

COM175-1 FA15 - Scriptwriting for Television and Film
Instructor – Dr. Alan Hueth
Copy of Syllabi from Canvas

Course Introduction & Resources

It all starts with a script! Every film and television (TV) program -- no matter what type -- is based on ideas and instructions conveyed through a script or some other pre-script document that the producer, director, and other crew members need in order to create a film or TV program. Given this fact, scriptwriting is *the* foundation (and most important component) for creating film and TV programs.

The past 35 years of innovation -- starting with the inception of cable TV (especially HBO and CNN) and the internet --has created an explosion of new television and film program content throughout the world. With this expansion has come a huge need for creatively-skilled and dependable writers who have the ability to write many different forms and types of scripts for all of the different types of film and television programs.

This course is based on these facts. It is a survey of the scriptwriting process and the techniques for writing scripts for a variety of different program forms for TV, film, and new media. It is a hands-on course--designed to give you experience in writing scripts for the *most common* types of shows on TV and film. These include interview shows, news/documentaries and reality shows, TV commercials, public service announcements (PSA's), television show promos and film trailers, corporate media and new programs, and TV and film drama and comedy.

Your understanding of the approaches and techniques of scriptwriting will be broadened and deepened through screening, discussion, analysis, and practice in writing these different kinds of programs. You'll learn the craft and conventions of scriptwriting by experiencing the writing process--first hand-- through individual and group exercises and scriptwriting assignments.

You have two resources for this course:

1. The textbook for this course is [Writing Scripts for Television, Film & New Media](#) (Oxford University Press), by Alan Hueth--available (FREE!) in the "Modules" section on this website. It includes chapters on all textbook content; and
2. The textbook's complementary website (under construction) and the *Chapter Website Links* which are included at the end of each chapter--these are also FREE! There are dozens of links to full programs and clips of the different film, television, and new media programs that are included in the textbook readings.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's)

As a result of taking this course, you will be able to do the following: demonstrate an understanding and ability to...

1. ...apply the elements and principles of drama in writing scripts for film, TV, and new media programs;
2. ...practice the creative process for writing scripts for the different types of film, TV, and new media programs;
3. ...do basic pre-script research for film, TV, and new media scripts;
4. ...formulate communication objectives for film, TV, and new media programs, and write scripts that accomplish those objectives;
5. ...envision creative concepts in scripts for film, TV, and new media programs;
6. ...write scripts in the conventional and professionally-correct script formats for film, TV, and new media programs;
7. ...rewrite script material that has been critiqued and returned to you--for making changes/writing additional drafts, etc.; and
8. Demonstrate an appreciation for, and an ability to give and receive constructive criticism of your own and others' creative ideas and scripts.

Activities

The course learning outcomes will be accomplished through the following activities:

- Mini-lectures
- Textbook readings
- Supplemental internet readings on scriptwriting
- Active student discussions of course topics -- based on the readings and website contents
- Viewing, analysis, and critique of student-produced and professional, award-winning TV/film/new media programming
- Submitting In-class notes/outlines (when requested), along with *Big Questions* textbook chapter reports
- In-class, ungraded writing exercises
- Graded scriptwriting assignments
- Analysis and critique of your own and other's concepts and scripts

Evaluation: Assignments, Points & Grading Scale, Policies

<i>The Ten Big Questions</i> chapter reports and In-Class Lecture Notes 20 @ 10 points each	200
<i>Who I Am</i> Script Formatting Assignment	100
TV commercial/PSA/Show Promo Action Plan, Scripts & Storyboards	100
Interview Show Action Plan and Script	100
Documentary/Reality Show Action Plan and Treatment/Script	150
Corporate Media Action Plan & Treatment/Script	100
Screenplay Logline, Synopsis, Step Outline, Treatment, and Script Combo	150
Attendance & Participation	100
TOTAL POINTS:	1000

- Your grades for projects will be based upon grading criteria provided for each assignment -- and how well you satisfy the criteria. The criteria include several components:
 1. Your creativity in utilizing the elements of drama to (potentially) elicit *pathos* in the audience through your script *visions*;
 2. Your ability to write material in the appropriate script format -- based on the type of show; and
 3. The clarity, completeness, and quality of the other areas that are included in each assignment.
- The specific criteria are included on each assignment page posted on this website. Be sure to include every component and requirement of the assignment -- or the submission will be considered incomplete and will negatively affect your grade. Also, your grades for these assignments will be posted on the *Grades* section of this course website.
- **A Special Note:** I will do my best to return your graded scripts back to you in a reasonable amount of time. It usually takes 1-2 weeks to grade and return assignments. The time-length that I need is based on the complexity and length of the assignment, other courses and projects I'm working on from week-to-week, and how long my *honey-do list* is for each weekend. I usually grade on the weekends which do not have too many other intrusions on my time. In any case, you can count on receiving graded scripts back to you *before* the next assignment is due so that you can benefit from my feedback *before* you write your next script. Your patience on this is much-appreciated.

