INSTRUCTOR: JILL GOLDSMITH

UCLA FILM AND TELEVISION TV WRITING SUMMER INSTITUTE

FTV 133B, INTERMEDIATE TV WRITING ONE-HOUR DRAMA/HALF-HOUR DRAMEDY SERIES, SUMMER 2020

LOCATION: Remotely, via Zoom

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The goal for this class is for you to create an original one-hour original drama/dramedy or half-hour dramedy pilot.

COURSE GOALS:

Students will learn how to:
• Service the franchise of your original series
• Fit into the network’s “wheelhouse” and meet their expectations
• Develop and deepen your characters
• Create and revise an Outline for your pilot
• Write the first draft of an effective pilot for your original series.

You’ll also be expected to provide notes on your fellow writers’ material. This includes: verbal/written notes, participation in table discussions, and active contribution to the work of others.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS/READINGS:

Writing the TV Drama Series, by Pamela Douglas

The TV Showrunner’s Roadmap, by Neil Landau

TV Outside the Box: Trailblazing in the Digital Television Revolution, by Neil Landau

TV Writing On Demand: Creating Great Content in the Digital Era, by Neil Landau
Plus, read every successful pilot you can get your hands on, especially in the genre, style, and tone that relate to your script.

**WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**WEEK ONE** (Class Meetings 1&2): Introduction to the course and syllabus. Student pitches and feedback. Review of: one-hour drama and half-hour dramedy structure; A, B, and C story-lines; premise, theme, conflict, characters; the difference between writing screenplays and episodic TV; episodic pilot vs. "premise pilot" vs. hybrid. Lecture on: servicing the "franchise" and story arcs (aka "long story"); breaking story; beat sheet and outline formats; effective pitches and loglines.

**Assignment #1:** Refine chosen pitch and come up with two potential A and B stories. Due for next class.

**Assignment #2:** Orally pitch two possible A and B stories for your pilot. Discussion of Beat Sheets and how to write a Teaser. Write a Beat Sheet for your pilot. Due for next class.

**WEEK TWO** (Class Meetings 3&4): Discussion and feedback on Beat Sheets. Discussion about writing an Outline based on Beat Sheets. Unifying theme, character arcs, network "story area documents," and compelling act breaks.

**Assignment #3:** Write first half of outline (5 pages), due for next class. Discussion about outlines in progress.

**Assignment #4:** Revise first half and write second half of Outline (5 more pages). Completed Outline due for next class.

**WEEK THREE** (Class Meetings 5&6): Discussion and feedback on Outlines. Discussion about how to segue from Outline to First Draft. Scene structure. Writing memorable scenes. Discussion about series bibles. The studio and network notes process.

**Assignment #5:** Begin writing first draft of your script. Goal is complete rough draft of the Teaser, due for next class.

**Assignment #6:** Continue writing script. Goal is to complete Teaser and Act One. Due for next class.

**WEEK FOUR** (Class Meetings 7&8): Read selected pages in class and discuss. Discussion of issues that have emerged from Outline to script. Writing great dialogue.
Assignment #7: Continue writing script. Turn in pages for table read in next class.

Assignment #8: Continue writing scripts. Goal for this week is to complete Acts Two and Three, due for next class.

WEEK FIVE (Class Meetings 9&10): Read selected pages in class and discuss. Discussion on establishing the world of your show, tone, and voice.

Assignment #9: Acts 4 and 5 (depending on format). For half-hours, please revise all acts. Discussion about rewriting strategies, editing, and polishing. Solving story issues.

Assignment #10: Complete and revise first draft of script. Develop a pitch.

WEEK SIX (Class #11): First draft of all teleplays due in PDF format via email. Discussion about what happens in the real world with the draft to be “published” and distributed to the director, actors, assistant directors, and all department heads for pre-production. The pre-production, production, and post-production processes: the production board and call sheet. Breaking into the industry. Practice pitches.

Assignment #11: Refine your pitch for Pitch Session the following day.

Class #12: Individual Script Conferences. Receive notes on your completed draft in a one-on-one script consult. You will also have the opportunity to discuss feedback from the Pitch Session.

STATEMENT OF GRADING:

GRADES: Attendance at every class is mandatory for a passing grade. Two unexcused absences will result in a failing grade. Please carefully spell-check and proof-read your work; sloppy, ungrammatical, typo-ridden work will be returned, unread, graded down.

