COM/ENG 357: Scriptwriting for Serial Media
Spring 2016
Tue./Thur.   12-1:50pm   Black 139

Instructor: Maria Sanders   Office Hours: Bouillon 225
Assistant Professor, Film and Video Studies   Mon. & Wed. 2-4:30p & Thur 9-10a
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                                                                             by appointment)

Course Overview & Learning Objectives

Catalog description: Scriptwriting for basic genres of serial television & the web. Includes study of serial script structure, story, character development and dialog.

- o   Students will gain an understanding of the structure of the television industry and the varying role of the scriptwriter.

- o   Students will learn the different genres and the storytelling conventions of those genres in TV scriptwriting.

- o   Students will learn the importance of the premise, universal appeal, central idea, plot, themes, TV "bibles" and TV characters, development and dialog.

- o   Students will learn the format mechanics and conventions of writing a TV "spec script."

Required Material

- •   Screenplay software (hopefully free) & documentary online rental (about $4).

Requirements, Assignments, & Grading

Complete the required assignments prior to each class session and arrive prepared to discuss them. You will demonstrate your command of the subject matter through:

Draft analyses (2): "C Word" script	10%
"Show Runners" summary	2%
Analysis & comedy spec, scene	10%
Analysis & drama spec, scene	13%
Original series bible & pilot & pitch	30%
Episode & rewrite (or show running)	20%
Final Exam (TBD)	5%
Attendance / Participation	10%
TOTAL	100%

Assignment Policy

Assignments will be submitted **on the due date by midnight (technically 11:59pm)**. If you submit the assignment late, you can only earn 50% credit.   You may only submit an assignment within three days for credit. Assignments will not be accepted after that point, unless you have met with me in person. If you are absent on a day an assignment is due, your assignment is still due that night by 11:59pm.

(Please find the course calendar in a separate document.)

Please note: If you've had classes with me before, you're used to submitting things online. This quarter may require some submissions on paper. This will be noted in the assignment sheet.

Plagiarism

The Film and Video Studies program has a zero tolerance policy regarding plagiarism. If at any point plagiarism is discovered in your work, you will receive an F for the course and will be expelled from the FVS program. If you are not an FVS major, you will receive an F for the course and must meet with the instructor and your department chair to discuss other action.

Plagiarism is defined in the CWU Student Code of Conduct as "the appropriation of any other person's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own work offered for credit." If in doubt, cite your source. If you are going to quote a source verbatim, you must use quotation marks around the material and cite your source. If you are paraphrasing another's work, you still must cite the source.

Attendance & Participation

Attendance will be recorded in order to accurately assess participation. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class period. If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to inform me after class. **Three tardies (or instances of leaving class early) equal one absence.** Keep track of your attendance to make sure you don't exceed the allowable number. *Your attendance grade can be positively affected by your active participation in class, and negatively affected by the lack of it.*

6 or more absences will result in a failing grade for the course. Please don't put both of us in the position where I have to enforce this. Because I will.

Save *your absences for sick days, production shoots, job interviews … etc.* If there is a death in your family or you are hospitalized or otherwise detained, please contact me, your advisor, and the department chair or program director of your major (in the case of FVS, Jon Ward and/or Liahna Armstrong).

The schedule may change, weird stuff comes up, life gets crazy for all of us. I understand that. Please communicate with me if anything is going on that affects your ability to succeed in the class, or if you are concerned, frustrated, overjoyed … let's keep each other in the loop.

Proofreading & Screenplay Format

You are expected to carefully proofread all assignments and scripts. Every assignment grade will include a percentage based on spelling and grammar.

Formatting should follow the script guidelines presented in class, in the textbook, and on the assignment sheets. You may either purchase script formatting software or use one of the free resources available online:

- **Celtx** is great for single-camera comedies and hour dramas – go to celtx.com

- For multi-camera sitcom format, you will have to format manually within celtx or download a free trial of **Movie Magic Screenwriter 6** – screenplay.com/t-mmsdemo.aspx

(Please find the course calendar in a separate document.)

Canvas & Email

The Canvas classroom will contain pertinent course documents. You are responsible for retrieving necessary items to complete your homework from Canvas.

I will be using your school email address or Canvas to contact you. Please check your messages regularly.   If I have to cancel class, I will email everyone and arrange for a note on the door, if possible.

ADA Accommodation

If you have a disability and wish to set up academic adjustments in this class, I will be happy to work with you on this. Please send me an electronic copy of your "Academic Adjustments" form so we can meet to discuss how the approved adjustments will be implemented. If you do not yet have this form, please contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible: Bouillon 140 / ds@cwu.edu / 509-963-1202.

Behavior

Disruptive and/or unkind words or actions will not be tolerated and could result in your removal. Together, we will maintain a respectful, productive environment.

In consideration of me, your classmates, and our shared experience, please turn off your cell phones and other devices when class begins. Laptops may be used, but your participation grade may be affected if it is clear you are not really "present" and engaged in the class.

As writers, we can feel sensitive or exposed when our ideas or scripts are discussed. We'll respect each other and the work, and strive for thoughtful, honest and constructive comments and questions.

(Please find the course calendar in a separate document.)

SPRING '16			COM/ENG 357 - Scriptwriting for Serial Media
			Tue / Thur 12p - 1:50p Black 139
Week 1			
Tue	29-Mar		The Biz
Thur	31-Mar		The Biz / Show analysis
	Assignment:		***"The C Word" 1st & 2nd draft analysis (due Mon. 4/4 by midnight)***
Week 2			
Tue	5-Apr		Comedy
Thur	7-Apr		Comedy
	Assignment:		***Comedy analysis & script (due Mon. 4/11 by midnight)***
Week 3			
Tue	12-Apr		Workshop scripts; Drama
Thur	14-Apr		Drama
	Assignment:		***Hour analysis & scene (due Mon. 4/19 by midnight)***
Week 4			
Tue	19-Apr		Workshop scripts; Bibles
Thur	21-Apr		Bibles; pitching
	Assignment:		***Pitch (due Mon. 4/26 by midnight)***
Week 5			
Tue	26-Apr		Pitches
Thur	28-Apr		Pitches
	Assignment:		***Bible - original series (due Mon. 5/2 by midnight)***
Week 6			
Tue	3-May		Voting / staff assignments
Thur	5-May		Staff meetings
	Assignment:		***Episode assignment (due Mon. 5/9 by midnight)***
Week 7			
Tue	10-May		Workshop episodes
Thur	12-May		Staff meetings
	Assignment:		***Show runner reviews / notes (due Mon. 5/16 by midnight)***

(Please find the course calendar in a separate document.)

Week 8			
Tue	17-May		Staff meetings
Thur	19-May		Staff meetings
Assignment:			**Final draft of episode (due Mon. 5/24 by midnight)**
Week 9			
Tue	24-May		Reality TV; Writing for Web
Thur	26-May		Prep for final
Week 10			
Tue	31-May		TBD
Thur	2-Jun		Final exam
Assignment:			**No assignment**
Week 11			TBD

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