

TCOM 2682  
Fedor Hall, Room 2053  
Spring, 2006

**SCRIPTWRITING FOR ELECTRONIC MEDIA**  
***Syllabus and Schedule***

**Dr. Amy Graban Crawford**

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**Office Hours:** Monday, 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.  
Thursday, 12:00 noon – 2:00 p.m.  
Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.  
Friday, 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
And by appointment  
**Web Address:** <http://www.cc.ysu.edu/~agcrawfo/>

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**Course Description:**

*This course is designed to help you learn the formats and terminology necessary to increase the effectiveness of your audio-visual script writing. Through multiple writing assignments, you will analyze, create and present writing samples for a variety of program formats and media.*

**Course Objectives:**

- *Define and describe various script formats;*
- *Distinguish between writing strategies for various media;*
- *Explain choices made while constructing a script;*
- *Demonstrate proper word usage, sentence structure, and pacing as appropriate for media scripts;*
- *Use stories, character and dialogue to persuade audiences to purchase or use a product/service;*
- *Differentiate writing conventions from television, radio and print.*
- *Break down the structure of news and promotional non-fiction pieces;*
- *Use media research methods to produce media messages;*
- *Differentiate between emotional and logical appeals;*
- *Categorize potential audiences based on lifestyles and values*
- *Use demographics and psychographics to construct persuasive messages;*
- *Create professional radio and television commercial campaigns;*
- *Design a interview and demonstration program script;*
- *Modify print news stories to air on television or radio;*
- *Devise a media campaign*
- *Solve problems as part of a group*
- *Analyze your own work and the work of others;*
- *Explain your application of audience analysis in constructing a script*
- *Organize and present a project proposal to the class;*
- *Collaborate creatively and be a productive, cooperative team member;*
- *Meet deadlines and work under time constraints;*
- *Explain ethical issues and personal responsibilities that accompany the production of media messages.*
- *Produce ethical and legal media scripts*

**Textbook:**

Orlik, P.B. (2004). Broadcast/Cable Copywriting (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Publishing.

***Additional Required Resources:***

- ◆ *A YSU Unix account to allow access to email;*
- ◆ *Floppy disks, zip disk, CD-ROM or other recording media on which to save work;*
- ◆ *Reliable access to word processing technology and software;*
- ◆ *Overhead transparencies. These are available for \$1.00 each at ComDoc, Kinko's, Campus Book and Supply, etc.;*
- ◆ *A supply of manila folders;*
- ◆ *Access to a dictionary and an English usage handbook.*

***Class Policies:***

***Prerequisites:***

*An objective of this course is to help you learn the principles of writing for electronic media, both broadcast and non-broadcast.*

*This entails planning words to be spoken, sounds to be heard and actions to be seen. Scriptwriting has its own set of rules, some of which differ from those which apply to print media. To learn these new rules requires you already to know the rules for print and to understand the basics of electronic media. Hence, the minimum prerequisites for this course are:*

- 1. ENGL 1550, Writing I***
- 2. TCOM 1580, Introduction to Telecommunication Studies***
- 3. TCOM 1581, Telecommunication Technologies***

***PLEASE NOTE: YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE CREDIT FOR THIS COURSE IF YOU HAVE NOT COMPLETED THE PREREQUISITES WITH A GRADE OF "C" OR BETTER PRIOR TO THE START OF THIS COURSE.***

***Disability Statement:***

*In accordance with University procedure, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course please contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. You must be registered with the Center for Student Progress/Disability Services office located at Wick House, on the corner of Wick Avenue and the Access Road, and provide a letter of accommodation to verify your eligibility. You can reach the CSP/Disability Services at 330-941-1372.*

***Center for Student Progress:***

*The Center for Student Progress is a resource on campus established to help students successfully complete their university experience. Please phone 330-941-3538 or visit the Center for assistance and tutoring, or for individualized assistance with social and academic success. The main Center is located in Kilcawley West under the bookstore.*

***Deadline Adherence Principles:***

*Within the media profession, in particular, and most work environments in general, deadlines and time constraints are a key reality that shapes the outcome and success of an endeavor.*

