COM175-1 FA16 - Scriptwriting For Television And Film – Hueth

MWF 11:00 – 11:55

PLNU Mission Statement

To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where **minds** are **engaged and challenged, character** is **modeled** and **formed**, and **service** becomes **an expression of faith**. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

This course is directed, especially, towards the "teaching" and "sending" part of the PLNU mission -- especially for the media communication and art-video performance majors, and cinema studies minor program. You'll be taught much about how to write scripts for films and television shows -- much-needed knowledge and skills that you'll acquire and use to be "sent" out into the professional media world to make a difference.

Course Introduction, Resources, Websites

INTRODUCTION

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 36 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.

RESOURCES

You have two resources for this course:

1. The textbook for this course is <u>Writing Scripts for Television, Film & New Media</u> (Oxford University Press), by Dr. Alan Hueth (your instructor)--and is available (FREE!) in the "Modules" section on this website. It includes chapters on all textbook content; and

2. The textbook's *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.

WEBSITES

Get to Know the *Point TV*

Acquaint yourself with some cool Point TV websites below to guide you for this assignment! See all kinds of projects and films that can inform, inspire, and stir some creative thinking for this course and beyond.

Here's the *Point TV (Links to an external site.)* website that includes show descriptions, production schedules, crew lists for shows, press releases/news about the latest news about the station and the media com and broadcast journalism students and their activities. Some of these shows were born in this course AND some of the scripts were written in this course!
Point TV's Facebook (Links to an external site.)
Point TV Vimeo Channel (Links to an external site.)
Point TV YouTube Channel (Links to an external site.)

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:

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- Mini-lectures
- Textbook readings and chapter reports
- 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
- In-class notes/outlines/exercises and follow up Discussions on group exercises
- In-class, ungraded individual and group writing exercises
- Graded scriptwriting assignments
- Analysis and critique of your own and other's concepts and scripts

Evaluation: Assignments, Points & Grading Scale, Policies

Scriptwriting for.... book reading reports and In-Class Lecture Notes 20 @ 10 points each	200
Who I Am 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
Short Film, Websode, or Feature-Length Screenplay	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.

- Script Evaluation Codes 🔲🖉:🔲🖉 I will start using abbreviations rather than full-word/sentence explanations in my evaluations of your scripts this semester. These codes will consist of single letters and short abbreviations. You can click on the Script Evaluation Codes to see these abbreviations and interpret my feedback--evaluations of your scripts. If you ever need a more complete explanation, I'm glad to meet with you and provide some additional explanation. This is all created for your benefit, learning, and growth as a scriptwriter.

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- <u>Grading Scale</u>:
- 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 the day when that chapter's Reading Report assignment(s) is/are due.

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    WEEK 1:

- **Tuesday, 8/30/16** NO READING ASSIGNED
    A. Syllabus, activities, assignments, etc.
    B. Introductions

- **Wednesday, 8/31/16 READING:** *Writing Scripts... Preface & Introduction; and Chapter 1: Principles & Elements of Outstanding Scriptwriting*

- A. Introductions (continued)
  B. Discussion: principles and elements of drama

- **Friday, 9/2/16 READING:** *Chapter 2: Vision & Language of Scriptwriting*
  A. Discussion: vision and language of scriptwriting
  B. Screen examples on website

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- **WEEK 2:**

- **Monday, 9/5/16**--NO CLASS (LABOR DAY)

- **Wednesday, 9/7/16 READING:** *Chapter 4: The Vision: Scriptwriting Formats*
  A. Discussion: *Who I Am* assignment
  B. Exercise: Script Formatting

- **Friday, 9/9/16 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

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- **WEEK 3:**

- **Monday, 9/12/16 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, 9/14/16** READING: none assigned
  A. Exercise continued

- **Friday, 9/16/16 READING:** *Chapter 10: Interview Shows*
  A. Discussion: Interview Show Assignment
  B. Discussion: writing for interview shows
  C. Screen program samples

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- **WEEK 4:**

- **Monday, 9/19/16** 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, 9/21/16** READING: review *Ch.10 Interview Shows & Ch. 3--the creative process*
  A. Group Exercise: interview show ideas--type, style, and content

- **Friday, 9/23/16** READING: review *Ch.10 Interview Shows & Ch. 3--the creative process*
  A. Group Presentation--their interview show concept

