BROOKLYN COLLEGE
Department of Television, Radio & Emerging Media
TVR 3661 T3 (Code #: 29799)
Advanced Television Comedy Scriptwriting
Fall 2024
Tuesdays 3:40-6:20pm

Prof. Brian Dunphy
Office: 406s Whitehead
Office Hours: **Tuesdays 11:00am-12:00pm, 2:30-3:30pm** and **Wednesdays: 2:30-3:30pm**
E-mail: profdunphy@gmail.com

Course Description:
Scriptwriting for television comedy programming. Developing scripts based on research, character analyses, plot analysis, and story treatments. Course will feature comedy/sitcom scripts.

(Not open to students who have completed Television, Radio and Emerging Media 4173 [73], Special Topics: Advanced Television Writing: Drama.)

Prerequisite: Television, Radio and Emerging Media 2616 with a grade of B or better, or Film 1301 Screenwriting I with a grade of B or better, or permission of the chair.

Overview:
Writing a TV show is hard. Creating a TV show is harder…. Being funny.. good luck… Getting it made… How do we do it? Better question is -- why do we do it?

Students will find out whether they are able to create a TV show or write an episode of a TV show. By reading scripts/chapters/articles, watching pilots, and diving into the work, we will do something incredible…. And try to be funny at the same time.

Students will learn how to create a premise, beat sheet/outline, characters, and students will write several drafts of their script.

Required Reading:
This course uses OER (Open Educational Resources) and ZTC (Zero Textbook Cost) readings. There are ZERO purchases for textbooks. All work will be available by Week 1.

***Additional Requirements* and Materials Needed:**
- Viewings: TV – see below
    - Access to television shows via streaming for certain full-length programs.
    - There are free trials for most streaming services – make sure to cancel!

- Writing Program - Writer Duet (others are available but WD is preferred)
    - There is a FREE basic option. I have a code for 60% off if a student wants to use the Pro version, but this is optional.

Required: Texts, Articles, Pilot Episodes/Scripts

- All documents will be either posted to BB or sent via a downloadable link
- WITH ANY READINGS/VIEWINGS – TAKE NOTES! DO NOT JUST "REMEMBER" – The more detailed the better.

Websites to Use:

Script Sites:
https://www.simplyscripts.com/tv.html
https://thetelevisionpilot.com/
https://nofilmschool.com/tv-pilot-script

Video & Podcast sites:
https://johnaugust.com/scriptnotes
https://www.writeyourscreenplay.com/screenwriting-podcast-jacob-krueger-write-your-screenplay/
https://www.lessonsfromthescreenplay.com/
https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/beyondthescreenplay

Attendance & Lateness Policy:
You're a working writer – you need to show up on time to class. It's that simple. I understand the 2/5 trains are brutal but there's no way they're brutal EVERY Tuesday at 3:30pm.

Attendance of each class session is important because there are only 14 total meetings. We only meet once a week, missing one course is equivalent to missing two courses in a 28-meeting course.

Brooklyn College attendance policy expects students to attend all scheduled sessions of every class. I expect this too. If you miss a class, it may be impossible for you to catch up. Also, a vital component of this class will be working as a group which is impossible to do if you are not here.

A large percent of your grade is made up of feedback, attendance and class participation. So just be here because you need to be.

If you have a personal emergency that causes you to miss class, you need provide official documentation to avoid an effect on your grade. 'Official' means a very serious injury or illness or a death in your family, etc. If you must miss a class for any reason, you are still expected to find out what you missed in terms of in-class lecture material and assignments. Any assignments given will still be expected of you on its due date. I will not be available after class to catch you up.

The readings are necessary background for classroom discussion and the project papers that will be assigned during the term. The readings should be done as assigned as preparation for in-class discussion and work.

Rules Regarding Creativity and Content:
All work produced for your class needs to show respect for your fellow classmates and for academic standards regardless of form or medium.

Policy on Academic Integrity:
The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and

plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found at this site: http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation.

Policy on Late or Make Up Work:
You won't miss your deadlines, so this is a useless subheading.

Course Objectives
1. Students will understand the basic structure of comedy TV writing forms ranging from short-form monologue to act structure/breakdown to long form scripts.

2. Students will be able to use narratives as a part of being able to write a pilot (or other) episodes and other assignments.

3. Students will write their own outlines/beat sheets, character creations, and other required elements to create the pilot.

Grade Breakdown
Deadlines: 10 (there are numerous deadlines, miss any for ANY reason that is not excused, lose points.)
Pre-Writing/Other work: 25 (Viewings/Readings, Premise, research, outline, beat sheet)
Draft (Acts): 20 – total
Classwork/Feedback: 20 (each student will evaluate those in the group, write up a short paragraph assessing their feedback, included in here are deadlines.)
Final Work: 25 (Draft 2, Cleaned up pitches/Logline)

IMPORTANT - Save All Files/Assignments:
Your Name + Assignment Name + DATE
Example: Micah Lasso Assignment 101824

Details on Feedback & Classwork:

Learning how to comment on other scripts is an essential tool for a writer. Knowing when an error/mistake is made (content, format) helps the writer and yourself. Once you spot them, the hope is you won't make them.