Below is the weight given to each component of the final grade: Please note that ALL COURSE GRADES ARE FINAL.

Attendance 20%
Series Pitch 5%
A/B Stories 5%
Teaser 5%
Acts 1 & 2 15%
Acts 3,4,5 15%
Final Pitch 5%
Beat sheet 10%
Outline 10%
First Draft 10%
Total: 100%

Final Course Grade: 100%
A (90-100%)
B (80-89%)
C (70-79%)
D (60-69%)
F (≤ 59%)

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION:

Please arrive to the online class on time. If you’re going to be late/absent, please send instructor an email.

All ideas discussed in class are strictly confidential and should not be discussed with others outside of class.

Industry professionals are partially defined or rise and fall by their interactions with other Industry professionals. As such, you will be graded on your interactions in class. That means that class attendance is mandatory, as is class participation. Your feedback is invaluable to your colleagues. Therefore, you are expected to actively listen, contribute and analyze during class discussions.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND STUDENT CONDUCT:

With its status as a world-class research institution, it is critical that the University uphold the highest standards of integrity both inside and outside the classroom. As a student and member of the UCLA community, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors. Accordingly, when accusations of academic dishonesty occur, The Office of the Dean of Students is charged with investigating and adjudicating suspected violations. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, multiple submissions or facilitating academic misconduct. Plagiarism is a serious offense. It is the presentation of another author’s words or ideas as if they were
your own. If you have any questions about documentation, quotations, and related matters, please do not hesitate to ask your instructor before submitting your work. Please also refer to the UCLA Rules of Student Conduct at the below website:

http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Student-Conduct
Instructor: Lisa Vangellow  
Email: Lvangellow@gmail.com  
Daytime Number: 602-738-3810

Class Meetings: Tuesdays 7PM-8:50PM  
Location: Zoom Virtual Meetings- Link to follow

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Summer Speaker Symposium is a class that offers students the opportunity to learn about various areas of the TV and film industry from industry professionals. Each week, a new panel of industry professionals will participate in a comprehensive Q & A with the instructor focused on a particular topic of interest followed by a Q&A by the students. Students will have an opportunity to ask the experts questions that will help enhance their entertainment business education and inform more on their future career paths.

At the completion of each class, students will write a paragraph evaluating the panel, what they learned, and how it affects their area of interest.

The six paragraphs (one for each class) will be combined into a final paper (no longer than 2 pages) that will summarize their experience in the course and how their view of the TV and Film industry has changed.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course work consists of attending weekly Zoom class meetings, participating in a meaningful manner in Q&A sessions with Guest Speakers, and writing a paragraph summary at the end of each class evaluating the panels. These summaries will be combined into a final paper to be turned in at the completion of the course.

WEEKLY CLASS TOPICS

Class One: TV series from pitch to screen  
Class Two: Documentary film/series production  
Class Three: Development  
Class Four: Working with Talent  
Class Five: Directors and Cinematographers- Dream team  
Class Six: Diversity and Inclusion in the entertainment industry

FINAL PAPER

At the end of the course students are required to write a paper summarizing their thoughts on the Guest Speaker panels and how the panels have influenced their view of
the industry.

GRADING
50%: Participation in Class Discussions Guest Panels
25%: Final Paper
25%: Attendance

UCLA Statement of Academic Integrity and Information on Student Conduct
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http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/StudentConduct

UCLA Statement of Equity Inclusion and Diversity
The diversity of the people of California has been the source of innovative ideas and creative accomplishments throughout the state’s history into the present. Diversity – a defining feature of California’s past, present, and future – refers to the variety of personal experiences, values, and worldviews that arise from differences of culture and circumstance. Such differences include race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, disabilities, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and geographic region, and more. Because the core mission of the University of California is to serve the interests of the State of California, it must seek to achieve diversity among its student bodies and among its employees. The State of California has a compelling interest in making sure that people from all backgrounds perceive that access to the University is possible for talented students, staff, and faculty from all groups. The knowledge that the University of California is open to qualified students from all groups, and thus serves all parts of the community equitably, helps sustain the social fabric of the State. Diversity should also be integral to the University’s achievement of excellence. Diversity can enhance the ability of the University to accomplish its academic mission. Diversity aims to broaden and deepen both the educational experience and the scholarly environment, as students and faculty learn to interact effectively with each other, preparing them to participate in an increasingly complex and pluralistic society. Ideas and practices based on those ideas, can be made richer by the process of being born and nurtured in a diverse community. The pluralistic university can model a process of
proposing and testing ideas through respectful, civil communication. Educational excellence that truly incorporates diversity thus can promote mutual respect and make possible the full, effective use of the talents and abilities of all to foster innovation and train future leadership.