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- **WEEK 5:**

- **Monday, 9/26/16** READING: *review Ch. 10 Interview Shows & Ch. 3--the creative process*
  A. Individual Exercise: start writing your interview show w/instructor feedback

- **Wednesday, 9/28/16 READING: *Chapter 11--Documentary & Reality Shows***
  A. Discussion: documentary & reality shows
  B. Screen samples of documentaries and reality shows

- **Friday, 9/30/16** READING: review *Ch. 11--Documentary...*
  INTERVIEW ASSIGNMENT DUE
  A. Discussion & screen: documentary & reality shows (continued)

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- **WEEK 6:**

- **Monday, 10/3/16** READING: review *Ch. 11--Documentary...*
  A. Discussion & screen: documentary & reality shows (continued)

- **Wednesday, 10/5/16** READING: review *Ch. 11--Documentary...*
  A. Group Brainstorm session: documentary or reality show series

- **Friday, 10/7/16** READING: review *Ch. 11--Documentary...*
  A. Group Presentation--documentary or reality show series concept

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- **WEEK 7:**

- **Monday, 10/10/16 READING:** *Chapter 12 Corporate & Educational Media*
  A. Discussion of corporate & educational programs
  B. Screening & discussion of corp & ed programs

- **Wednesday, 10/12/16** READING: *review Ch. 12 Corporate...*
  A. Screening & discussion of corp & ed programs
  B. Corporate & Educational Script Assignment

- **Friday, 10/14/16** READING: *review Ch. 12 Corporate...*
  DOCUMENTARY ASSIGNMENT DUE
  A. Group Brainstorm session: a corporate & educational program

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- **WEEK 8:**

- **Monday, 10/17/16** READING: *review Ch. 12 Corporate...*
  A. Group Presentation: Corporate & Educational Program Ideas

- **Wednesday, 10/19/16 READING:** *Chapter 8: Commercials, PSA's & Promos*
  A. Discussion: Commercials, PSA's and Promos
  B. Screening & discussion

- **Friday, 10/21/16** NO CLASS--FALL BREAK

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- **WEEK 9**

- **Monday, 10/24/16** READING: *Review Ch. 8: Commercials...*
  CORPORATE & EDUCATIONAL ASSIGNMENT DUE
  A. Screening & Discussion

- **Wednesday, 10/26/16** READING: *Review Ch. 8: Commercials...*
  A. Group Brainstorming Session: Commercial OR PSA OR Show Promo Campaign

- **Friday, 10/28/16** READING: *Review Ch. 8: Commercials...*
  A. Group Brainstorming--Commercial Campaign...etc.

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- **WEEK 10:**

- **Monday, 10/31/16 READING:** *Chapter 5: Film & Television Drama*
  A. Discussion: film and television drama
  B. Screening & discussion

- Wednesday, 11/2/16 READING: *review Ch. 5 Film...*
  A. Screening & discussion

- Friday, 11/4/16 READING: *review Ch. 5 Film...*
  COMMERCIAL/PSA/PROMO CAMPAIGN ASSIGNMENT DUE
  A. Screening & discussion

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- **WEEK 11:**

- **Monday, 11/7/16 READING:** *Chapter 6 Film & Television Comedy*
  A. Discussion: film and television drama
  B. Screening & discussion

- Wednesday, 11/9/16 READING: *review Ch. 6 Film...*
  A. Screening & discussion

- Friday, 11/11/16 READING: *review Ch. 6 Film...*
  A. Screening & discussion

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- **WEEK 12:**

- **Monday, 11/14/16 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, 11/16/16 READING: *review Ch. 7 Short Films*
  A. Short films--screening & discussion

- Friday, 11/18/16 READING: *review Ch. 7 Short Films*
  A. Short films--screening & discussion

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- **WEEK 13:**

- Monday, 11/21/16 READING: *review Ch. 7 Short Films*
  A. Short films (continued)

- Wednesday, 11/23/16 NO CLASS--HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

- Friday, 11/25/16 NO CLASS--HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

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- **WEEK 14:**

- Monday, 11/28/16 READING: *review Ch. 7 Short Films*
  A. Discussion: short film ideas

- Wednesday, 11/30/16 READING: *review Ch. 7 Short Films*
  A. Synopsis/short film script writing exercise w/instructor feedback

- Friday, 12/2/16 READING: *review Ch. 7 Short Films*
  A. Synopsis/short film script writing exercise w/instructor feedback

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- **WEEK 15:**

- **Monday, 12/5/16 READING: *Chapter 13: Ethics and Law in Scriptwriting***
  A. Discussion: ethics and law in scriptwriting
  B. Ethics writing case study & Potter Box Model

- Wednesday, 12/7/16 READING: *Review Ethics...*
  A. Laws and legal issues (case studies)

- **Friday, 12/9/16 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.