Treat the feedback as you would want to receive it. One line or a word or so won't do.

Give real suggestions regarding the premise, outline, beat sheet, action, dialogue, character, story choices, etc.

Each student is in a group where you will provide feedback to one another (about 4 per group). We may switch groups towards the end of the semester once new drafts are introduced.

At the end of the semester, all students will give an assessment of the feedback from each group member. Included in this assessment is a 1-2 paragraph description on what you believe the student should receive on a 1-10 or 1-15 scale. Depending on which group you are in. A copy/paste of all the feedback given by the student with dates.

All feedback is due before class time – specific days/times to follow.

During class time, students are expected to do table reads, respond with feedback to other scripts, and participate in full. Missing class hurts your grade here.

How to Ace This Class:

	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Class Participation Feedback	Misses class; fails to complete in-class assignments or assignments for in-class presentations; does not ask questions/give feedback to the presenters; does not comment on presentations; is not attentive.	Asks and answers questions; engages in discussion; is attentive; brings in assignments complete; asks for and incorporates feedback; asks questions of other presenters; comments on presentations; is attentive.	Asks and answers questions and/or gives feedback frequently; engages in discussion frequently; brings in assignments complete; asks for and incorporates feedback; takes creative risks; asks questions of other presenters; comments on presentations; uses the class e-discussion board enthusiastically; is attentive and enthusiastic.
Writing – all aspects	Fails to demonstrate knowledge of appropriate structural techniques, writes unclearly, does not get or use feedback from the class, employs inappropriate grammar, does not follow professional formatting guidelines, fails to turn in assignments or turns them in late or incomplete.	Demonstrates knowledge of the subject by applying appropriate structural techniques; incorporates feedback from class uses grammar appropriate to the format; turns in assignments on time.	Demonstrates strong grasp of more than one technique by using them in the assignment; takes creative risks; uses feedback garnered in class; employs fitting grammar; asks for and incorporates feedback before submitting final draft. Turns in assignments on time.

Schedule & Class Breakdown – SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Week 1 – September 3rd – HELLO!
Intro & Basics of TV Writing
The Promise of the Premise
Learning Writerduet
Start thinking about your show idea/premise.

Part II: Workplace Comedy
WKPR vs. Newsradio

Week 2 – September 10th
Continue with learning TV writing
Breakdown of pilot episodes.

Assignment:
- Comedic scene writing (but I'm not funny!)
- Read pilot episodes –
    - Abbott's Elementary
    - The Family Sitcom – Modern Family, Black-ish

Readings:
A. Documents on proper script writing (see course documents)
B. Gilles You're Funny
C. Landau Comedy Cringe Parts 1 & 2
D. Inside The Writers Room Chapter 3 (How to Make Your Writing Personal) and Chapter 5 (Finding Your Voice)

Week 3 – September 17th
Further Breakdown of pilot episodes
Scenes read in class

Assignment:
- Ready to pitch? Just an idea is an idea.
- Breakdown

Read and then watch pilot episodes:
- Friends, Roommates & Lovers
    - Catastrophe and Fleabag

Readings:
A. Landau Chapter 6 - pages 127-144
B. Brown – Chapter 5 & 6
C. Save the Cat – Parts 1 & 2

Week 4 – September 24th
More on Writing for TV

Assignment: Continue writing scenes

Viewing & Script Reading: TBD

Readings:
A. Rabkin
B. More documents on blackboard

Week 5 – October 1st
Assignment: Characters
Viewings: TBD

Readings:
A. The Protags Journey
   - Character Arc (19-33)
   - Disunity (2 pages)
   - Deconstruction (55-58. 62-63
   - Reconstruction (75-76, 82-85)
   - Unity (95-96, 101-102,
B. TV Writing on Demand
   - Chapter 7 – Character Empathy v. Sympathy
C. Writing the Pilot
   - Characters (31-37, 45-51)
D. Sitcom Characters +

Week 6 – October 8th
Assignment:
Idea – What is Your Idea? Why you? Why now?
Premise – What is this all about? What is the hook?
Research (comps)

World Building & More on Engines
Readings:
Landau Chapter 3 – World Building page 49-63

Week 7 – October 22nd
Assignment: Boots on the Ground
Family Dynamics
Dialogue, Scene Writing

Readings:
WSF – Dialogue chapter

Week 8 – October 29th
Assignment: Story Pitches, Loglines

TV episode week/Beat Sheets

Viewing: TBD

Assignment:
Beat Sheet - one or two words/sentences.

Readings:
A. TV Writing on Demand
   - Chapter 5 (Story Tentacles)
B. STC Beat Sheet

Week 9 – November 5th
Assignment: Expanded pilot Beat Sheets & First draft of outline of pilot

Viewing: TBD – on your show

Reading:
A. Script – depends on your show

Week 10 – November 12th
Assignment: Second draft of outline and The First 10

Viewing: TBD – depends on show
Reading: Script – depends on show

Week 11 – November 19th
Assignment: To and Write Act 1 (+teaser)

Week 12 – November 26th
Assignment: Act 1 re-write

Week 13 – December 3rd
Assignment: Act 2

Week 14 – December 10th
Assignment: Act 2 re-write

Final Script Due with Personal Assessment: December 17th(ish)