

# FILM A108: TELEVISION SITCOM GENRE

Item	Value
Curriculum Committee Approval Date	10/07/2020
Top Code	061200 - Film Studies
Units	3 Total Units
Hours	54 Total Hours (Lecture Hours 54)
Total Outside of Class Hours	0
Course Credit Status	Credit: Degree Applicable (D)
Material Fee	No
Basic Skills	Not Basic Skills (N)
Repeatable	No
Grading Policy	Standard Letter (S)

## Course Description

This is an introductory course to the sitcom genre. Students will get a comprehensive and practical look at each aspect of the multi-camera sitcom and single camera sitcom genre. This class will explore the different job functions within the writer's room. It will provide an explanation of job titles that exist for writers and the roles network television executives play in the final output of a television program. This class will develop and identify the basic story structure elements present within the sitcom genre. This class will also address career strategies for advancement within the television and new media industries. ADVISORY: FILM A110, FILM A102, and FILM A155. Transfer Credit: CSU.

## Course Level Student Learning Outcome(s)

1. Identify the essential theories that pinpoint story elements which can be streamlined or magnified for thematic threads in television narratives as well as illustrating writing styles in the sitcom genre to successfully communicate with industry professionals.
2. Demonstrate basic level of proficiency by articulately examining and explaining thoughtful points-of-view on valid constructive screenplay elements and themes in a critically cogent manner.
3. Create, compose, and exhibit a written sitcom draft, using acquired knowledge to complete an original project containing proper story structure elements.

## Course Objectives

- 1. Distinguish and differentiate between entry level writing positions and executive producer/show runner positions within the television industry.
- 2. Identify and explain basic sitcom genre styles and formats.
- 3. Apply theory, critical analysis, and assessments of television programming.
- 4. Diagram outlines and treatments.
- 5. Formulate and write a sitcom script.
- 6. Develop an understanding of the planning and writing process of a television sitcom.
- 7. Recognize writing job and internship opportunities in television.
- 8. Demonstrate proper use and interpretations of industry terminology and writing styles of the sitcom genre.

- 9. Compare and contrast format standards of traditional broadcast sitcoms to the current and emerging digital platforms and technologies in Hollywood.
- 10. Critically explain and identify styles of sitcom scripts standard to the entertainment industry.
- 11. Classify and critique written sitcom works all while examining the style and format standard to the entertainment industry.
- 12. Design and compose a fully written single camera or multi camera sitcom for their portfolio.

## Lecture Content

Gatekeepers of Film Television Categorize Gatekeepers Gate-Keeper Responsibilities Development Current Programming Television Development Current Programming Pilots Testing Staffing Season Production Company Showrunner Writing Staff Writing Assistant On-Set PA Office PA Story Structure Writers Journey Character Development Plot Lines Story Archs Beat Sheet Picking the Right Story Write to the Premise Write the Main Character Write the Formula Structuring Your Story Seven Plot Elements Using Elements to Develop Your Story Two-Act Frame Work Six-Scene Template Outlining Your Story Why Bother with an Outline The Whiteboard How I write an Outline Writing Scenes Move the Story Forward Write It as a Drama First Roughing out a Scene as a Drama Now For the Jokes Page Count TV Series Treatment Components Ten essential TV Series treatment components Six big questions about your idea. TV treatment assignment Character Bone Structure Physiology Sociology Psychology Show Premise Breakdowns: Dissection and the Anatomy of Pilots Show Breakdown Story Grids Creating Your Pilot Story Grid Logline What is a Logline Four requirements to creating one The Hero Hero must serve the idea Working on Staff Sitcom writing staff Production Season Production Week Your job as a staff writer Creating your own series Agents and Executives Agents Picking an Agent Business Relationship Learn From The Best Websites What to Watch Where to look Network

## Method(s) of Instruction

- Lecture (02)
- DE Live Online Lecture (02S)
- DE Online Lecture (02X)

## Instructional Techniques

A. Lecture B. Practical Examples C. One-on-one Instruction D. Individual Assignments E. Text Book F. Assignment Critique G. Assignment Feedback H. TV Sitcom Review

## Reading Assignments

Script Coverage: students are required to spend 16hrs (1hr/wk) reading, writing, analyzing, and critiquing coverage on a professional television script. Reading text: Students are required to spend 16hrs (1hr/wk) reading chapters in the book elephant bucks and writing bullet points from the chapters. Story Structure: Students are required to spend 16hrs (1hr/wk) reviewing story structure chapters from a heros journey book.

## Writing Assignments

Students will be required to write one critical analysis of a television program. Proficiency will be demonstrated by satisfactorily completing assignments and participating in group and class discussion. Students will demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills through their understanding of outlines, treatments, and scripted content. Students

will write pilot series outlines. Students will write pilot series treatments. Students will write pilot series show bibles. Students will write an original television pilot.

## Out-of-class Assignments

Outline writing: students are required to spend 16hrs (1hr/wk) compiling and constructing a TV series pilot outline for their sitcom. Treatment writing: students are required to spend 16hrs (1hr/wk) compiling and constructing a TV series pilot treatment for their sitcom. Scriptwriting: students are required to spend 32hrs (2hr/wk) writing an original TV pilot sitcom.

## Demonstration of Critical Thinking

A. Assignments B. Individual Projects C. Examinations D. Oral Presentation and analysis E. Written Script Coverage

## Required Writing, Problem Solving, Skills Demonstration

Students will be required to write a sitcom outline. Students will be required to write a sitcom treatment. Students will be required to write a sitcom spec script. Students will be required to write a sitcom pilot script. Proficiency will be demonstrated by satisfactorily completing assignments and participating in group and class discussions. Students will demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills through their understanding of the script writing process.

## Eligible Disciplines

Broadcasting technology (film making/video, media production, radio/TV): Any bachelors degree and two years of professional experience, or any associate degree and six years of professional experience.

## Textbooks Resources

1. Required Miller, Kam. *The Hero Succeeds*, First ed. High Low Media, 2016  
 2. Required Edwards, Rona, Skerbelis, Monika. *I Liked It Didn't Love It*, third ed. Edwards Skerbelis Entertainment, 2016  
 3. Required Venis, Linda. *Inside the Room*, First ed. Gotham Books, 2013  
 Rationale: Ideally the most comprehensive and practical representation of what its like to be in the writers room. A must for any aspiring writer who wants to learn the functionality of the writers room.  
 4. Required Bull, Sheldon. *Elephant Bucks*, First ed. Michael Wiese Productions, 2007  
 Rationale: This book explores the fundamental process of building a sitcom. Its written by a successful, working sitcom writer who credits are extensive. His instructional method surpasses any book on the market about writing sitcoms.  
 5. Required Vogler, Christopher. *The Writers Journey: Mythic Structure For Writers*, Third ed. Michael Wiese Productions, 2007  
 Rationale: *The Writers Journey* helps the writer understand the theoretical and mythological approach to character development and their journey in the writing process. Traditional methods are used in this book to help the writer understand the theory behind stories.

## Software Resources

1. Final Draft . Final Draft, 11 ed. Screenwriting software or something equivalent.