Grading Scale:

- Your course grade will be based upon the following cumulative point scale:
- 920-1000 A
- 900-919 A-
- 880-899 B+
- 820-879 B
- 800-819 B-
- 780-799 C+
- 720-779 C
- 700-719 C-
- 680-699 D+
- 620-679 D
- 600-619 D-

Course Schedule

- FIRST MENTION OF CHAPTER READING is **emboldened** and signifies when that chapter's *The Ten Big Questions* reading report is due.

WEEK 1

- **Tuesday, 9/1/15** NO READING ASSIGNED
 - A. Syllabus, activities, assignments, etc.
 - B. Introductions
- **Wednesday, 9/2/15 READING: *Writing Scripts... Preface & Introduction; and Chapter 1: Principles & Elements of Outstanding Scriptwriting***
 - A. Introductions (continued)
 - B. Discussion: principles and elements of drama
- **Friday, 9/4/15 READING: *Chapter 2: Vision & Language of Scriptwriting***
 - A. Discussion: vision and language of scriptwriting
 - B. Screen examples on website

WEEK 2

- **Monday, 9/7/15** --NO CLASS (LABOR DAY)
- **Wednesday, 9/9/15 READING: *Chapter 4: The Vision: Scriptwriting Formats***
 - A. Discussion: *Who I Am* assignment
 - B. Exercise: Script Formatting

- **Friday, 9/11/15 READING: *Chapter 3: The Vision -- Creativity & the Process of Scriptwriting***
 - A. Discussion: creativity and the process of scriptwriting
 - B. Work on *Who I Am* assignment -- w/instructor feedback

WEEK 3

- **Monday, 9/14/15 READING: *Chapter 9: News & Sports***
WHO I AM ASSIGNMENT DUE
 - A. Discussion: writing for news & sports
 - B. Screen program samples
 - C. Group or individual exercise
- **Wednesday, 9/16/15 READING: none assigned**
 - A. Exercise continued
- **Friday, 9/18/15 READING: *Chapter 10: Interview Shows***
 - A. Discussion: Interview Show Assignment
 - B. Discussion: writing for interview shows
 - C. Screen program samples

WEEK 4

- **Monday, 9/21/15 READING: review *Ch.10 Interview Shows & Ch. 3--the creative process***
 - A. Screening & Discussion--Interview show types & styles (continued)
 - B. Group Brainstorming session: interview show ideas
- **Wednesday, 9/23/15 READING: review *Ch.10 Interview Shows & Ch. 3--the creative process***
 - A. Group Exercise: interview show ideas--type, style, and content
- **Friday, 9/25/15 READING: review *Ch.10 Interview Shows & Ch. 3--the creative process***
 - A. Group Presentation--their interview show concept

WEEK 5

- **Monday, 9/28/15 READING: review *Ch. 10 Interview Shows & Ch. 3--the creative process***
 - A. Individual Exercise: start writing your interview show w/instructor feedback
- **Wednesday, 9/30/15 READING: *Chapter 11--Documentary & Reality Shows***
 - A. Discussion: documentary & reality shows
 - B. Screen samples of documentaries and reality shows
- **Friday, 10/2/15 READING: review *Ch. 11--Documentary...***
INTERVIEW ASSIGNMENT DUE
 - A. Discussion & screen: documentary & reality shows (continued)

WEEK 6

- **Monday, 10/5/15** READING: review *Ch. 11--Documentary...*
A. Discussion & screen: documentary & reality shows (continued)
- **Wednesday, 10/7/15** READING: review *Ch. 11--Documentary...*
A. Group Brainstorm session: documentary or reality show series
- **Friday, 10/9/15** READING: review *Ch. 11--Documentary...*
A. Group Presentation--documentary or reality show series concept

