
  Reading 1 and 2 (due Tuesday, September 1)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>September 2</th>
<th>Stages of developing a creative concept</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading 3</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>September 9</td>
<td>Storyboarding and writing TV commercials</td>
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<td>Examples of TV commercials</td>
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<td>Reading 4 and 5</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>September 16</td>
<td>Corporate and instructional video</td>
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<td>Reading 6</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>September 23</td>
<td>In-class presentation of commercials</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>September 30</td>
<td>Documentary Film</td>
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<td>Reading 7</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>October 7</td>
<td>Dramatic structure for documentary and fiction film</td>
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<td>Reading 8</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>October 14</td>
<td>Plot driven versus character driven documentary</td>
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<td>Pitfalls of the observational film</td>
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<td>Pitching a story idea</td>
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<td>Reading 9</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>October 21</td>
<td>In-class documentary pitch</td>
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<td>Reading 10</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>October 28</td>
<td>Characters and dialogue</td>
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</table>
The characters in *Casablanca*

Reading 11

**Week 11** November 4 Writing dialogue

Reading 12

**November 11** VETERANS’ DAY HOLIDAY

Week 12 November 18 Adaptations

November 25 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week 13 December 2 Adaptations and Comedy writing

Week 14 December 9 Comedy writing

Week 15 December 16 Presentation and discussion of final projects

3-5 p.m. (in our regular classroom)

**DUE DATES FOR ASSIGNMENTS**

September 23 In-class presentation of commercials

September 30 Corporate video script

October 14 Documentary visual treatment

October 21 In-class documentary proposal (pitch)

November 18 Character sketch/dialogue assignment

December 16 In-class presentation of final projects

3-5 p.m. (in our regular classroom)