Therefore, the University of California renews its commitment to the full realization of its historic promise to recognize and nurture merit, talent, and achievement by supporting diversity and equal opportunity in its education, services, and administration, as well as research and creative activity. The University particularly acknowledges the acute need to remove barriers to the recruitment, retention, and advancement of talented students, faculty, and staff from historically excluded populations who are currently Underrepresented.

UCLA Dissability and Discrimination Mandate
Students needing academic accommodations based on a disability should contact the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) at (310)8251501 or in person at Murphy Hall A255. When possible, students should contact the CAE within the first two weeks of the term as reasonable notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. For more information visit www.cae.ucla.edu.

“Class meetings held with Zoom may be recorded. Zoom uses video recording or other personal information capture for the purpose of facilitating the course and/or test environment. Pursuant to the terms of the agreement with UCLA, the data is used solely for this purpose and any vendor is prohibited from redisclosing this information. UCLA also does not use the data for any other purpose.”

UCLA Department of Film, Television, and Digital Media
FTV 101A Summer Speaker Symposium
WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

NOTE: The order of panels is subject to change based on Guest Speaker availability.

Week One: TV Series from Pitch to Screen
The Week One panel will host TV Executives, Producers, and Showrunners and Literary Manager to discuss the process from a writer’s pitch, through development, production, and distribution of a TV series.
• Introductory Questions regarding the Guest Speakers’ Career Paths
• Open Q&A Session between Students and Guest Speakers

Specific Discussion Topics will include:
Pitching, distribution platforms, and series development in the OTT streaming world.

This year’s guest speakers will be announced closer to the beginning of the course.
Week Two: Documentary Film and Series Production
Students will learn from award winning documentarians the challenges and rewards of the unscripted world.
• Introductory Questions regarding the Guest Speakers’ Career Paths
• Open Q&A Session between Students and Guest Speakers
• Summary Questions regarding priority Discussion Topics
Specific Discussion Topics will include:
Why is there a boom in unscripted content; particularly documentaries and doc series?
How does the documentary world compare to Hollywood; diversity, age, gender, income, etc.

This year’s guest speakers will be announced closer to the beginning of the course.

Week Three: Development
In this class, students will learn about the script development process and pitfalls from Creative Executives in the business.
• Introductory Questions regarding the Guest Speakers’ Career Paths
• Open Q&A Session between Students and Guest Speakers
• Summary Questions regarding priority Discussion Topics
Specific Discussion Topics will include:
Why is development such a crucial but difficult part of getting a TV series or movie greenlit?
What are the factors that keep a project in “development hell” versus propelling it into production.

This year’s guest speakers will be announced closer to the beginning of the course.

Week Four: Working with Talent
In this class session, students will learn about the business of working with talent; whether it be as representation or working at the celebrity’s production company to find and development projects specific to that performer.

• Introductory Questions regarding the Guest Speakers’ Career Paths
• Open Q&A Session between Students and Guest Speakers
• Summary Questions regarding priority Discussion Topics
Specific Discussion Topics will include:
Why do so many entertainers start their own production companies?
How does a manager or agent find talent, or decide to represent new talent?

This year’s guest speakers will be announced closer to the beginning of the course.

Week Five: Directors and Cinematographers, the Dream team
In this class session, students will learn about the important dynamic between the director and the camera department and how the synergy between them can elevate a TV, Film, or commercial production.

- Introductory Questions regarding the Guest Speakers’ Career Paths
- Open Q&A Session between Students and Guest Speakers
- Summary Questions regarding priority Discussion Topics

Specific Discussion Topics will include:
How do you find a perfect marriage between a Director and their camera dept?
How do directors and cinematographers break into the business?

This year’s guest speakers will be announced closer to the beginning of the course.

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**Week 6: Diversity and Inclusion in the TV and Film Business**

In the final class, the students and panelists will participate in an in-depth discussion about the state of diversity in the entertainment business.

