

CTAT 344
Continuity Writing for Electronic Media

Instructor: Mary Ann Watson, 129 Quirk Building, 734/487-0064

Text: *Copywriting for the Electronic Media* (Fifth Edition)
by Milan D. Meeske (Thomson Wadsworth, 2006)

Course Description

CTAT 344 is a class about the process of writing continuity material for electronic media. Students will be introduced to the information-gathering techniques and the standard script formats used in the field. Vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and the importance of meeting deadlines are key components in the course content. The overarching theme of CTAT 344 is that effective continuity writing is a blend of creativity and discipline.

Writing Intensive Rationale

CTAT 344 merits Writing Intensive designation because it simulates the process of creating nonfiction material for electronic media. Its purpose is to give students a foundation in continuity writing through the assignment of projects that require research, creative brainstorming, writing, and revising. Electronic Media and Film Studies majors and minors are required to complete a 300-level writing class. CTAT 344 is the most commonly chosen in our area.

Objectives of the Course

Students who successfully complete CTAT 344 will:

- 1) Understand and employ the process model of: a) information gathering, b) creative brainstorming, c) scripting in format, d) first draft and e) revision and editing
- 2) Formulate strategies to engage audiences of particular demographic groups
- 3) Recognize how research informs and influences the content of advertising, entertainment, and informative programming
- 4) Use standard scriptwriting formats and style conventions
- 5) Be familiar with the way media organizations evaluate and disseminate the work of continuity writers

The Ground Rules

All assignments, including in-class exercises and the final test must be submitted in order to pass this course. No faxed, e-mailed or hand-written submissions will be accepted.

Late assignments will be accepted for full credit only under extenuating circumstances such as a death in the family or serious illness.

Please make a copy, or make sure you have a computer backup before submitting an assignment. Please staple multiple-page assignments.

Students are allowed three absences during the term (although an absence does not exempt a student from an assignment deadline). Each absence beyond three will cause the participation grade to drop by two points. Students are expected to contribute to class discussions and critiques. Our classroom, however, is a profanity-free zone.

Notice: Academic dishonesty—plagiarism, cheating—will be penalized.

Final Grades in CTAT 344 are based on the following 100-point scale:

Advertising Position Paper (3-4 pages)	10 points
Final Draft 30-second TV Commercial.	15 points
Public Service Announcement Position Paper (3-4 pages)	10 points
Final Draft 30-second PSA	15 points
Final Draft “This I Believe”	20 points
Critique of “The Best of Broadcast Writing” (2-3 pages)	10 points
Final “Check Out” Test	10 points
Presentation Style/Attendance/Participation in Good Spirit. . .	10 points

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week One:

Housekeeping/Intro to Course—“The Commitment to Write”
The 5-Step Process Model

Reading: Chapter One—The Broadcast Copywriter
Chapter Two—Copywriting Style, Basic Mechanics

I. ADVERTISING

Week Two:

The “Unique Selling Proposition”—Knowing the Product

The Emotional Response—Knowing the Audience

Slogan Analysis: The Phrase That Stays

Reading: Chapter 4—Advertising Basics

Chapter 5—Motivation

Week Three:

Advertising Techniques

Script Formats

Advertising Position Paper DUE

Reading: Chapter Six—Organizing the Broadcast Commercial

Chapter 11—Types of Television Commercials

Week Four:

Discussion of Position Papers

Examples of Classic Ad Campaigns

First Draft of TV Commercial DUE

Reading: Chapter 10—The Television Commercial (Mechanics)

Week Five:

In-class Pitches

Final Draft TV Commercial DUE

Reading: Chapter 3—The Legal and Ethical Implications of Copywriting

II. PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Week Six:

Techniques of Persuasion

Prompting Generosity

Changing Behavior

Reading: Chapter 13—Public Service, Issue, and Political Announcements

Week Seven:

View and Analyze Professional PSA Campaigns

PSA Position Paper DUE

Reading: Chapter 14—The Broadcast Campaign

Week Eight:

Discussion of Position Papers
Examples of Classic PSA Campaigns
First Draft PSA DUE

Reading: Chapter 12—Promotion

Week Nine:

PSA presentations
Final Draft PSA DUE

Chapter 16—Writing for the Internet

III. RADIO COMMENTARY: “THIS I BELIEVE”

Week Ten:

Examples of Radio Commentaries
Personal Stories
Social Issues

Reading: Chapter 9—Types of Radio Copy

Week Eleven:

NPR Guidelines for “This I Believe” Submission
Crafting the Message
First Draft of “This I Believe” DUE

Reading: Chapter 17—Corporate Programs

Week Twelve:

Improvisational Writing Exercise

Week Thirteen:

Final Draft “This I Believe” DUE
“This I Believe” presentations

IV. THE BEST OF BROADCAST WRITING

Week Fourteen:

Examples and Critique of Extraordinarily Wonderful Writing

Week Fifteen:

2-3page critique of “The Best of Broadcast Writing” examples DUE

Last Day—Course Wrap-up

Exam Period: Final “Check Out” Test

CTAT 344 PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

3 to 4-page Position Paper

- Select one client from the list of options below.
- Research the issue or cause your client wants to publicize. At least six sources should be consulted with at least three of those sources being publications of legitimate journalism such as major newspapers or newsmagazines.
- Prepare a summary on the background and status of the issue or cause. If there is opposition to your client’s position, it should be noted.
- Conduct a focus group with at least five people in the target audience regarding their thoughts, ideas, and feelings on the issue involved. Identify what “responsive chord” is likely to prompt generosity or to inspire an attempt to change behavior.
- Suggest a strategy to reach the target audience through a PSA campaign.

1. National Safety Transportation Board

Urge drivers not to use cell phones while behind the wheel

Target audience: Young drivers age 16-25

2. American Cancer Society

Persuade young people not to sunbathe or use tanning booths

Target audience: Teenagers through mid-20s

3. Chimp Haven

Generate contributions for retirement home for chimps used in medical research

Target audience: Families with children under the age of 10

4. International Association for Organ Donation

Encourage a commitment to organ donation and making that commitment known to family and friends

Target audience: Young adults ages 18-30

5. Girl Scouts of America

Solicit direct financial donations for the upkeep of Girl Scout camps

Target audience: Women ages 45-65+ who are former Scouts

6. American Academy of Pediatrics

Encourage lifestyle changes to prevent childhood obesity

Target audience: Parents of children ages of 6-14

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30-second Public Service Announcement

Evaluation

1. Format/Professional look of submission

1 1.5 2 2.5 3

2. Innovative approach and/or Effective visual metaphor

1 1.5 2 2.5 3

3. Specific appeal to target audience

1 1.5 2 2.5 3

4. Creative use of audio-visual elements

1 1.5 2 2.5 3

5. Memorable/clever slogan with layered meaning

1 1.5 2 2.5 3