



SYLLABUS
Radio-Television Writing -- MMJ 320
Spring 2019

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PAC 130

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Office hours: Wednesday, 10 a.m.-12 noon; Thursday, 2-4 p.m. (or by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: A study of the techniques, style and form at 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.)

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.

THIS IS AN “E-ASSISTED” COURSE

Some activities and assignments may take place on MyLeo2DL. You’ll be notified of these.

Grading Components

eCollege assignments	80%
Tests (2)	20%

Extra credit may be obtained if you request it by Monday, April 29. The purpose of extra credit is to give borderline students a boost, for example, from “C” to “B” or “B” to “A.”

Course activities

You will have a writing assignments each week. Assignments must be completed by the stated deadline for each assignment. Those that are late will be penalized 10 points; after the end of the week in which the assignment is made, the penalty will be 20 points.

If you miss doing an assignment, and you present an acceptable excuse (see below), you will be allowed to make up the assignment with no penalty. Otherwise, a grade of 0 will be recorded. Late work will not be accepted more than one week after the absence.

If you fall more than one week behind in your assignments without notifying me of the reason, I may drop you from the course.

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 in class).
- Written in the proper broadcast format and style (summaries of AP and local style guidelines will be provided).
- Written in a conversational style, directed to an individual listener. This is also called “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.

If you need help in developing your basic writing skills, I recommend you visit the A&M-Commerce Writing Center in the Hall of Languages.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiessocialsciencesarts/departments/literatureLanguages/writingCenter/default.aspx>

You may also find a free online service such as [grammarly.com](http://www.grammarly.com) helpful in your writing.

These are the typical problems with writing assignments:

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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

Length. You'll have a specific time designated for what you write. As a general "rule of thumb," about 180 words equals one minute, but you should also read the writing to yourself and time it.

I may return work to you ungraded. In this case, the work contains some major deficiency, and you will have 24 hours 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).

Test – we will have tests on Thursday, March 14 and Thursday, May 2. The test will include true-false, multiple-choice and short-answer questions. Everything presented in class is subject to appear on the test.

Absences

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.**

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.

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. You’re responsible for finding out about any assignments that may have been made.

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 MMJ 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

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