

**SYLLABUS**  
**Radio-Television Writing -- RTV 320**  
**Summer 2009**

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PAC 130

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** A study of the techniques, style and format of script preparation for the radio and television media. Scripts include commercial, news documentary and dramatic programs.

**Most of what you see and hear on television is written. Sitcoms, dramas, soap operas, talk-show jokes, the continuity of “reality” shows, commercials, certainly the news. Being able to write for television and radio is a major skill.**

**TEXT:** *Copywriting for the Electronic Media: A practical Guide*, Milan D. Meeske, fifth edition. (You will definitely need access to the textbook.)

You will also need floppy disks or flash drives and access to Microsoft Word.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

To develop your abilities as a writer in various broadcast formats.

### **Classroom Behavior**

“Students are expected at all times to recognize constituted authority, to conform to the ordinary rules of good conduct, to be truthful, to respect the rights of others, to protect private and public property, and to make the best use of their time toward an education.” -- Texas A&M University System Student Rights and Obligations

**Behavior Tips: When I am talking, do not talk. Listen. Likewise, when another student is talking to me or to the class, do not talk. Listen.**

**Cell phones should be turned off.**

**Times when you leave the room during class should be very, very rare and should only occur when you are ill or otherwise in very great distress. Pay a visit to the bathroom or the water fountain before class begins.**

I'll respect you. I expect the same in return from you. Students who disrupt class more than once may be asked to leave the classroom, and may not be allowed to return before meeting with me and/or the dean of student affairs. If your behavior does not improve, you will be dropped from the class.

### **Grading Components:**

Tests (2 X 20%)	40%
Exercises	30%
Project	20%
Term paper	10%

Extra credit may be obtained if you request it. The purpose of extra credit is to give borderline students a boost, for example, from "C" to "B" or "B" to "A."

### **Course activities**

**Exercises** – we will work on textbook writing exercises in and out of class. These will develop your skill in various formats, mainly commercial scripts and news.

This is a writing class. Your work will be judged, therefore, on the quality of your writing. An piece of work receiving an "A" will be:

- On-time.
- Free of spelling, grammatical and style errors (more than one spelling error will probably cost you 10 points).
- Written in the proper broadcast format.
- Written in a conversational style, directed at an individual listener.
- Written (in most cases) in active voice (subject-verb-object sentence structure).
- Demonstrate imagination and creativity.

The breakdown on how the exercises and projects are graded:

### **Commercials**

Style/format	40%
Creativity	20%
Persuasive selling point/ Effective approach	20%
Spelling/grammar/punctuation	20%

## News

Style/format	20%
Accuracy	20%
Creates interest/good lead	20%
Clarity	20%
Spelling/grammar/punctuation	20%

## Entertainment Scripts

Style/format	50%
Content (plot, creativity, etc.)	30%
Spelling/grammar/punctuation	20%

Late work will be penalized 25 points, and will not be accepted more than one week after the absence.

I may return work to you ungraded. In this case, the work contains some major deficiency, and you will have until the next class period to rewrite and resubmit the assignment. If you do not, a grade of 50 will be recorded.

**Project** – You will write a 12-15 page, three-act script for a television entertainment (comedy or drama) program. You may write an original episode of an established television show, or you may write an episode for a television show you create out of your imagination. Due Monday, July 6, penalty of 25 points if late.

A page featuring many examples of real television show scripts can be found at:

<http://www.dailyscript.com/tv.html>

**Tests** – we will have two tests, one at mid-semester and one at the time of the final exam. They will include true-false, multiple-choice and short-answer questions. Everything presented in class is subject to appear on the test. The second test will be comprehensive.

The tentative dates for the tests are June 25 and July 9.

**Term paper** – Students are required to write a 10-page (minimum), double-spaced (12-point type or smaller) research paper (minimum 20 sources) on the topic “The history of television advertising.” The sources should be listed, in detail, at the end of the paper and source notes should appear throughout the paper, all according to APA or MLA style. Papers are due Monday, July 6.

This will involve doing research on the issue. You are not to base your presentation on your own opinion. A research paper should contain your original

writing, based on the information you obtain from your sources (again, see "Plagiarism" below). Most of this information should be paraphrased, which means you put it into your own words.

Direct quotes (passages taken word-for-word from the source, and, of course, placed in quotation marks) should be kept to a minimum and limited to not more than 40 words each. Direct quotes generally should be used to show the opinion or point-of-view of the source, not routine factual material.

