

**Writing For Television  
TELE 310  
3 Credits**

**Columbia College Chicago  
Television Department  
1104 S. Wabash  
room 715  
T – 6:30 to 9:20  
Chicago, IL 60605  
312/369-7410 (office)**

**Instructor Name: Steve Zacharias  
Contact Phone Number: 1-847-209-4300 (Please don't text)  
E-Mail Address: szacharias@colum.edu**

**Course Description:** An intermediate scriptwriting class designed to teach the fundamental skills required to pitch, outline and write sitcom, sketch, Internet and Mobile and hour drama scripts. Intense analysis of current 'in-production' shows and scripts provide industry standard learning models. Student work will be read aloud and workshopped, step-by-step, in a traditional 'writer's table' story conference procedure. For the final project, students have the option of writing either a sitcom script, six original sketches, the first half of an hour-drama script or 6 Show Extension Webisodes.

**Learning Objectives:**

Students will:

1. come up with a movie idea
2. Write an outline (fill in the 20 Points is the outline)
3. Write a 105 page screenplay (approximately 7 pages a week)

**Attendance Policy:** Two tardies equal one absence and **THREE ABSENCES MAY EQUAL FAILURE**. When working in television, DEADLINES AND TIME FRAMES ARE REAL. Therefore, as an exercise in developing this discipline, this class requires punctuality in attendance and deadlines for writing assignments.

**Class Participation:** All students are expected to pitch ideas and give notes on other student's work. As a writer, it's often difficult to hear your work read aloud and workshopped. However, as work will be read aloud and discussed in class **ALL** notes will be given in a spirit of encouragement with the goal of assisting the writer in improving his or her final draft.

**Grading Policy:** If you attend regularly, participate in class, and complete all writing and reading assignments on schedule, your final grade will depend on quality of finished projects. Superior work will earn an A. Good, thoughtful work will earn a B. An obvious, all-out effort will receive a C. Insufficient attendance, minimal or lack of class participation, and missing or late assignments, will result in an F. A grade of D is reserved for those who might have earned a high grade, but had it lowered because of reasons described above.

Movie idea	20%
Outline	20%
Final Script	50%
Class Participation/ Tabling	10%

**Grading Scale:**

A	94-100%	C+	77-79%
A-	90-93%	C	74-76%
B+	87-89%	C-	70-73%
B	84-86%	D	60-69%
B-	80-83%	F	Below 60

**\*\*\*COLLEGE-WIDE POLICY ON MINIMUM GRADE\*\*\***

It is now policy that for any class a Columbia student takes in their list of departmental core courses, the student must achieve a minimum of "C". If you are a TV major, or if you are planning on this class counting towards another department's core requirements, you will not be able to move into classes requiring this class as a prerequisite (or to take advanced classes beyond the core) with a grade of "C-" or lower in this class. DO NOT EXPECT EXCEPTIONS TO BE MADE OR TO BE ABLE TO RELY ON EXTRA CREDIT AT THE LAST MINUTE. Pay attention to your grades as you go, and work with your instructor: turn in your work on time and follow the assignment guidelines, take care to be on time and present in class, and ask questions when you have them.

<b>Week 1:</b>	<b>SETUP - 1 7-PAGE SEQUENCE</b>
<b>Week 2:</b>	<b>SETUP - 1 7-PAGE SEQUENCE</b>
<b>Week 3:</b>	<b>STORY BEGINS – 1-7 PAGE SEQUENCE</b>
<b>Week 4:</b>	<b>STORY CONTINUES – 1 7-PAGE SEQUENCE</b>
<b>Week 5:</b>	<b>STORY CONTINUES – 1 7-PAGE SEQUENCE – END 1<sup>ST</sup> ACT</b>
<b>Week 6:</b>	<b>BEFORE MIDPOINT – 1 7-PAGE SEQUENCE</b>
<b>Week 7:</b>	<b>BEFORE MIDPOINT – 1 7-PAGE SEQUENCE</b>
<b>Week 8:</b>	<b>MIDPOINT – 1 7-PAGE SEQUENCE</b>
<b>Week 9:</b>	<b>AFTER MIDPOINT – 1 7-PAGE SEQUENCE – THINGS GO DOWNHILL</b>
<b>Week 10:</b>	<b>AFTER MIDPOINT – 1 7-PAGE SEQUENCE – END 2<sup>ND</sup> ACT – THE HERO IS IN SO MUCH TROUBLE THEY CAN'T GET OUT OF IT</b>
<b>Week 11:</b>	<b>BEFORE CLIMAX – 1 7-PAGE SEQUENCE – TRY AND FAIL TYPE SCENES</b>
<b>Week 12:</b>	<b>BEFORE CLIMAX – 1 7-PAGE SEQUENCE</b>
<b>Week 13:</b>	<b>CLIMAX - 1 7-PAGE SEQUENCE</b>
<b>Week 14:</b>	<b>CLIMAX – 1 7-PAGE SEQUENCE</b>
<b>Week 15:</b>	<b>AFTER CLIMAX – 1 7-PAGE SEQUENCE</b>

**Statement on Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is giving credit to the ideas, research, and creations of others; and part of one's education is learning how to give this credit. When a writer inserts a citation into her work, she is not only being honest about the source of her knowledge, but also making visible the ways in which her work depends on the support of others—whether they are students or faculty members at her institution or thinkers and writers from distant times and places. The citation is a way of paying tribute to the contributions of others and to situate one's own work in the broader intellectual tradition. Citations may be particular to writing; however, every area of creative endeavor requires some form of acknowledgement of sources. Academic and artistic integrity require scrupulous care for these forms.