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- MONDAY, 12/12/16, 10 a.m. (or before):
  TV/FILM SYNOPSIS-SCRIPT ASSIGNMENT DUE

Course Policies--READ CAREFULLY

A very important part of your preparation for working in the media industries (or any professional field) is "professional socialization." This includes the following:

1. Punctual arrival and attendance to all class sessions;

2. A laser focus attention to all in-class lectures, discussions, presentations, and exercises. This means NO SMART PHONE OR COMPUTER USAGE during class time...unless it is required for an assigned in-class exercise; and

3. Submitting all script assignments and reading reports by/before the deadline. It is extremely-important that you begin to demonstrate this ability.   Meeting deadlines is evidence that you have made the assignment (and this course required in your major) **a priority** over other activities that you were able to accomplish that particular week.

Also, you are not allowed to use the classroom computers and printer to print your Scriptwriting for... reading reports.

In-Class Participation:

Ten (10) percent of your grade in this course is based upon this aspect of your performance in this area. 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, probably, the most important part of your professional socialization. Unexcused absences and tardiness are not acceptable in the media professions. And the script is **the foundational component** for program production, and the ability to get the job done and show up is evidence of your seriousness, maturity, and priorities -- someone that your co-workers can count on to get the job done and show up. Therefore, you are required to attend all class sessions (to earn all points).   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. Absences and tardiness will negatively affect your attendance and participation grade -- which can often make 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 4.5 sessions for this 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 this 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.

PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY⊛

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See Academic Policies in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY⊛

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic <u>dis</u>honesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See Academic Policies for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

ee the university's NEW POLICY included in the PLNU undergraduate handbook:

Academic Behavior Policy

Both faculty and students at Point Loma Nazarene University have the right to expect a safe and ordered environment for learning. Any student behavior that is disruptive or threatening is a serious affront to Point Loma Nazarene University as a learning community. Students who fail to adhere to appropriate academic behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Although faculty members communicate general student expectations in their syllabi and disruptive student conduct is already addressed in the Undergraduate Student Handbook, the purpose of this policy is to clarify what constitutes disruptive behavior in the academic setting and what actions faculty and relevant administrative offices may take in response to such disruptive student behavior.

"Disruption," as applied to the academic setting, means classroom, instructor or classmate-related student behavior that a reasonable faculty member would view as interfering with or deviating from normal classroom, class-related, or other faculty-student activity (advising, co-curricular involvement, etc.). Faculty members are encouraged to communicate positive behavior expectations at the first class session and to include them in course syllabi. Examples of disruptive classroom behavior include, but are not limited to:

- persistent speaking without being recognized or interrupting the instructor or other speakers;
- overt inattentiveness (sleeping or reading the newspaper in class);
- inordinate or inappropriate demands for instructor or classroom time or attention;

- unauthorized use of cell phone or computer;
- behavior that distracts the class from the subject matter or discussion;
- unwanted contact with a classmate in person, via social media or other means;
- inappropriate public displays of affection;
- refusal to comply with reasonable instructor direction; and/or
- invasion of personal space, physical threats, harassing behavior or personal insults.

The policy applies if the behavior is reported by a faculty member or academic administrator and occurs exclusively or primarily in a student-faculty member interaction. Incidents which involve both academic and non-academic behavior may result in responses coordinated by the Vice Provost for Academic Administration and the Dean of Students.

Civil and polite expression of disagreement with the course instructor, during times when the instructor permits discussion, is not in itself disruptive behavior and is not prohibited.

Some students possess medical or psychological conditions that may affect functioning within the standards of the university. Although such students may be considered disabled and are protected under the Rehabilitation Act/ADA, they are required to meet the fundamental university academic and behavioral policy as described in the Student Handbook, Undergraduate Catalog and/or faculty syllabi.

PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY ⊛

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY⊛

If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU's Disability Resource Center (DRC) within the first two weeks of class to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at DRC@pointloma.edu. See Disability Resource Center for additional information.

PLNU Campus Computer/Network Usage Policy

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.pointloma.edu/discover/new-student-orientation/campus-life/computer-faqs