

CTWR 519B: Thesis In Television Drama
4 units – Section 19319D

SYLLABUS – SPRING 2020

Instructor: Barbara Nance
Class Schedule: Thursdays, 1:00 pm – 3:50 pm
Class Location: ONLINE
Office Hours: ONLINE – By Appointment
Contact Information: BNance@cinema.usc.edu

Two-Semester Objective

Develop an original hour-long dramatic television series including characters, world, and story lines for Season One; write and polish a pilot episode, a pitch document, and a 10-episode season arc

Second Semester Objective

Write a professional-quality pitch plus a 10-episode season arc. The revised/polished pilot script, the second semester pitch document, and the Thesis packet will be turned in during finals week and will count as the final for this course.

Course Goals

The first semester of this two-semester course was devoted to the creation of a pilot script for a one-hour dramatic television series.

This semester is a giant step forward in bringing the series to fruition. The work that lies ahead is daunting. Students will architect and give a professional-quality pitch of their project. The purpose of this is to dive deeper into the concept, analyze and dimensionalize the characters and discover if the pilot can sustain several seasons. Or do adjustments have to be made in the pilot/show concept to correct any weaknesses that have been uncovered?

In addition, pitching the show will teach the students valuable lessons on how to verbally convey their show idea as if they were pitching it to a producer with the hope of attaching them to the project or a TV executive in hopes of garnering a sale.

Finally, students will revise their pilot script, incorporating notes they received from the Thesis Share Day. All of these elements will be combined into the final package for grading.

Specific Goals:

- Architect and orally deliver a professional-quality pitch
- Evaluate and develop believable, dimensional series characters
- Understand the importance of creating intriguing guest characters, some that reappear over several episodes
- Sketch out episodes of the first season as well as what the tentpoles for the series are
- Rewrite/polish pilot script

Prerequisite

CTWR 519A

Suggested TextWriting the TV Drama Series by P. Douglas (not required, but highly recommended)

Deadline Hollywood Daily (just the TV section)

Various other news web sites (i.e., Huffington Post, NY Times, etc.)

Attendance Policy

Students are expected be on time and prepared for each class. On the third absence, students will have their final grade lowered by 10% and an additional 10% for each absence thereafter. Two late arrivals equate to one full absence. **Note:** This is a change in policy. Instructors will no longer distinguish between an excused or an unexcused absence. An absence will be an absence.

Please note that if you are a Writing for Screen and Television major/minor you must receive a grade of a C or better in order to receive degree credit. If you have any questions about the minimum grade required for credit, please check with your home department.

If you have an emergency and/or know you will miss class, please contact your professor prior to class or contact the Writing Division at 213-740-3303.

If a student has an emergency and additional accommodations are needed, those accommodations will need to come through the USC Campus Support and Intervention (CSI) office. The Writing Division recommends the student and/or advocate contact CSI at 213-821-4710 and their home department adviser for additional support.

Grading

10%	Participation in discussion/notes/feedback of other students' work
10%	Breakdown of Season One episodes
30%	Verbal pitch + pic document
50%	Final Package, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal pitch + document • short breakdown of Season 1 episodes • Revised/polished draft of pilot script • Main character bios • Artwork (if desired)

All work is to be delivered via e-mail **no later than 1 pm on the TUESDAY AFTERNOON prior to Thursday's class** to allow time for review/notes to be given to student during class. If work is not delivered by this deadline, notes from teacher are not guaranteed. Late assignments will result in grade being lowered 5 grade points for every 24 hours it is delayed.

Course Schedule

** Please note that all class topics are subject to change at the discretion of the professor**

Week 1 (January 21):

Discussion of Thesis Share Day notes. Discussion of where each student's pilot ended and where the series will now go. The entire season will be discussed with its possibilities and challenges. Review Winter Break assignment. Begin discussion of the concept of pitching – main elements that make up a pitch (Hook, Why Me?, Tone/World, Characters, Pilot Story & Beyond).

Assignment: Begin to write your pitch.

Weeks 2 through 5 (January 28, February 4, 11, 18):

Discuss each student's pitch and push deeper into each presentation so that a rough skeleton can begin to take shape.

Assignment: Continue honing/refining pitch document.

Week 6 (February 25):

Orally deliver revised/polished pitch.

Assignment: Read pilot script. Prepare list of five things to address in rewrite.

Weeks 7 through 11 (March 4, 11, 18, 25, 1):

Rewrite weeks. Return to the first semester pilot script to adjust the writing to accommodate any notes from Thesis committee, adjustments as a result of the pitch doc, as well as the Season 1 episode arcs. Rewritten scripts in progress are brought to the workshop each week. Scenes are discussed and students are continuously advised.

Assignment: Write/turn-in an act a week so that you have a revised draft finished by the end of week 12 ready for the table read.

Weeks 12 & 13 (April 8, 15):

Table reads. Three students per week.

Friday, April 16 – Final Draft of Pilot script due to student's Thesis Committee members

Week 14 (April 22):

No class – Wellness Day

Friday, April 23 – 2nd Thesis Committee Day

Week 15 (April 29):

Apply feedback from table read, discuss any last-minute issues with script, season, bible, etc. Wrap-up. Discuss the industry, where to go from here? What's next?

Finals Week: Have everything polished and honed to the best of your ability so that the entire package can be emailed on **Thursday, May 6th by 1 pm.**

Laptop and Cell Phone Policy

Laptops may be used for note-taking during lectures and to read assignments out-loud. Internet may be used for research purposes only (i.e., to look up information on a topic-related matter that we are discussing in class).

NO CELLPHONE USAGE WHATSOEVER will be tolerated. Cell phones must be turned off or silenced (no vibrate) before class begins.

No other e-mailing, text messaging, tweeting, web surfing, game-playing, etc. will be tolerated. Anyone found doing this will be asked to leave *immediately* and they will be marked as absent (unexcused). I'm not kidding.

Per Writing Division policy, the following is a breakdown of numeric grade to letter grade:

A	100% to 94%	C	76% to 73%
A-	93% to 90%	C-	72% to 70%
B+	89% to 87%	D+	69% to 67%
B	86% to 83%	D	66% to 63%
B-	82% to 80%	D-	62% to 60%
C+	79% to 77%	F	59% to 0%

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/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>.

Support Systems

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class.

<https://equity.usc.edu/>

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. <http://dsp.usc.edu>

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. <https://diversity.usc.edu/>

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, <http://emergency.usc.edu>

USC Department of Public Safety – 213-740-4321 (UPC) and 323-442-1000 (HSC) for 24-hour emergency assistance or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. <http://dps.usc.edu>

PLEASE NOTE:

FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX