

Spring 2015

# RTV 4101 Advanced Writing for Television

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*Florida International University*

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
SJMC  
RTV 4101 ADVANCED WRITING FOR TELEVISION/Spring 2015

Assistant Professor: Kate MacMillin  
Time: Mo-We 11: - 12:50, Room ACII 242  
Email address: kmacmill@fiu.edu  
Office Hours: Mon & Wed. 3-4

**COURSE PRE-REQUISITE:** All students must have previously taken and passed MMC 3104, Writing Strategies. No exceptions will be made (per SJMC policy).

**TEXT:** No text required

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:**

This course is intended to introduce the student to various types of writing for television and Internet/Journalism videos. This will include storytelling for short videos and short documentaries. Class time will be divided between lectures, guest speakers, shooting and video editing workshops.

This course will be devoted to various approaches to video storytelling. This semester we have a special opportunity to create videos for possible broadcast on WPBT. In January, the vice president of content, Max Duke, will be visiting our class to discuss some options.

Content: The SJMC is also devoted to communicating via print and video on sea level rise in South Florida. For students interested in this topic, many ideas will be discussed. However, you will be given a focus from Max Duke on some content ideas and the decision on the topic will be up to you.

Yes, this course is called Writing for TV and there will be several writing exercises as well as writing for your specific videos. Writing for TV starts with a clear written proposal and you will be graded on those proposals as well as in-class exercises and your project work.

**ASSIGNMENTS:** Two mini-docs 2- 2:30 in length, plus a written summary/overview for each.

Process: 1) Submit written proposal 2) Submit questions for interviews 3) Shoot story, 4) Transcribe all interviews, 5) Log video 6) Edit FIRST ROUGH CUT, 7) Edit second rough cut...and so on, until you are satisfied with your work (and grade).

**EVALUATION:**

Grades on in-class exercises and other projects will be as follows:

- Meets all format requirements: 50%
- Grammar, spelling, etc.: 30%
- Artistic evaluation/visual storytelling: 20%

The overall grade for the course will be based on:

- First Doc: Summary overview: 10%
- First Doc: Video 25%
- Second Doc: Summary overview 15%
- Second Doc: Video 40%
- Class Attendance: 10%

**The instructor reserves the right to make additions, deletions or other changes to this syllabus.**

**Learning Outcomes:**

Students will learn how to interview for TV

Students will learn how to write scripts

Students will learn basic techniques in videography; the language of images in storytelling

Students will learn basic documentary format

Student will learn how to use Adobe Premier or Final Cut and various video cameras.

**ALL STUDENTS are required to have**, by the second week of class (DEADLINE January 21) an external hard-drive of at least 250 GB. This drive will be an essential component of your participation in this class, as you will NOT be allowed to save any of your work on the computers in the classroom. Make sure that the drive you buy is compatible for MAC/PC. The cost should be between \$69-\$99; try BestBuy, Target, or COSTCO.

FIU's tech help Web site: <http://fiuinfo.pbworks.com/w/page/5768851/FrontPage>

#### COURSE SCHEDULE

##### **Week one: January 12**

Course introduction and overview. The goal of this class is to create professional mini-docs that can enhance your resume and may end up on local public television and/or a professional Web site. If you want to work in groups, we will discuss how that can work. As you know, it can be a great way to collaborate and it can be also be fraught with student availability issues.

We will:

Work with camera equipment, by doing in-class interviews this first week.

##### **Discuss interviewing techniques, the language of images**

View other professional projects completed by SJMC students last semester.

View your professor's doc: "South Florida's Rising Seas," which won Best Short Documentary in the DocMiami Film Festival 2014.

##### **Week two:**

**January 19 – No class**

**January 21 – We will discuss your particular topic interests. We are still firming up the date for a visit from WPBT2's vp to review his new show ideas. Come to class with topic ideas, including ideas for sea level rise, including names of people you'd like to interview. You will present an oral presentation to the class on your approach.**

We will watch short documentaries from various Web sites: [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), [www.miamiherald.com](http://www.miamiherald.com), etc.

##### **Week three:**

**January 26- 28**

BRING YOUR HARD DRIVES TO CLASS. Josh Shear and Wayde Klipper will help you set up your hard drives.

Sign "Release and assumption of risk" form for all FIU equipment used during the semester.

Wed. Josh and Wayde will show you how Final Cut Pro (or) Adobe Premier editing works.

All your work has to be saved on your won hard drives.

You will be given sample proposals and sample scripts

##### **Week four:**

**Feb. 2-4**

You will deliver a formal proposal for Doc #1, which will include your interviewees.

##### **Week five:**

**Feb. 9- 11**

Begin shooting your mini-doc, reporting in to me on progress.

##### **Week Six:**

**Feb. 16-18**

Transcribe interviews, log footage and create a paper cut *with first draft of a script*

Another review of editing systems from Josh or Wayde

##### **Week Seven:**

**Feb. 23- 25**

Professor reviews all docs and will request changes if necessary.

**Week Eight:**

**March 2-4**

Final edit of Doc # 1

**Week Nine:SPRING BREAK**

**March 9-14**

**Week Ten:**

**March 16-18**

Class screens all docs and students discuss what they've learned in the process.

Discuss topics for Doc #2. Wed. Bring written proposals for Doc #2

**Week Eleven:**

**March 23- 25**

Shooting doc #2

**Week Twelve:**

**March 30- April 1**

Transcribing, logging, paper cut

**Week Thirteen:**

**April 6-8**

Editing Doc #2

**Week Fourteen:**

**April 13-15**

Show first draft of Doc to me/make changes: Wed. show Max Duke

**Week Fifteen:**

**April 20-22**

Making revisions based on Duke's comments

Final screening of all work to class.

**Academic Honesty**

As FIU students, you are expected to strictly follow the honor code regarding academic honesty. Florida International University outlines your responsibilities as follows:

*Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.*

*Misconduct includes: Cheating – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources; or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. Plagiarism – The use and appropriation of another's work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student's own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is responsible for plagiarism.*

Any students who fail to meet these expectations will receive an "F" for the course grade and will be reported to the chair of the department, as well as the dean of the school.

**This syllabus may be changed by the instructor if adjustments are required because of students' skill sets or community-based projects that may be offered to FIU classes.**