Sometimes acknowledging sources is a way of insulating work against criticism, a way of saying to the audience, “You can check my facts on this; I’ve done my homework; and I know what is my own thinking and what I owe to others.” But avoiding charges of dishonesty, fabrication, or theft is not the only reason for making clear the influences on a work. It can also be a way of inviting colleagues, present and future, near and far, to join in the project at hand.

Acknowledging sources gives others the information they need to follow in the author’s footsteps and become part of an ongoing intellectual or artistic journey.

Collaboration is at the heart of academic work. In a college setting, students and faculty join together to benefit from each other’s work, to share knowledge and ideas, to engage in open debate, and to influence and be influenced by other people. Because there is an active exchange of information and ideas, it is essential that members of the community recognize the importance of acknowledgement and learn the conventions of citation and attribution.\*

To that end Columbia endorses continuing efforts in education on this important topic for both students and faculty alike as well as active monitoring of the number and types of academic integrity misconduct.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Columbia College Chicago seeks to maintain a supportive academic environment for students with disabilities. Students who self-identify as having a disability should present their documentation to the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office. After the documentation has been reviewed by the SSD office, a Columbia College accommodation letter will be provided to the student. Students are encouraged to present their Columbia accommodation letters to each instructor at the beginning of the semester so that accommodations can be arranged in a timely manner by the College, the department, or the faculty member, as appropriate. Accommodations will begin at the time the letter is presented. Students with disabilities who do not have accommodation letters should visit the office of Services for Students with Disabilities, Room 311 of the 623 S. Wabash building (312-369-8296).

### **Mandatory Attendance Policy Statement**

Students are required to attend class regularly. Failure to attend class in the first two weeks of the term will negatively impact financial aid. If your professor reports that you failed to attend and participate in class during the add/drop period, a grade of NS (no-show) will be entered on your record for the course. Please note, you will still be charged tuition and fees for any course for which you receive a NS grade. For more information on non-attendance please visit the Student Financial Services [website](#).

### **Academic Progress Report Statement**

During week 6 of fall and spring terms, Columbia College Chicago measures the academic progress of all undergraduate students. The academic progress report is meant to provide a sense of your performance at this point in time. For each course in which you are enrolled, you will receive one of the following reports from your instructor:

- *Exceeds basic expectations:* Demonstrating performance at a very high level in the course, typically shown as earning high grades on assignments and displaying a deep engagement with course content.
- *Meets basic expectations:* Demonstrating behavior proven to produce success in college, such as consistent attendance, class participation, and on-time completion of assignments.
- *Does not meet basic expectations:* Demonstrating behaviors known to put students at risk for failure, such as excessive absences, lack of class participation, and missed or incomplete assignments.

While the academic progress report is not a final grade and will not impact your grade point average, it is a valuable indicator of your performance in the course to date. Columbia College Chicago is providing you with this report because we are committed to your success. You will receive the reports via email during week 6, and you are encouraged to discuss them with your instructor(s).

### **Counseling Services:**

731 S. Plymouth Court, suite 112      312.369.8700 [counselingservices@colum.edu](mailto:counselingservices@colum.edu)  
 Services are designed to help students increase self-awareness and address mental health concerns with the goal of empowering students to manage challenging areas in their lives. All counseling services staff follow professional standards of confidentiality. Information discussed within a counseling relationship is not disclosed without written permission of the individual. Counseling Services are provided free of charge. The most utilized services include individual sessions, group sessions, and linkage to community services. A Columbia College student in a relationship with another Columbia College student, can also receive couple sessions. All currently enrolled students are eligible to receive 12 individual sessions per academic year. Group sessions are unlimited.

### **College Advising Center**

**623 S. Wabash, Suite 300**

**312-369-7645 / [collegeadvising@colum.edu](mailto:collegeadvising@colum.edu)**

The College Advising Center assists undergraduate students with all transitional issues as they navigate their entire college experience. College advisors guide students in creating and implementing an educational and professional plan as they progress from orientation toward graduation. As students take responsibility for their academic and career goals, they should meet with their college advisor on a regular basis. Students at Columbia are expected to meet with their college advisor at least once a semester during their first year.

### **The Learning Studio:**

**33 E. Congress, first floor**

**312.369.8130 [www.colum.edu/learningstudio](http://www.colum.edu/learningstudio)**

The Learning Studio is an excellent resource for academic progress and success for all students at any level. The Learning Studio provides tutoring in a number of disciplines including Accounting, the Science and Math Learning Center, the Foreign Languages Lab and the Writing Center. Students are encouraged to go to the Learning Studio and work with the tutors. Students

can make an appointment through Oasis (using the “Make Appointments” tab) or by calling the Learning Studio.

**The Library** serves students with resources and support for research, study, collaboration, fun, and information in all formats—books, ebooks, articles, primary sources, images, film, music, space, programs, technology, and equipment. Our specialized materials and services focus on what students need and want—textbook reserves, study rooms, collaborative technology, maker lab, 3D printer, light boxes, scanners, equipment checkout (cameras, camcorders, projectors) and research assistance by chat, text, email, phone, or in-person. For more, see the website <http://library.colum.edu/> or drop by the Library (624 S. Michigan).

***Note: This syllabus is intended to give the student guidance in what may be covered during the semester and will be followed as closely as possible. However, instructors reserve the right in their discretion to modify, supplement, and make changes as course needs arise. You will be notified of all changes.***