To be clear: You are required to have a minimum of 20 sources. This means the information in your paper will come from at least 20 separate books, newspaper or magazine articles.

NOTE: Of the 20 sources, at least six must be books. This will likely require you to visit the University library.

I will allow you to use Internet sources, but they must come from the Access World News data base, which is available on the library web page (<http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/library/newsdbp.htm>). Be sure the sources you find from Access World News are U.S. sources because many are British sources.

You may find details on APA style at this Internet address: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r\\_apa.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html)) and MLA style at this Internet address: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r\\_mla.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_mla.html)). Or visit the Gee Library on campus for style information.

In addition, a link to an example of a good student paper is available in my on-line syllabus.

<http://faculty.tamu-commerce.edu/jmdempsey/doc/studentpaper.doc>

Also, the following site will take the vital information from the source (author, title, publisher, year, etc.) and create a proper ALA or MLA end note for you:

<http://www.citationmachine.net/>

You will be graded strictly on spelling, grammar, punctuation, and general writing quality; the content of the paper; and research quality and adherence to APA or MLA style. An "A" paper will be good in all of these areas.

The paper will be graded this way: Spelling/grammar/punctuation/general quality of writing, 30%; Content, 35%; Research/APA or MLA style, 35%.

**IMPORTANT: If you fail to include footnotes and end notes in proper APA or MLA style, or if you fail to submit a paper of a minimum 10**

**full pages and 20 separate sources, I will return the paper to you ungraded. FOR EXAMPLE, SUBMITTING A LIST OF WEB ADDRESSES AS YOUR “END NOTES” OR “WORKS CITED” IS NOT ACCEPTABLE. If the paper is not resubmitted by July 2, the grade for the paper will be no better than 50.**

## However ...

Students with fewer than three unexcused absences (i.e., 0, 1 or 2) unexcused absences) and who participate positively in class will be rewarded by not being required to write a term paper. You will receive full credit for an “A” term paper. See policies regarding attendance and participation below.

**A chart showing the up-to-date unexcused absences for each student will be posted on the door of the classroom. You will choose a code word or number to identify yourself. This is to help you in keeping track of your unexcused absences. However, you are ultimately responsible for keeping up with your unexcused absences.**

**Attendance and Participation** – A few words of philosophy here:

*An “A” student is almost always present and on time for class. It is a vital part of the “A student” package.*

*You should think of class attendance as you think of attendance at a job. I am in no way obligated to make concessions on my policies because of situations in your personal life (he kindly said). As they used to say on the late, lamented TV cartoon “Super Chicken:” “You knew the job was dangerous when you took it.” By choosing to seek a college degree, it should be understood you are choosing a difficult path for yourself. It’s not supposed to be easy.*

*The rules are the same for everyone. It’s unfair to students who attend class faithfully to receive the same credit as students who attend only when it’s convenient.*

The only automatically excused absences are defined below in the University’s official attendance policy (items A-D). However, I understand you have complex lives and I will consider other work-related, or family-related excuses. It is helpful if you know that you will miss class to inform me of the reason in advance.

**EXCUSES SHOULD BE SUBMITTED IN WRITTEN FORM, AND CONTAIN THE SIGNATURE, PHONE NUMBER AND/OR E-MAIL ADDRESS OF AN AUTHORITATIVE PERSON (PHYSICIAN, PARENT, EMPLOYER, ETC.)**

**EXCUSES MUST BE SUBMITTED ON THE DAY THAT YOU RETURN TO CLASS FOLLOWING AN ABSENCE. YOU MUST SUBMIT A COPY OF THE EXCUSE THAT I CAN KEEP FOR MY RECORDS.**

Do not abuse this policy. Remember, apart from the defined excused absences below, I will use my discretion in granting an excused absence, which means I may not approve it.

**Tardies** are distracting to other students and to me. I'll count two tardies as equal to one unexcused absence. You'll be counted as tardy if you come in after I've taken roll. It's your responsibility to make sure you call my attention to the fact that you were tardy and not absent.

NOTE: If an illness or other uncontrollable event causes you to miss more than one class in a row, this will be counted as one absence "event." Be sure to promptly communicate with me in a case such as this. For such an absence of more than one class, I'll require a note from a doctor or some other authoritative person (for example, a parent) with a telephone number and/or e-mail address by which the person can be contacted. You're responsible for finding out about any assignments that may have been made. The assignment will be due the following class period after the date you return.

ANOTHER NOTE: Absences for official University activities (i.e., athletics, choir, etc.) will not count against you. Written advance notice of each event should be submitted to me.