WEEK 7

- **Monday, 10/12/15** READING: *Chapter 12 Corporate & Educational Media*
A. Discussion of corporate & educational programs
B. Screening & discussion of corp & ed programs
- **Wednesday, 10/14/15** READING: review *Ch. 12 Corporate...*
A. Screening & discussion of corp & ed programs
B. Corporate & Educational Script Assignment
- **Friday, 10/16/15** READING: review *Ch. 12 Corporate...*
DOCUMENTARY ASSIGNMENT DUE
A. Group Brainstorm session: a corporate & educational program

WEEK 8

- **Monday, 10/19/15** READING: review *Ch. 12 Corporate...*
A. Group Presentation: Corporate & Educational Program Ideas
- **Wednesday, 10/21/15** READING: *Chapter 8: Commercials, PSA's & Promos*
A. Discussion: Commercials, PSA's and Promos
B. Screening & discussion
- **Friday, 10/23/15** NO CLASS--FALL BREAK

WEEK 9

- **Monday, 10/26/15** READING: Review *Ch. 8: Commercials...*
CORPORATE & EDUCATIONAL ASSIGNMENT DUE
A. Screening & Discussion
- **Wednesday, 10/28/15** READING: Review *Ch. 8: Commercials...*
A. Group Brainstorming Session: Commercial OR PSA OR Show Promo Campaign
- **Friday, 10/30/15** READING: Review *Ch. 8: Commercials...*
A. Group Brainstorming--Commercial Campaign...etc.

WEEK 10

- **Monday, 11/2/15 READING: *Chapter 5: Film & Television Drama***
 - A. Discussion: film and television drama
 - B. Screening & discussion
- Wednesday, 11/4/15 READING: *review Ch. 5 Film...*
 - A. Screening & discussion
- Friday, 11/6/15 READING: *review Ch. 5 Film...*
COMMERCIAL/PSA/PROMO CAMPAIGN ASSIGNMENT DUE
 - A. Screening & discussion

WEEK 11

- **Monday, 11/9/15 READING: *Chapter 6 Film & Television Comedy***
 - A. Discussion: film and television drama
 - B. Screening & discussion
- Wednesday, 11/11/15 READING: *review Ch. 6 Film...*
 - A. Screening & discussion
- Friday, 11/13/15 READING: *review Ch. 6 Film...*
 - A. Screening & discussion

WEEK 12

- **Monday, 11/16/15 READING: *Chapter 7: Short Films***
 - A. Principles & Elements of Drama in Short Films
 - B. Screenplay Synopsis/Short Comedy/Drama Script Assignment
 - C. Screen, analyze, discuss short films
- Wednesday, 11/18/15 READING: *review Ch. 7 Short Films*
 - A. Short films--screening & discussion
- Friday, 11/20/15 READING: *review Ch. 7 Short Films*
 - A. Short films--screening & discussion

WEEK 13

- Monday, 11/23/15 READING: *review Ch. 7 Short Films*
 - A. Short films (continued)
- Wednesday, 11/25/15 NO CLASS--HAPPY THANKSGIVING!
- Friday, 11/27/15 NO CLASS--HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

WEEK 14

- Monday, 11/30/15 READING: *review Ch. 7 Short Films*
A. Discussion: short film ideas
- Wednesday, 12/2/15 READING: *review Ch. 7 Short Films*
A. Synopsis/short film script writing exercise w/instructor feedback
- Friday, 12/4/15 READING: *review Ch. 7 Short Films*
A. Synopsis/short film script writing exercise w/instructor feedback

WEEK 15

- **Monday, 12/7/15 READING: Chapter 13: Ethics and Law in Scriptwriting**
A. Discussion: ethics and law in scriptwriting
B. Ethics writing case study & Potter Box Model
- Wednesday, 12/9/15 READING: *Review Ethics...*
A. Laws and legal issues (case studies)
- **Friday, 12/11/15 READING: Chapter 14: Getting Started...**
A. Starting a writing career, getting experience, your foot in the door, "should and should-not do's," resources, links, etc.
- MONDAY, 12/14/15, 10 a.m. (or before):
TV/FILM SYNOPSIS-SCRIPT ASSIGNMENT DUE

Assignments: An Overview

Be sure to check out Point TV's Vimeo Channel:

<http://vimeo.com/channels/pointtv/52421676#/channels/pointtv/page:2>

The course learning outcomes will be accomplished through the following reading and writing assignments: *NEEDS A BIT MORE EDITING

- The Big 10 Questions Chapter Reports
- *Who I Am* Script
- Interview show script (sports, news/topic/issue oriented, etc.)
- Documentary treatment & script
- TV commercial/PSA script
- Corporate/industrial action plan & video script
- Screenplay synopsis for feature-length film, or short (7-10 min) drama/comedy script

Outstanding and producible scripts and concepts will be presented to producers in the COM 425 TV Workshop (fall, 2013) and COM 442 Field Production short film (spring, 2016) classes for consideration for production and to be included on PLNU's *Point TV-Channel 23* cable schedule and Vimeo channel.

