I. Basic Course Information

A. Course Number and Title: COMM-251 Writing for the Media

B. Date of Proposal: February 15, 2007

C. Sponsoring Department: Communication & Languages

D. Semester Credit Hours: 3

E. Weekly Contact Hours: 3

   Lecture: 3
   Laboratory: 0

F. Prerequisites: ENG111-English 1

G. Laboratory Fees: None

II. Catalog Description

Prerequisite: ENG111-English 1

Writing for the Media introduces students to the basics of screenwriting for film/video, copywriting for advertising, writing for the web, and treatments for other interactive applications. The course focuses on the development of scripts and storyboards in planning effective Interactive Communication and Entertainment (ICE) packages. The course encourages creative writing intended for production. Areas covered will include beginning preparation, structure, script format, treatment, characterization and visual dynamics.

III. Statement of Course Need

Writing for the Media is a foundation course for students in the ICE (Interactive Communication and Entertainment) Digital Video Production certificate. It prepares students to become writers for the media or to work as free-lance entertainment or advertising writers. Students in this course are encouraged to submit or use their scripts for production courses.
IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum

- The course meets a requirement in the following programs:
  1. Digital Video Production Certificate
- Program Elective
  1. Communication Studies

Writing for the Media transfers selectively as an introductory or survey course in media writing.

V. Outline of Course Content

The course explores the following topics:

- Idea generation. How to find ideas that fit the requirements for a video, an audio, an ad, or an interactive application.
- Selecting the appropriate medium (video, audio, interactive). What makes a story or objective suit one or the other?
- The premise: How to develop and present a premise.
- Story structure: Multi-plot, mini-plot or anti-plot.
- Genre: Defining different kinds of genres and learning how to apply them. Differences between radio, TV, and film genres.
- Characterization: How the character drives a story. Cast design. How many characters do we need/can we handle in each medium?
- Treatments: What they are and why they are written. Different medium-specific approaches.
- Scripts: Formats, syntax and grammar.
- Visuals: How to tell or support the story visually.
- Sound: How to tell or support the story with sound.
- Story Boards: How to plan a production or change a script using a story board.

VI. Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes

A. General Educational Goals

Students will:

- present a fully-developed proposal for a video, ad, audio segment or interactive communication or entertainment package (G.E. 1, 2)
- communicate clearly, coherently and convincingly, both orally and in writing (G.E. 1, 2)
- write media presentations that reflect critical and creative thought (G.E. 1, 2)
• demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills (G.E. 2)
• use the Internet to acquire reliable information and data for and about writing for the media (G.E. 1, 3)
• recognize ethical issues in ideation, scripting and producing video, audio and interactive packages (G.E. 5).

B. Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

• Describe the various types of writing utilized in media industries
• Describe the processes, techniques, and formats used in various mediums (video, audio and interactive media)
• Demonstrate mastery of media industry language and terminology
• Demonstrate ability to write effective advertising copy for video
• Demonstrate ability to write effective video and audio scripts
• Demonstrate ability to analyze, evaluate and critique examples of each type of writing.

VII. Modes of Teaching and Learning

• Lecture/discussion
• Small-group activities and exercises
• Class and small-group editing/critiquing
• Videotapes/DVDs
• Guest speakers
• Compile samples of the student's writing ability utilizing each script format.

VIII. Papers, Examinations, and other Assessment Instruments

• Quizzes
• Writing exercises and assignments
• Student treatments, scripts and storyboards
• Student oral presentations
• Final project (20 second advertisement)

IX. Grade Determinants

• Quizzes
• Writing exercises and assignments
• Student scrip writing*
• Student oral presentations
• Final examination.
* Students are required to submit one or more scripts for consideration in ICE (Interactive Communication and Entertainment) production classes (Video Production I, Video Production II, The Record website (audio files, video segments), local cable television stations (e.g., VILLETv), or other media outlets.

X. Texts and Materials

Textbooks such as the following will be used:


XI. Resources

- Camcorder
- Digital Audio Recorder
- PC with simple audio, video editing capabilities
- DVD/video projection
- Classroom with computer stations
- Guest speakers.