**IMPORTANT: STUDENTS WHO MISS MORE THAN FIVE CLASSES MAY BE DROPPED FROM THE COURSE.**

When your absences reach five, I will have a conference with you and/or direct you to meet with the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Further unexcused absences will result in your being dropped from the class.

Work of any kind due on the date you are absent is still due on that date, unless your absence qualifies as an approved emergency or extended illness (as described above). It will be counted as late, and all late work will be penalized 10 points.

The only automatically excused absences are defined below in the University's official attendance policy (items A-D). However, I understand you have complex lives and I will consider other work-related, or family-related excuses. It is helpful if you know that you will miss class to inform me of the reason in advance.

## **UNIVERSITY ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **13.99.99.R0.01 Class Attendance**

1. Students are responsible for learning about and complying with the attendance policy stated in the catalog, Student's Guidebook, and/or faculty syllabus. Faculty members will provide details on requirements and guidelines for attendance in their classes in their course syllabi.

2. Students are responsible for requesting makeup work when they are absent. They will be permitted to make up work for absences which are considered by the faculty member to be excusable. The method of making up work shall be determined by the faculty member.

The student is responsible for providing the faculty member reason(s) for his/her absence. The faculty member then determines the validity of the reason(s) for the absence and whether the student is to be excused for the absence. Faculty members may consider the following reasons for absence as excusable:

- a. Participation in a required/authorized university activity;
- b. Verified illness;
- c. Death in a student's immediate family;
- d. Obligation of student at legal proceedings in fulfilling responsibility as a citizen; and
- e. Others determined by individual faculty to be excusable (e.g. elective University activities, etc.).

Appeals can be made through normal administrative channels.

3. A record of excused and unexcused absences will be maintained by a faculty member for reference since certain financial assistance and other programs may require attendance records.

4. Students who have failed any part of the Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP) test are required by the State of Texas to attend remediation. The TASP required students who do not attend remediation courses or tutorial sessions will be withdrawn from the university.

5. When requested by the student, teachers will inform the student who has been absent whether makeup work is allowed and whether absences jeopardize the student's standing in a class.

It is the prerogative of the faculty to drop students from courses in which they have accrued excessive absences as defined in the course syllabus. In such cases, faculty recommend through the department head to the appropriate college dean that a student be dropped from a class. The faculty member will document absences and will make a reasonable effort to communicate with the student prior to recommending a drop. If approved, the college dean will forward the recommendation to the Records Office.

6. Students who wish to drop a course or withdraw from the university are responsible for initiating this action.

7. If a student believes the final grade is unfairly impacted by attendance requirements, an appeal can be made. This appeal process is explained in "Student's Appeal of Instructor's Evaluation" (Procedure A13.06).

**Plagiarism:** *Any form of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, is unacceptable.* Plagiarism of material is obviously included.

Academic dishonesty subjects you to possible dismissal from the class and referral to the department head or dean of students. At the least, such an assignment will receive a grade of F and will not be made up.

Definition of plagiarism: "A piece of writing that has been copied from someone else and is presented as being your own work." This is as true of a sentence as it is of an entire paper.

Plagiarism includes taking verbatim sections from the textbook without attributing the material to the author. Also, "sharing" work with another student (presenting another student's writing as your own) is plagiarism.

IT IS PLAGIARISM TO COPY EVEN A SENTENCE FROM SOMEONE ELSE'S WORK – MUCH LESS AN ENTIRE ARTICLE FROM THE INTERNET -- AND PRESENT IT AS YOUR WORK WITHOUT PROPER ATTRIBUTION AND FOOTNOTING.

Most of the time, it is remarkably easy for professors to spot plagiarism. You are much better off doing your own work, both from the standpoint of your grade and what you learn.

**(MORE FOLLOWS, NEXT PAGE)**

## **Other matters**

I maintain the right to make changes as needed, in my judgment, from the stated plans contained in the syllabus for this class. Such changes will be announced to the class.

University statement: Students requesting accommodations for disabilities must go through the Academic Support Committee. For more information, please contact the director of Disability Resources and Services, Halladay Student Services Bldg., Room 303-D. Telephone, (903) 886-5835.



MASS MEDIA, COMMUNICATION AND THEATRE

**Document of receipt and understanding.**

I have received the syllabus for RTV 320.

By my signature, I acknowledge that I fully understand the requirements of the class and will abide by the rules and guidelines contained in the syllabus.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

[www.tamu-commerce.edu](http://www.tamu-commerce.edu)

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A MEMBER OF THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM