

Tisch School of the Arts

Writing the TV Pilot in London

IDWPG-UT 1071/ IFMTV-UT 1071

Instruction Mode: In-person

Spring 2023

If you are enrolled in this course 100% remotely and are not a Go Local/Study Away student for NYU London, please make sure that you've completed the online academic orientation via Brightspace so you are aware of site specific support structure, policies and procedures. Please contact NYU London if you have trouble accessing the Brightspace site.

Syllabus last updated on: 26 May 2022

Lecturer Contact Information

Prerequisites

Prerequisites: For Dramatic Writing Students: Craft, Episodic Writing I / For UGFTV Students: Introduction to TV Writing or Preparing the Teleplay & Screenplay

Note: This class will count as 'Episodic II' for DDW students, and as 'Advanced TV: Writing the One Hour' or 'Writing for Television: The Half Hour' for UGFTV students

Units earned

4 credits

Course Details

- Time TBD

- Location: Rooms will be posted in Albert before your first class.

- Remote Participants: Your instructor will provide you with the Zoom link via NYU Classes.
- COVID-related details: In the interest of protecting the NYU London community, we are closely following CDC guidance around COVID-19 and adjusting our recommendations and policies accordingly. Your health and well-being is our top priority.
 - If you are attending in person, you will be assigned a seat on the first day and are expected to use that seat for the entire semester due to NYU COVID-19 safety protocol. Please note that you are expected to attend every class meeting in-person; however, this may change during the drop/add period if in-person student registration increases significantly or at any point during the semester if local COVID-19 regulations require additional physical distancing.

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the basic craft of writing original pilots.

Students will read and analyze produced pilots from recognized British series and write their own original pilots, which will be analyzed and discussed in a workshop environment. Lectures will emphasize both pilots and the series that emerge from those pilots.

The class will be taught by a British instructor and British examples will be used as reference throughout the semester. (Students *do not* need to write pilots specifically for British TV.)

The purpose of this class is for students to explore writing generative work in the episodic form. The work may range across hour and half-hour, comedy and drama, as well as advertiser supported and subscriber supported series.

NOTE: students should come to the first class having watched and/or read the pilot for *Fleabag* (written by Phoebe Waller-Bridge) and have a short pitch for an original show prepared.

Course Objective

At the completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Analyze British television series for form and content
2. To create, pitch, outline and write an original pilot
3. To develop a story engine that generates episodes, seasons and series arcs based on the original pilot

Assessment Components

You are expected to attend class in person or remote synchronously. Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

Teaching & Learning Philosophy

This is a workshop class; all reading will be done prior to classtime, which will be spent in lectures and discussions.

Students will be required to start with a premise, develop an outline, and write a completed draft of an original, full length pilot. Before going to outline, students will have to delineate the major characters, identify the arena in which the series takes place, and demonstrate a “story engine” that shall facilitate long-term series narrative.

Required Text(s)

Electronic Resources (via Brightspace / NYU Library Course Reserves)

May Include:

Fleabag - pilot by Phoebe Waller-Bridge

Catastrophe – pilot by Sharon Horgan and Rob Delaney

The End of the F---ing World - pilot by Charlie Covell
Life On Mars – pilot by Matthew Graham
Derry Girls- pilot by Lisa McGee
The Five – pilot by Harlan Coben and others
I May Destroy You - Pilot by Micaela Coel

Grading

Students will be graded on the completion of the assignments, class participation and the final project (this is a pass/fail class).

Grades will be determined as follows:

- **25% Class Participation** (engagement in class discussions, asking questions, critiques of screenings, readings and other students' work)
- **50% Assignments** (timely and focused completion of all screenings and written assignments: meeting deadlines, following directions, correct spelling, grammar and proofreading)
- **25% Final Project**

Assignments throughout the semester, several produced pilots will be watched and/or read and analyzed for content, structure, character, plot and theme with the aim of applying these skills to their own writing. (It is understood that pilot length is flexible and that the line between comedy and drama has become quite thin. Advertiser-supported pilots will have act breaks; subscriber supported scripts will not.)

Assignments- students will read produced pilots and each other's original work in advance of class time, to be discussed in the class room. Students are required to complete all assigned work. Written assignments are due 48 hours before the start of the class they are assigned for, and must be uploaded to the class drive.

Final- students will write a full length, original episodic pilot.

Session 1

NOTE: students should come to the first class having read and watched the ***Fleabag*** pilot and have a short pitch for an original show prepared

LECTURE: course intro/review syllabus/***Fleabag*** pilot - how do you set the style, long-term plot, and characters of a series?

WORKSHOP: Students will do the extremely short version of their pitch. What's the venue/world? Who's the lead? Where does the conflict come from?

ASSIGNMENT: read ***Life On Mars*** /prepare a longer pitch for your show

Session 2

LECTURE/ANALYSIS: ***Life On Mars*** - What's the problem in the show? What drives the show? Story engines

WORKSHOP: Group A does their longer pitch -- here's the venue, this is the lead (or this is an ensemble), here is where the conflict occurs, here's what generates story, here's the story of the pilot.

ASSIGNMENT: read ***Derry Girls*** pilot

Session 3

LECTURE/ANALYSIS: ***Derry Girls*** - setting up a premise

WORKSHOP: Group B does their longer pitch -- here's the venue, this is the lead (or this is an ensemble), here is where the conflict occurs, here's what generates story, here's the story of the pilot.

ASSIGNMENT: Write Outlines/Read ***Catastrophe pilot***

Session 4

LECTURE/ANALYSIS: ***Catastrophe*** setting up a specific delineated world

WORKSHOP: Discuss outlines (Group A)

ASSIGNMENT: read ***The Five*** pilot/rewrite outlines (Group A)

Session 5

LECTURE/ANALYSIS: ***The Five*** pilot -- setting up an ensemble/the difference between an ensemble and a single-lead show

WORKSHOP: Discuss outlines (Group B)

ASSIGNMENT: read ***The End of the F---ing World pilot*** / rewrite outlines (Group B)

Session 6

LECTURE/ANALYSIS: ***The End of the F---ing World pilot*** - the half hour drama/setting up a non-linear structure

WORKSHOP: discuss rewritten outlines (Group A)

Session 7

WORKSHOP: discuss rewritten outlines (Group B)

ASSIGNMENT: write the first 15-20 pages of your original pilot (depending upon the length and structure of show)

Session 8

WORKSHOP: first 15-20 pages (Group A)

ASSIGNMENT: half-hour writers should write a complete first draft, hour writers should write 1/2 of their pilots (Group A)

Session 9

WORKSHOP: first 15-20 pages (Group B)

ASSIGNMENT: half-hour writers should write a complete first draft, hour writers should write 1/2 of their pilots (Group B)

Session 10

WORKSHOP: first draft or 1/2 pages (Group A)

ASSIGNMENT: half hour writers rewrite first half of pilot and analyze strengths and weaknesses; hour writers finish their drafts (Group A)

Session 11

WORKSHOP: first draft or 1/2 pages (Group B)

ASSIGNMENT: half hour writers rewrite first half of pilot and analyze strengths and weaknesses; hour writers finish their drafts (Group B)

Session 12

WORKSHOP: rewritten first halves or complete first draft (Group A)

Session 13

WORKSHOP: rewritten first halves or complete first draft (Group B)

ASSIGNMENT: submit final drafts for grading/two page outline for the first season of the show

Session 14

WORKSHOP: pitch/discuss the first season of the show (Group A/B)

Classroom Etiquette

To optimize the experience in a blended learning environment, please consider the following:

- Please be mindful of your microphone and video display during synchronous class meetings. Ambient noise and some visual images may disrupt class time for you and your peers.
- Please do not eat during class and minimize any other distracting noises (e.g. rustling of papers and leaving the classroom before the break, unless absolutely necessary).
- If you are not using your cell phone to follow the lesson, cell phones should be turned off or in silent mode during class time.
- Make sure to let your classmates finish speaking before you do.
- If deemed necessary by the study away site (ie COVID related need), synchronous class sessions may be recorded and archived for other students to view. This will be announced at the beginning of class time.
- Students should be respectful and courteous at all times to all participants in class.

Academic Policies

Grade Conversion

Your lecturer may use one of the following scales of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

A = 94-100 or 4.0

A- = 90-93 or 3.7

B+ = 87-89 or 3.3

B = 84-86 or 3.0

B- = 80-83 or 2.7

C+ = 77-79 or 2.3

C = 74-76 or 2.0

C- = 70-73 or 1.7

D+ = 67-69 or 1.3

D = 65-66 or 1.0

F = below 65 or 0

Attendance Policy

Studying at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students.

And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers, or online through NYU Brightspaces if the course is remote synchronous/blended, is expected promptly when class begins. Attendance will be checked at each class meeting. If you have scheduled a remote course immediately preceding/following an in-person class, you may want to write to NYU London to see if you can take your remote class at the Academic Center.

As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor and/or the Academics team by e-mail immediately (i.e. before the start of your class). Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, Moses Center accommodations, religious observance or emergencies. Your professor or site staff may ask you to present a doctor's note or an exceptional permission from an NYU Staff member as proof. Emergencies or other exceptional circumstances that you wish to be treated confidentially must be presented to staff. Doctor's notes must be submitted in person or by e-mail to the Academics team, who will inform your professors.

Unexcused absences may be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade for every week's worth of classes missed, and may negatively affect your class participation grade. Four unexcused absences in one course may lead to a Fail in that course. Being more than 15 minutes late counts as an unexcused absence. Furthermore, your professor is entitled to deduct points for frequently joining the class late.

Exams, tests and quizzes, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation. It is the student's responsibility to produce this doctor's note and submit it to site staff; until this doctor's note is produced the missed assessment is graded with an F and no make-up assessment is scheduled. In content classes, an F in one assignment may lead to failure of the entire class.

Regardless of whether an absence is excused or not, it is the student's responsibility to catch up with the work that was missed.

Final exams

Final exams must be taken at their designated times. Should there be a conflict between your final exams, please bring this to the attention of the Academics team. Final exams may not be taken early, and students should not plan to leave the site before the end of the finals period.

Late Submission of Work

- (1) Work submitted late receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100 point scale for each day it is late (including weekends and public holidays), unless an extension has been approved (with a doctor's note or by approval of NYU London Staff), in which case the 2 points per day deductions start counting from the day the extended deadline has passed.
- (2) Without an approved extension, written work submitted more than 5 days (including weekends and public holidays) following the submission date receives an F.
- (3) Assignments due during finals week that are submitted more than 3 days late (including weekends and public holidays) without previously arranged extensions will not be accepted and will receive a zero. Any exceptions or extensions for work during finals week must be discussed with the London Site Director.

- (4) Students who are late for a written exam have no automatic right to take extra time or to write the exam on another day.
- (5) Please remember that university computers do not keep your essays - you must save them elsewhere. Having lost parts of your essay on the university computer is no excuse for a late submission.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

As the University's policy on "[Academic Integrity for Students at NYU](#)" states: "At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct and for recognizing and supporting these values in others." Students at Global Academic Centers must follow the University and school policies.

NYU takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form, and may check your assignments by using TurnItIn or another software designed to detect offences against academic integrity.

The presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images, or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you **MUST** inform your professor.

For guidelines on academic honesty, clarification of the definition of plagiarism, examples of procedures and sanctions, and resources to support proper citation, please see:

[NYU Academic Integrity Policies and Guidelines](#)

[NYU Library Guides](#)

Inclusivity Policies and Priorities

NYU's Office of Global Programs and NYU's global sites are committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. In order to nurture a more inclusive global university, NYU affirms the value of sharing differing perspectives and encourages open dialogue through a variety of pedagogical approaches. Our goal is to make all students feel included and welcome in all aspects of academic life, including our syllabi, classrooms, and educational activities/spaces.

Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays

Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer and NYU London Academics Office in writing via e-mail one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics Office will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only

excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also [University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#)

Pronouns and Name Pronunciation (Albert and Zoom)

Students, staff, and faculty have the opportunity to add their pronouns, as well as the pronunciation of their names, into Albert. Students can have this information displayed to faculty, advisors, and administrators in Albert, NYU Classes, the NYU Home internal directory, as well as other NYU systems. Students can also opt out of having their pronouns viewed by their instructors, in case they feel more comfortable sharing their pronouns outside of the classroom. For more information on how to change this information for your Albert account, please see the [Pronouns and Name Pronunciation website](#).

Students, staff, and faculty are also encouraged, though not required, to list their pronouns, and update their names in the name display for Zoom. For more information on how to make this change, please see the [Personalizing Zoom Display Names website](#).

Moses Accommodations Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented and registered disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Student Accessibility (+1 212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance. Accommodations for this course are managed through NYU [SITE].

Bias Response

The New York University Bias Response Line provides a mechanism through which members of our community can share or report experiences and concerns of bias, discrimination, or harassing behavior that may occur within our community.

Experienced administrators in the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) receive and assess reports, and then help facilitate responses, which may include referral to another University school or unit, or investigation if warranted according to the University's existing Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

The Bias Response Line is designed to enable the University to provide an open forum that helps to ensure that our community is equitable and inclusive.

To report an incident, you may do so in one of three ways:

- Online using the [Web Form \(link\)](#)
- Email: bias.response@nyu.edu
- Phone: 212-998-2277