*To create the most efficient and supportive environment, it is essential that we all take responsibility for the role we play in creating a positive learning experience. Missed or late assignments create major time and scheduling conflicts and are inconvenient and unfair to those who are prepared. **Assignments should be completed by the start time (1:00 pm) on the scheduled due date. Any assignments turned in after this time will be considered late. All late assignments must be LABELLED AS LATE ON THE FOLDER in order to be accepted at all. Late scripts will trigger an automatic 20% reduction of your grade.***

*A key component of the learning experience is developing a professional attitude and a solid work ethic. For this reason, the penalty for any late assignment is substantial. It is left to the discretion of the professor whether late assignment will be accepted at all. If they are accepted, your grade for the assignment will be reduced by*

**20%. The only exception to this policy is a documented emergency, documented ongoing illness or religious holiday, and every effort should be made to notify me in advance.**

*For certain assignments in this class, you will be working as a member of a team. Penalties for late assignments will be applied to individuals, if problems are reported in advance by the group to the professor. It is a part of your responsibility as a team member to complete work in a timely manner and to communicate to the group and to the professor when work is not being completed as assigned.*

**Policy regarding a grade of "I" or Incomplete**

*It is the policy of Youngstown State University and this instructor that a grade of "I" should only be assigned as a final grade if ALL of the following conditions are met:*

- 1. The student encounters unforeseen circumstances **beyond his or her control** that prevent completion of all coursework by the scheduled end of the semester.*
- 2. The student has completed at least 50% of the assigned coursework.*
- 3. The student is receiving a passing grade on all completed work.*

*If all of the above criteria cannot be met, a withdrawal from the course would be a more appropriate action than requesting an Incomplete.*

**Course Procedures:**

*This course is an introduction to the process and requirements of writing for electronic communication. This course is presented in four basic modes: (1) lectures, (2) discussions of the reading, (3) in-class writing applications and exercises, and (4) writing critiques.*

*Attendance:* *You are permitted to miss three class periods during the semester. I suggest that you use these absences wisely. It is a good idea to save them for any illness or personal emergencies that may arise. Your attendance grade will be lowered 20% for each absence over 3. For example, with 4 absences, you will receive an 80%, with 5 absences you will receive a 60%, and so forth.*

*If you are not in class when assignments are handed back, it is your responsibility to pick these up from my office.*

*If you are more than 20 minutes late to class or leave with more than 20 minutes remaining in the class, it will be considered a tardy. There are no excused tardies. Three tardies will equal one absence.*

*Your attendance and active participation in this class is an essential element of the skills addressed in this course. Your attendance in class every time, for the full class time, is imperative since you will be engaged in group discussions and class participation on a daily basis. Excess absence inevitably affects your overall performance and will result in a grade reduction. Student, instructor and group interaction is the foundation for this course. Your reading and homework assignments are coordinated with class activities. **Thus, it is critical that you complete your reading and homework prior to the class for which it is assigned in order for class discussion to be informed, effective and rich.** Students are encouraged and, indeed, expected to participate actively in group discussion and to offer suggestions and insights to one another as they research, organize and prepare scripts.*

*Criticism:* *A key part of a liberal arts education is the ability to think critically. This is also an important job skill that is much desired by employers. For professional writers and editors it is a foundation of their profession. We will be regularly critiquing written and produced scripts – those written by you, your classmates, and professional scriptwriters. If this is a new experience for you, it may be uncomfortable, initially. However, our mistakes as well as our successes inform our academic careers and our lives. Please be prepared to be a part of self- and group-critiques. We will review a list of the proper procedures and objectives for a formal critique to allow this to be as productive (and as painless) as possible.*

**Academic Dishonesty:** *If the instructor suspects cheating or plagiarism, she will inform the student. It is the student's responsibility to provide a defense to a charge of academic dishonesty. Please refer to your student handbook for more information on your rights and responsibilities as a student.*

**The instructor reserves the right employ a plagiarism-detection service during the semester. These services, such as Turnitin.com, analyze student work against material on the Internet and a database of past student papers to detect similarities and verbatim duplications.**

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### **Assignment Guidelines:**

Generally, writing assignments will be due each class session. In order to provide a structured environment, reduce ambiguity, expedite grading, and replicate a professional setting, a number of guidelines will be used when creating and handing in assignments. These are:

1. Never submit your original script. Submit a paper printout. Please save the original to a labeled disk or CD and keep this in a safe location.
2. All scripts are to be submitted as word-processed output.
3. All scripts are to be submitted in a manila file folder. The folder is to be clearly labeled on the front and tab. You may recycle folders for subsequent assignments by crossing through the previous assignment and writing the current one. Please remove all previous assignment papers from the folder. List on the folder:
  - a. Your name
  - b. The assignment due date
  - c. Assignment identification (e.g. AI News Leads)
4. You will list identifying information on the top of your script. Please only put this information on the first page of your script, and be sure to **staple** all pages of your script. I will pass out additional information on script formatting in class. In the top left-hand corner of the first page of your script please list the following information:
  - a. Your name
  - b. The assignment due date
  - c. Assignment identification
  - d. Assignment air dates
  - e. A horizontal lineOn each subsequent page include the following in the upper right-hand corner:
  - a. Your name
  - b. The client's name
  - c. The page number
5. If your script fails to meet several objectives or contains fatal flaws, I will ask you to resubmit the script. These scripts must be submitted in the same manila folder as the original with the word "REWRITE" written in large letters on the folder. **The original, with my original notation, must always accompany the rewrite.** Revisions will only be accepted during the first 12 weeks of the semester if you are asked to resubmit. Standard revisions completed to raise your grade or improve your portfolio will be collected at the end of the semester (see item #6 below).
6. **You will be required to revise 5 of your scripts from the semester.** You will place these rewrites in a manila folder labeled "FINAL REWRITES" along with all **originals** (bearing my notations), which are being revised. If the originals are not included, your revisions will not be graded.
7. Hand all scripts to me at the beginning of the class when they are due. Please do not e-mail scripts to me; submit scripts to my mailbox or slide scripts under my door. This class involves a great deal of writing for you and also a great deal of grading for me. Unfortunately, time does not allow for me to review and provide suggestions on written scripts prior to the due date. I can, however, review scripts with you, in person, during office hours or by appointment. You may always submit final revisions at the end of the semester.

**Assignments:**

Detailed descriptions of assignments will be handed out separately.

<b>Exams (15%)</b>		
Exam 1		225 Points
Exam 2		225 Points
<b>News (15%)</b>		
A1	News Leads	50 Points
A2	Newscast Rundown	75 Points
A3	Radio News (5 minutes)	175 Points
A4	Television News	150 Points
<b>Radio Commercials and Promos (25%)</b>		
A5	:30 Radio Spot	50 Points
A6	:60 Radio Spot	50 Points
A7	Radio Campaign 1: 3 (:30) commercials	100 Points
A8	Radio Campaign 2: 2 (:30) commercials	100 Points
A9	“Legal and In-Good-Taste”: (:15 or :30) radio spots	100 Points
A10	Underwriting (:10) in-kind spots	100 Points
A11	PSAs: 2 (:20) public service announcements	100 Points
A12	Dramatic Radio Spots: 2 (:60)	100 Points
A13	8 Sweepers and 2 Liners	50 Points
<b>Television Commercials (10%)</b>		
A14	Commercial 1: 2 (:30) TV spots with storyboard	150 Points
A15	Commercial 2: 2 (:30) TV spots with storyboard	150 Points
<b>Television Programs (5%)</b>		
A16	TV Program 1	150 Points
<b>Promotional Media Campaign (15%)</b>		
A17	Final Project and Presentation	450 Points
<b>In-Class Exercises</b>		
	News Language Exercise	50 Points
	News Attribution and Source Exercise	50 Points
	Audio Expression Exercise	50 Points
	Video Visualization Exercise	50 Points
	<b>Revisions</b>	150 Points
	<b>Attendance</b>	100 Points
		<b>3000 POINTS</b>

**TCOM 2682 Grade Scale:**

2685 – 3000	A
2385 – 2684	B
2085 – 2384	C
1785 – 2084	D
1784 or fewer	F

**Important Youngstown State University Dates for Spring, 2006**

Spring Term Begins.....	January 17
Last Day for Adds .....	January 24
Last Day to Apply for Graduation.....	February 3
Spring Break.....	March 13 – March 17
“W” Withdrawal Deadline.....	March 24
Final Exams Begin.....	May 8
Fall Term Ends.....	May 12
Commencement .....	May 20