Course Policies--READ CAREFULLY

Deadlines :

A very important part of your preparation for working in the media industries (or any professional field) is "professional socialization." This includes your ability to do your job well and accomplish tasks on time. Deadlines are a fact of life in the media, and it is important that you begin to practice/demonstrate this ability to meet deadlines. Therefore, all assignments must be submitted on time. They are due during the class session noted in the course schedule. They must be in the proper format, typed, and all pages stapled together. Ten (10) points automatically deducted for unstapled submissions. **NO LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Also, you are not allowed to use the classroom computers and printer to print your graded scriptwriting assignments.

In-Class Participation:

Ten (10) percent of your grade in this class is based upon this aspect of your performance in this course. You will not receive a high "A" in this portion of the course simply by attending all class sessions and being on time. That is noble and notable, however, that is only a baseline requirement for receiving an "A" in attendance and participation. An "A" grade participant is one who exhibits excellent participation. They are consistently and actively involved in the class discussions. They are honest, yet tactful and respectful in their evaluation of other's work, and are open to criticism of their own work. They consistently provide insightful comments, pose pertinent and important questions, and generally enhance everyone's understanding of the course material by their presence and input. An excellent participant also exhibits an energetic and positive attitude throughout the semester.

Attendance:

This is another important part of your professional socialization. Unexcused absences and tardiness are not acceptable in the media professions. Many people are often counting on you to do your job, and if you don't come through on time--due to absence or tardiness, the entire organization/team suffers. Therefore, you are required to attend all class sessions, unless otherwise excused. I will usually shut the door at the beginning of class. If you have to open the door to enter after class starts, do tell me after class why you were late. Consistent tardiness will negatively affect your attendance and participation grade. Be aware that your attendance and participation grade is 10% of the course grade, and often makes the difference in your final course grade.

From the Provost:

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes in which a student is registered is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. Therefore, regular attendance and participation in each course are minimal requirements to be met. There are no allowed or excused absences except when absences are necessitated by certain university-sponsored activities and are approved in writing by the Provost.

Whenever the number of accumulated absences in a class, for any cause, exceeds ten percent of classes (this is equivalent to missing five-5 sessions in a 15-week semester course), the faculty member has the option of filing a written report to the Vice Provost for Academic Administration which may result in de-enrollment, pending any resolution of the excessive absences between the faculty member and the student. If more than 20 percent (9 sessions or more in a semester-long course) is reported as missed, the faculty member may initiate the student's de-enrollment from the course without advance notice to the student. If the date of de-enrollment is past the last date to withdraw from a class, the student will be assigned a grade of "F" or "NC." There are no refunds for courses where a de-enrollment was processed.

In-Class Computer Use

During the class sessions, computers are to be used only for script research and writing assignments for this course, and during class timeframes assigned for those purposes. Please do your web surfing, email, and homework (for this or other classes) at other times. Also, **no personal laptops or other electronic devices are allowed to be used during class sessions.** Also, you need to save all material written during in-class writing sessions to a university-provided shared hard drive, or a thumb drive.

University Policies

Campus Computer/Network Usage

Careful and ethical use of computing resources is the responsibility of every user. Students will be held to a standard of accountability for how they use computers at PLNU.

Link to Computer Use Policy:

<http://www.ptloma.edu/studentdevelopment/StudentHandbook/index.htm>

Academic Accommodations

All students are expected to meet the standards for this course as set by the instructor. However, students with learning disabilities who may need accommodations should discuss options with the Academic Support Center during the first two weeks of class. The ASC will contact professors with suggested classroom needs and accommodations. Approved documentation must be on file in the ASC prior to the start of the semester.

Link to Academic Support Center:

<http://www.ptloma.edu/studentdevelopment/StudentHandbook/index.htm>

Cheating and Dishonesty

Students will be honorable in all of their academic work. Dishonesty in assignments, examinations, or any other academic work is an affront to fellow students and faculty and will not be tolerated. In addition, dishonesty as a student is not acceptable. ...Student Handbook

Link to [Academic Honesty Policy](#):

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Link to Computer Use Policy:

<http://www.ptloma.edu/studentdevelopment/StudentHandbook/index.htm> (Links to an external site.)