

# **Mercer County Community College**

## **Arts and Communication Division**

### **CMN 161**

### **WRITING FOR RADIO/TV**

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

An overview of written formats commonly used in radio and television. Writing assignments include radio and television thirty and sixty second commercials, broadcast news copy, broadcast interviews, public service announcements, and a dramatic piece. All assignments must be typed.

Text (s):      **Reference Division Booklist**

Prerequisites: **CMN141, CMN151, and ENG101**

**Credits: 3**

**Lecture Hours: 3**

**Food and drink are strictly prohibited in classrooms as per Health and Safety Laws. Students may not be in chemicals or cleaning fluids without the appropriate MSD sheets.**

**Course Coordinator: Mitch Canter**

**Revised: Summer 2005**

## **I. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- A. To acquaint students with the fundamental differences between writing for print and writing for broadcast.
- B. To provide a basic understanding of the terms and techniques of broadcast writing.
- C. To enable the student to deal with the three basic forms of broadcast writing, e.g.: writing to inform, writing to persuade and writing to entertain.
- D. To enable the student to deal with the basic restraints of time and format which are peculiar to radio and television.
- E. To offer actual “hands-on” writing experience in each of the three basic categories.

## **II. SPECIFIC GOALS**

At the end of the semester the student will be able to:

- A. Write television and radio commercials.
- B. Write a television or radio public service announcement.
- C. Write broadcast news stories.
- D. Write a broadcast interview.
- E. Write plot outlines, scenarios, and dialogue for a television drama.
- F. Analyze and critique broadcast writing samples.

## **III. MODE OF INSTRUCTION**

Lecture, demonstration and viewing/listening experiences. Each week of the course involves some analysis or direct writing assignment.

No time extensions are granted, due to the deadline nature of writing for radio and television. Since broadcast copy, news and scripts are created to be read aloud, typing is a necessary skill for broadcast writers. One course requirement, therefore, is that all assignments must be typed.

Any assignments that are not typed will receive no credit.

#### **IV. METHOD OF EVALUATION**

There will be more than twelve writing assignments and one final exam in CMN161. Some assignments will be timed assignments during class, while others will allow more time for completion.

As mentioned previously in this course outline, assignment due dates are taken seriously since writers in broadcasting must meet strict deadlines. Assignments that are late will receive no credit.

- A. The twelve (12) highest scores of your writing assignments will be averaged and count for 80% of your grade.
- B. The final examination will count for 20% of your grade.

Class attendance, participation, and motivation will enter into the final grading evaluation

#### **V. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Avoid plagiarism by giving adequate and proper credit to other's words and thoughts. A student must never knowingly represent the thoughts, ideas, or work of others as her or his own, use or obtain unauthorized assistance in the execution of any academic work, or give fraudulent assistance to another student. Penalties for a breach of academic integrity (cheating) range from failing the assignment to failing the course. See the Student Handbook at [www.mccc.edu](http://www.mccc.edu) for the official college policy on Academic Integrity.

#### **VI. THE CLASSROOM AS A LEARNING COMMUNITY**

All students are welcomed to an environment that creates a sense of community of pride and respect; we are all here to work cooperatively and to learn together. With that as our goal, it is important that all students come to all class sessions on time, and stay until the end of the class meeting unless you have informed the instructor that you must leave early. If you are unavoidably late, please enter the class quietly. If you must miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for all material covered, for announcements made in your absence, and for acquiring any material that were distributed in class.

It is important to stay focused on the class activities and discussions. For this reason, all pagers, cell phones, or other electronic equipment that will distract the class should be turned off. Side conversations are also distracting for both the instructor and other students in the class. Simple norms of courtesy should be sufficient to have our class run in the best interests of all of us.

**SYLLABUS FOR CMN 161**  
**WRITING FOR RADIO AND TV**

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<b>WEEK</b>	<b>READING</b>	<b>WRITING ASSIGNMENT</b>
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<b>Writing to Persuade</b>	Weeks 1-5 Reading is in <i>Orlik's Broadcast/Cable Copywriting</i> text	
1	Chapters 1 and 3 (Omit Chapter 2) Tools of the Trade	Assignment #1: Re-Write a Poorly Written Commercial Quiz on Punctuation and Style
2	Chapters 4, 5 and 7 - Key Elements of Radio Writing	Assignment #2: Write a Straight-Voice Radio Commercial
3	Chapters 6 and 8 - CDVP Factors	Assignment #3: Write a Radio Commercial using the Elements of Sound
4	Chapters 10 and 11 - Key Elements of Television Writing	Assignment #4: Write a Television Commercial
5	Chapter 14	Assignment #5: Write a Television or Radio PSA
<b>Writing to Inform</b>	Weeks 6-11	
6	Chapters 1 and 2	Assignment #6: Practice Writing Leads
7	Chapters 3 and 4	Assignment #7: Write Visual News Stories
8	Chapter 6	Assignment #8: Write Conflict News Stories; Writing Around Tape
9	Chapters 7 and 8	Assignment #9: Write a Television News Story
10	Chapter 11	Assignment #10: Write a Sports Story; Organize a Newscast
11	Chapter 5	Assignment #11: Write an Interview

**SYLLABUS FOR CMN 161**  
**WRITING FOR RADIO AND TV (cont'd)**

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>READING</b>	<b>WRITING ASSIGNMENT</b>
<b>Writing to Entertain</b>	Weeks 12-15 will be hand-outs on writing television drama	
12	Hand-out Reading on writing effective plot summaries and character descriptions	Assignment #12: Write a plot summary and character description for a half-hour television drama
13	Hand-out on writing effective scenarios	Assignment #12: Write the scenario for your half-hour television drama
14	Hand-out on The Writer's Guild of American format for a teleplay	Assignment #14: Write the teleplay for your half-hour drama's climactic scene or introductory scene
15	Review for the Final Exam	NO assignment - Review for the Final Exam

All assignments must be typed. All assignments must be handed in by the due date. Radio and television are time-sensitive media, and writers who cannot write within the constraints of deadlines have no jobs. Therefore, no late or hand-written assignments will be accepted.

Grades: The 12 best writing assignment grades will be averaged and counts as 80% of your grade in the course. The Final Exam is 20% of your grade in the course.