

SYLLABUS
Radio-Television Writing -- RTV 320
Summer 2015

Dr. John Mark Dempsey

BA 249-C

Office phone: (903) 886-5345

Home phone: (903) 886-7708

E-mail: jm.dempsey@tamuc.edu

Office hours: Monday and Tuesday, 2-4 p.m., or by appointment

Web page: <http://faculty.tamu-commerce.edu/jmdempsey/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION: A study of the techniques, style and format of script preparation for the radio, television and online media.

Most of what you see and hear on television is written. Sitcoms, dramas, soap operas, talk-show jokes, the continuity of “reality” show, commercials, certainly the news. On radio, DJ liner cards, public-service announcements, commercials and promos are written. The same is true for online material – text, video, audio. Being able to write for electronic media is a major skill.

TEXT: *Copywriting for the Electronic Media: A practical Guide*, Milan D. Meeske, sixth edition. (Helpful, but not required.)

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

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will develop the ability to write effectively for electronic-media news and public-service announcements. They will understand the proper format and style for the various forms of writing for TV, radio and other electronic media, and will develop creativity in their writing.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*). Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from

discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

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.

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:

Weekly eCollege assignments	60%
Daily in-class assignments	20%
Test	20%

Extra credit may be obtained if you request it by Monday, July 6. The purpose of extra credit is to give borderline students a boost, for example, from “C” to “B” or “B” to “A.”

One option for extra credit: Write a minimum 15-page TV entertainment script (for a situation comedy, drama or soap opera; a title page does not count as one of the pages; the 15th page must be a full page) as a semester project. This must follow the correct format for TV entertainment scripts. Examples will be provided.

Course activities

Weekly eCollege exercises – You will have an eCollege writing assignment on Thursdays. These must be done during the class hours of 9-11 a.m. If you miss doing an assignment, and you present an acceptable excuse (see below), no grade will be recorded. Otherwise, a grade of 0 will be recorded.

Look for the assignments under Week 1, Week 2, etc. in eCollege. Submit the completed assignments to the “Dropbox.”

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

- On-time.
- Free of spelling, grammatical and style errors (see “Common Grammatical Errors” distributed on the first day and posted my faculty web site and eCollege).
- Written in the proper broadcast format and style.

- Written in a conversational style, directed to an individual listener. “Writing for the ear.” Keep sentences short and relatively simple. Use simple, everyday words (Read your copy aloud to yourself as a test. This is very important.)
- Written (in most cases) in active voice (subject-verb-object sentence structure). Avoid passive voice.
- Complete in addressing the basic facts that the audience needs: Who, what, when, where? (Sometimes, you may also address “why” and “how.”)
- Easily understandable; the listener understands the story after hearing it the first time.
- Imaginative and creative, as appropriate.
- All work must be typed.

Work that is returned to you will have these numbers on it, indicating certain problems. The numbers will be explained in an attachment:

1 – Problems with spelling, grammar or punctuation. MORE THAN ONE SPELLING OR GRAMMATICAL ERROR WILL MEAN A GRADE NOT HIGHER THAN 70. BE SURE TO USE SPELL CHECK AND READ COPY **ALoud** TO YOURSELF.

2 – Format mistakes. Each type of writing we do has certain format standards, uniform ways of presentation. You’ll have examples to go by. If a mistake is indicated, refer to these examples.

3 – Broadcast-style mistakes. Broadcast-style writing has certain particular standards in how words and phrases are written. In particular, there are rules relating to numbers. Again, you’ll be given examples. Refer to these if this number is indicated.

4 - Lack of conversational style. The writing is too stiff and formal.

5 - Unclear or awkward writing. Sentence structure that is difficult for the announcer to read or the listener to understand. This may include failing to write in active voice. The logical construction of the story is lacking in some way.

6 - Failure to address the basic facts (who, what, when, where).

7 – Length. You’ll have a specific time designated for what you write, usually 30 or 60 seconds. You’ll have a general “rule of thumb” for the number of words and/or lines to write, but you should also read the writing to yourself and time it.

The grade will be recorded in the eCollege gradebook. SEE “COMMENTS” FOR SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON EACH ASSIGNMENT.

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 MAXIMUM grade of 50 will be recorded (i.e., grades may be lower than 50, but not greater).

Daily in-class writing assignments

Most class periods will include a writing assignment. If you miss class, late exercises will be penalized 20 points unless you have an excused absence (see below). **It is your responsibility to present me with an excuse from an authoritative person on the day you return to class and to find out what exercise you missed. Late work will not be accepted more than one week after the absence.**

In-class writing assignments will be graded using the same criteria as described above.

Tests – we will have one test on Wednesday, July 8. The test will include true-false, multiple-choice and short-answer questions. Everything presented in class is subject to appear on the test.

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.) FRIENDS, ROOMATES, ETC. ARE NOT “AUTHORITATIVE” PERSONS.

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.

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 20 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.Ro.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 dean of the college. 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.

“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.

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 Specific Procedures

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu



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.

PRINT YOUR NAME LEGIBLY: _____

Signed _____

Date _____

P.O. Box 3011 • Commerce, TX 75429-3011 • Phone: 903.886.5346 • Fax:
903.468.3250 •

www.tamu-commerce.edu