

USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR 574b: Dramatic Writing Across Media for Playwrights

Semester: Fall 2018

Units: 2 Units

Day: Thursdays

Time: 8p - 9:50pm

Location: MCC 102

Instructor: RODNEY TO

Office: MCC Adjunct Office

Office Hours: by Appointment

Contact: rodneyto@usc.edu / (917) 445-1040 (cell)

Course Description (from *USC Course Catalogue*)

Intensive overview of career paths for playwrights in a wide array of media as they exist now, and as new opportunities arise.

Overview

This course is an in-depth examination of alternate and supplemental writing opportunities for playwrights as they prepare for a professional writing career. This section of the course seeks to expand knowledge of writing paths, focusing on web-based media and documentary-style content culminating in the creation of a new media project.

Learning Objectives

Through research, analysis, in-class discussions, written, and media projects, students will experience a broad overview of writing and creating for both the digital and documentary landscape. We'll explore the process of content creation - from idea, to draft, to pitch, to sell - in order for playwrights to add to their skillset and writing portfolios and make them competitive in the marketplace.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

No initial textbooks required. Various coursework and assigned reading will be conferred throughout the semester.

GRADING: DESCRIPTION OF GRADING CRITERIA AND ASSESSMENT OF ASSIGNMENTS

*****SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS NEEDED. WILL NOTIFY OF ALL CHANGES*****

Grading Criteria

The quality of work for all components(see *Grading Breakdown*) is determined by the thoroughness of the effort, comprehension, the continuing process, and the imagination displayed.

Grading Scale (based on USC Grading Scale)

A = 96-100%	C+ = 78-80%
A- = 91-95%	C = 75-77%
B+ = 88-90%	C- = 71-74%
B = 85-87%	D+ = 67-70%
B- = 81-84%	D = 64-66%
	D- = 61-63%

[Failing Grade for Graduate Credit = C-]

Participation:

Collaboration and contributing to class discussions, lectures, and presentations is are essential components in learning, exploring, understanding, refining, and developing all areas of your writing skillset. Daily participation and active engagement in class is encouraged and will absolutely factor into the student's mid-semester and final grade. Therefore no absences or late arrivals will be allowed. *Participation is weighted at no more than 15% as per University Guidelines.*

*** Special Note**

All students enrolled in MFADW are required to attend program events. This includes all of the New Works Festival events (NWF I, II, and III), all Western Edge Playwrights' Salon events, and the student orientation held in late August. While some of these dates are not yet solidified, please put the times/dates in your calendar as soon as you can. Because we are monitoring professional development in every course that you take, and in the MFADW overall, your participation in these program events will have a direct impact on your annual review.

Please make any and all travel plans for after the New Works Festival III

Grading Breakdown

Weekly assignments	40pts
Mid-semester Written Project	20pts
Final Project	30pts
Weekly participation (discussions, contributions, etc.)*	10pts

Total Points

100pts

*** 10pts EXCELLENT participation.** Demonstrates active, everyday engagement. Shows willingness & enthusiasm in discussions, class activity, and collaborations.

*** 8pts GOOD participation.** Frequent active participation. Engaged, willing, semi- regular participation in discussions, class activity, and collaborations.

*** 6pts AVERAGE participation.** Semi-regular, but active participation in discussions, class activity, and collaborations.

*** 4pts BELOW AVERAGE participation.** Infrequent participation. Predominately passive and rarely demonstrates willingness to contribute to discussions, class activity, and collaborations.

*** 2pts POOR/INSUFFICIENT participation.** Does not participate willingly. Extremely passive and lacks enthusiasm. Poor, if any, contribution to discussions, class activity, and collaborations.

Further Grading Notes:

- When the GPA falls between two grades, the final grade will be weighted toward the positive end of the scale for students with excellent in-class participation. Grades will be weighted towards the negative end of the scale for those with poor in-class participation.
- I am available to discuss work and progress at anytime.

Assignment Submission Policy

Most of the required assignments will be either emailed or a hardcopy will be provided to the instructor. Occasionally, video assignments will assigned, in which case, files will be uploaded and submitted through a file-sharing program. *See above Late Submission below.*

Late Submission Policy:

Assignments are expected to be completed **by the due date & time**. Late assignments **WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED**.

Additional Policies

In-class Mobile Phone & Tablet Policy:

This is tricky because this course is dependent on content that students will be writing, researching, creating, and learning from personal devices. I'll be treating you as professionals-in-training. That said, while in class, all devices are solely for those purposes **ONLY**. Any intentional use of your devices for non-class purposes (such as texting, emailing, viewing of non-class related materials, etc.) will negatively reflect your participation grade.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

*****SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS NEEDED. WILL NOTIFY OF ALL CHANGES*****

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1 8/23	INTRO TO COURSE (w/ Paula Cizmar & Rodney To)		
Week 2 8/30	WEB SERIES / Intro		

Week 3 9/6	WEBSERIES / Continuing Discussion		
Week 4 9/13	WEB SERIES / Writing		
Week 5 9/20	WEB SERIES / Writing		
Week 6 9/27	PITCHING / Intro		
Week 7 10/4	PITCHING / Writing, in-class pitch practice		
Week 8 10/11	PITCHING / Guest lecturer(TBA) & practice pitches & notes		

Week 9 10/18	DOCUMENTARY / Intro		
10/25	DOCUMENTARY / Continue discussion		
Week 10 11/1	DOCUMENTARY / Blogs, Vlogs, & monetization		
Week 11 11/8	DOCUMENTARY / Continue discussion		
Week 12 11/15	FINAL PROJECT DISCUSSION / Begin discussing Final Media & Written Projects		
Week 13 11/22	THANKSGIVING	BREAK	NO CLASSES

Week 14 11/29	FINAL PROJECT PREP	(LAST IN-HOUSE CLASS)	(LAST IN-HOUSE CLASS)
Week 15	FINAL PROJECT WORK WEEK	FINAL PROJECT WORK WEEK	FINAL PROJECT WORK WEEK
FINALS WEEK	FINAL PROJECTS	FINAL PROJECTS SHOULD BE COMPLETED FOR SUBMISSION	FINAL PROJECTS DUE! (TBA)

FINAL EXAMINATION DATE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11 @7PM
Location TBA

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism - presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words - is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" <https://policy.usc.edu/student/scampus/part-b>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, and harassment are prohibited by the university. You are encouraged to report all incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity/Title IX Office* <http://equity.usc.edu> and/or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://dps.usc.edu>. This is important for the health and safety of the whole USC community. Faculty and staff must report any information regarding an incident to the Title IX Coordinator who will provide outreach and information to the affected party. The sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu> fully describes reporting options. Relationship and Sexual Violence Services <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp> provides 24/7 confidential support.

Support Systems

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://ali.usc.edu>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* <http://dsp.usc.edu> provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.