- Introductory Questions regarding the Guest Speakers’ Career Paths
- Open Q&A Session between Students and Guest Speakers
- Summary Questions regarding priority Discussion Topics

Specific Discussion Topics will include:
What are the struggles that people of diverse backgrounds face today in entering the entertainment industry.
Post #Metoo and #timesup, what has changed for the better or worse for women in the industry?
This year’s guest speakers will be announced closer to the beginning of the course.
This course is designed to help students build the fundamental skills of a professional television writer. Students are introduced to the pilot format, covering style and content, as well as the principles behind network needs and how pilots are chosen across broadcast, cable, and digital platforms. Students write a beat sheet, outline, and first act of an original pilot. Please note that students are expected to spend a minimum of 25 hours-per-week writing outside of class meetings.

You’ll also be expected to provide notes on your fellow writers’ material, including participation in table discussions and active contribution to the work of others.

**RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS/READINGS:**

*Writing the TV Drama Series*, by Pamela Douglas

*The TV Showrunner’s Roadmap*, by Neil Landau

*TV Outside the Box: Trailblazing in the Digital Television Revolution*, by Neil Landau

*TV Writing On Demand: Creating Great Content in the Digital Era*, by Neil Landau
The TV Writer’s Workbook: A Creative Approach to Television Scripts, by Ellen Sandler

Plus, read every successful pilot you can get your hands on, especially in the genre, style, and tone that relate to your script.

**WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**WEEK ONE** (Class Meetings 1&2): Introduction to the course and syllabus. Intro to one-hour drama, half-hour dramedy and comedy structure; A, B, and C story-lines; premise, theme, conflict, characters; the difference between writing screenplays and episodic TV; episodic pilot vs. “premise pilot” vs. hybrid; servicing the “franchise” and story arcs; breaking story; how to prepare a cohesive, viable pitch and logline.

**Assignment #1:** Create a 3-5 minute pitch for your original series. Due for next class.

**Assignment #2:** Orally pitch your series idea. For next class, come up with two possible A and B stories for your pilot.

**WEEK TWO** (Class Meetings 3&4): Pitch two possible A and B stories for your pilot and receive feedback. Discussion about writing Beat Sheets. Writing an effective Teaser.

**Assignment #3:** Write a beat sheet for your Teaser/Act One.

**Assignment #4:** Discussion and feedback on Beat Sheets for Teaser/Act One. For next class, complete the Beat Sheet for your pilot episode.

**WEEK THREE** (Class Meetings 5&6): Discussion and feedback on completed Beat Sheets. Discussion about writing an Outline based on Beat Sheets. Unifying theme, character arcs, network “story area documents,” and compelling act breaks.

**Assignment #5:** Write the Outline for your Teaser/Act One, by expanding the Beat Sheet.

**Assignment #6:** Feedback on Outline for Teaser/Act One. Complete your Outline, due for next class.

**WEEK FOUR** (Class Meetings 7&8): Discussion and feedback on completed Outlines. Discussion about how to segue from Outline to First Draft. Characters. Scene structure. Writing memorable
scenes. Writing compelling dialogue. Drafting the Series Bible with character arcs for each principal character, as well as central questions/mysteries, series mythology, and end game.

**Assignment #7**: Write the first 3-4 pages of your script. Turn in pages for table read in next class.

**Assignment #8**: Read through and feedback of pages. Continue writing scripts. Write the next 3-4 pages.

**WEEK FIVE** (Class Meetings 9&10): Read selected pages in class and discuss. Discussion on establishing the world of your show, tone, and voice. The studio and network notes process. Rewriting strategies, editing, and polishing. Solving story issues.

**Assignment #9**: Continue writing pages. Goal is to complete the required 10 pages. You may write up to 10 additional pages, if you choose, for a total of 10-20 pages. *Note: only 10 pages are required.

**Assignment #10**: Table read of selected pages. Complete and revise first draft of your Teaser/Act One. Develop a pitch.

**WEEK SIX** (Class Meeting 11): First draft of Teaser/Act One due in PDF format via email. You will receive notes on your completed Teaser/Act One in our next class. Practice pitches.

**Assignment #11**: Refine your pitch, in preparation for pitch session the following day.

**Class Meeting #12**: Receive notes on your completed Teaser/Act One. Discuss feedback from the pitch session. Discussion about what happens in the real world with the draft to be “published” and distributed to the director, actors, assistant directors, and all department heads for pre-production. Discussion of the pre-production, production, and post-production processes: the production board and call sheet. Breaking into the industry.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
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<td>Series Pitch</td>
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<td>A/B Stories</td>
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