

Tompkins Cortland Community College

Master Course Syllabus

Course Discipline and Number: ENGL 255

Year: 2024-2025

Course Title: Writing Television Drama and Comedy

Credit Hours:3

I. Course Description:

Creative Writing course: This course explores the process of writing series drama and comedy. After close analysis of series episodes and scripts, students develop and write scenes for a current comedy and a current drama. In addition, they develop and write a pilot and bible for an original series in a genre of their choice. ENGL255 fulfills the SUNY General Education requirement in The Arts. Prerequisites: Prior completion of, or concurrent enrollment in, ENGL100; RDNG116 if required by placement. 3 Cr. (3 Lec). Spring semester.

II. Additional Course Information:

1. This course is required for the Creative Writing – Screenwriting A.A. and the Creative Writing – Screenwriting Certificate. It can be used to fulfill a Liberal Arts or Unrestricted Elective in the Creative Writing – Prose, Poetry and Drama A. A. and an Unrestricted Elective in the Creative Writing – Poetry and Prose Certificate.
2. ENGL 255 serves as a writing-intensive English elective, a humanities elective, a liberal arts elective, and an unrestricted elective.
3. Students with an interest in television, cinema, creative writing, screenwriting, video/film production, new media, or the creative process will benefit from taking this course
4. This course requires class participation and group work as we read, critique, and workshop scripts
5. This course requires online homework.
6. This course uses specialized software as prescribed by the instructor, available at little or no cost to the student.

III. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze scripts and episodes of a current television show and apply what they've learned to writing premises and scenes for existing shows.
2. Critique and revise scenes.
3. Write a pilot and bible for an original series.
4. Format a television script correctly using specialized software.

IV. Tompkins Cortland Institutional Learning Outcomes; Program Learning Outcomes; SUNY General Education Outcomes

Tompkins Cortland ILOs

Complete this section for “service” courses only (e.g. courses that are required of all students; courses that are not program specific but satisfy liberal arts requirements; or commonly used in multiple academic programs to meet non-program-specific requirements). Check only Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) that are meaningfully developed and assessed in this course. For each ILO chosen, include the SLO to which it aligns.

Students will:

- ☐ Communicate effectively, in oral and written forms, taking into consideration audience and purpose.
- ☐ Apply principles and methods of scientific inquiry and quantitative reasoning appropriate to their discipline.
- ☐ Use information, critical thinking, and the creative process to solve problems and reach conclusions.
- ☐ Use technology appropriate to their discipline.
- ☐ Describe the ways in which social, economic, or environmental sustainability depends on their own and the collective contributions of a diversity of ideas and people.

Program Learning Outcomes

Complete this section for program-specific courses (e.g. those that share the same 4 letter designation as the academic program or satisfy requirements in related programs). List the academic program(s) here and note which Student Learning Outcomes align to specific Programmatic Learning Outcomes. Please see the MCS Instructions for more details.

Specify the Academic Program

Creative Writing-Screenwriting A.A. and Creative Writing-Screenwriting Certificate

PLO #1. Use literary scholarship to identify the conventions of the major creative genres – poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, drama, and screenwriting (*maps to ILO #3 – critical thinking*).

SLO #1 Analyze scripts and episodes of a current television show and apply what they've learned to writing premises and scenes for existing shows.

PLO #2. Describe and evaluate their creative processes and writing (maps to ILO #3 critical thinking).

SLO #2 Critique and revise scenes.

PLO #3. Produce creative writing portfolios (Maps to ILO #1 – effective communication).

SLO #3 – Write a pilot and bible for an original series; and

SLO #4 Format a television script correctly using specialized software.

SUNY General Education Outcomes

If this course **assesses** a SUNY GEN ED Outcome, check all that apply and indicate which course outcome(s) address each checked item:

☒ **CRITICAL THINKING** - Students will:

- a. identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments as they occur in their own or others' work; and
- b. develop well-reasoned arguments.

SLO #1 Analyze scripts and episodes of a current television show and apply what they've learned to writing premises and scenes for existing shows.

SLO#2 Critique and revise scenes.

☒ **INFORMATION MANAGEMENT** - Students will:

- a. perform the basic operations of personal computer use;
- b. understand and use basic research techniques; and

- c. locate, evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources.

SLO #4 Format a television script correctly using specialized software.

☒ **GENERAL EDUCATION CATEGORY - Area(s): The Arts**

For courses that are approved to meet one (or more) of the ten SUNY General Education categories, indicate which category the course fulfills, and which outcome(s) are aligned with the SUNY outcomes for that category:

SUNY Gen Ed Outcome for The Arts: Students will demonstrate an understanding of at least one principal form of artistic expression and the creative process inherent therein.

All of the SLOs for ENGL 255 align with this SUNY Gen Ed for The Arts outcome.

☐ This course does not address any of the above Tompkins Cortland ILOs, PLOs, or SUNY General Education Outcomes.

V. Essential Topics/Themes

1. Analysis of television episodes and scripts
2. Writing, critiquing, and revising scenes for current shows
3. Developing and writing the pilot and bible for an original series
4. Formatting teleplays using specialized software

VI. Methods of Assessment/Evaluation

Method	% Course Grade
1. Journal entries (analysis of television episodes and scripts)	10-15 %
2. Developing pilot and bible for original series	20-30%
3. Complete draft of pilot for original series	30-50%
4. Class participation (critiquing and revising work)	15–20%

VII. Texts – ☐ Required ☒ Recommended ☐ Used for more than one course (list courses)

1. Nash, Jamie. <i>Save the Cat! ® Writes for TV: The Last Book on Creating Binge-Worthy Content You'll Ever Need</i> . Save the Cat! Press, 2021. ISBN-10 : 0984157697
2. Landau, Neil. <i>TV Writing On Demand: Creating Great Content in the Digital Era</i> . 1 st ed. Routledge; 2018. ISBN-10 : 1138705713
3. Cook, Martie. <i>Write to TV</i> . 3 rd ed. Routledge, 2020. ISBN-13: 978-0367338138

Editions listed are current as of date of syllabus. More recent editions may be used.

VIII. Bibliography of Supplemental Materials

1. Bull, Sheldon. <i>Elephant Bucks: An Inside Guide to Writing for TV Sitcoms</i> . Michael Wiese Productions, 2007. ISBN-10 : 1932907270
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| 2. Douglass, Pamela. <i>Writing the TV Drama Series: How to Succeed as a Professional Writer in TV</i> . 4 th ed. Michael Wiese Productions, 2018. ISBN-10 : 1615932933 |
| 3. Vogler, Christopher. <i>The Writer's Journey – 25th Anniversary Edition: Mythic Structure for Writers</i> . 4 th ed. Michael Wiese Productions, 2020. ISBN-10 : 1615933158 |
| 4. Venis, Linda. <i>Inside the Room: Writing Television with the Pros at UCLA Extension Writers' Program</i> . Avery, 2013. ISBN-10 : 1592408117 |

Editions listed are current as of date of syllabus. More recent editions may be used.

IX. Other Learning Resources

Audiovisual: Access to television series episodes (example: library access using streaming service such as Netflix)
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Electronic:

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences www.oscars.org
Writers Guild of America West www.wga.org
Writers Guild of America East <https://www.wgaeast.org/>
Script Magazine www.scriptmag.com
Creative Screenwriting www.creativescreenwriting.com
Variety www.variety.com

Other: Access to example television scripts
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Attendance Policy: *To maintain good grades, regular attendance in class is necessary. Absence from class is considered a serious matter and absence never excuses a student from class work. It is the responsibility of all instructors to distribute reasonable attendance policies in writing during the first week of class. Students are required to comply with the attendance policy set by each of their instructors. Students are not penalized if they are unable to attend classes or participate in exams on particular days because of religious beliefs, in accordance with Chapter 161, Section 224-a of the Education Law of the State of New York. Students who plan to be absent from classroom activity for religious reasons should discuss the absence in advance with their instructors. See college catalog for more information.*

Services for Students with Disabilities: *It is the College's policy to provide, on an individual basis, appropriate academic adjustments for students with disabilities, which may affect their ability to fully participate in program or course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Coordinator of Access and Equity Services, to discuss their particular need for academic adjustments. All course materials are available in alternate formats upon request.*

Academic Integrity: *Every student at Tompkins Cortland Community College is expected to act in an academically honest fashion in all aspects of his or her academic work: in writing papers and reports, in taking examinations, in performing laboratory experiments and reporting the results, in clinical and cooperative learning experiences, and in attending to paperwork such as registration forms.*

Any written work submitted by a student must be his or her own. If the student uses the words or ideas of someone else, he or she must cite the source by such means as a footnote. Our guiding principle is that any honest evaluation of a student's performance must be based on that student's work. Any action taken by a student that would result in misrepresentation of someone else's work or actions as the student's own — such as cheating on a test, submitting for credit a paper written by another person, or forging an advisor's signature — is intellectually dishonest and deserving of censure.

Several degree programs offer student learning opportunities (such as internships, field work, and clinical experiences) outside the standard classroom setting. As part of the learning process, students must understand and engage in conduct that adheres to principles guiding employment within the professional workplace. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, academic integrity, accountability, reliability, respect, use of appropriate language and dress, civility, professional ethics, honesty, and trustworthiness. Disciplinary action may be initiated for inappropriate conduct occurring while participating in any course-related project or event.