

## 377533: Writing a Web Series Part I

SCRIPT-X 427.1

Winter 2021 Section 1 3 Credits 01/13/2021 to 03/23/2021 Modified 09/15/2020

### Meeting Times

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This course is taught asynchronously and fully online using Canvas. Sessions run weekly and there are no requirements to attend live, virtual meetings.

### Description

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With the expansion of web-based and app-based content and distribution platforms such as Youtube, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat, now it is easier than ever for writers to create and share their original creative content with the world. Writing a fiction web series comes with its own unique advantages and disadvantages, including limited budgets. In this workshop, you learn how to create your own web series and write the pilot episode. There are no prerequisites for this course.

### Objectives

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During this course, you will:

- Understand the different components of a screenplay.
- Be able to write an effective and engaging script within 5-15 pages.
- Learn how to give constructive notes and receive and apply feedback to their own work.

### Outcomes

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By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Craft stories that work within a limited budget in order to self produce.
- Create a series bible that includes a series summary, character overviews, and where season 2 and 3 can go.
- Write their own correctly formatted 5-20 page script.

### Materials

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Our class requires you to write with screenwriting software. You can use:

- Final Draft – (\$99.99) <https://store.finaldraft.com/final-draft-10-edu.html>
- Celtx – (Free) <https://www.celtx.com/index.html>
- Writer's Duet – (Free) <https://writerduet.com>
- Amazon Storywriter – (Free) <https://storywriter.amazon.com>

*NOTE: If you are serious about screenwriting, it is worth investing in Final Draft or another industry standard software. Scripts are always emailed to agents, managers, producers, etc. via pdf. For the purposes of this class, as long as your format is correct, it doesn't matter to me which software you choose to use.*

### Evaluation

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## Criteria

Each week's assignments are worth 10% of your grade.

10 weeks x 10% per week = 100% total.

Your weekly 10% is split between submitting your own material on time (5%) and giving timely, constructive feedback to your peers (5%).

## Breakdown

Grade	Range
A	90% - 100%
B	80% - 89.9%
C	70% - 79.9%
F	Below 70%

## \* Course Policies

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### Attendance Policies

- As this is a writing workshop, submitting your weekly assignments and giving feedback to your peers in a timely matter is important. If you know you will be late, please let me know via email or a message on Canvas.

### Participation

- We're going to spend a lot of time giving and receiving notes, so get ready to roll up your sleeves and participate! Be brave, have fun, and don't be afraid to ask questions. In fact, I find that some of the best notes are formatted as questions about the writer's decisions, motivations, and ultimate goals.
- Participation is important to me, so I expect each of you to give notes, thoughts, and constructive criticism to your classmates each week.

### Assignment Submissions

- All assignments will be submitted to Canvas.
- Students may complete work early, but please be aware your peers and I may not comment on your work until the appropriate time.

### Late Work and Extension Policies

- If you're going to submit late work or comments, please send me an email or message on Canvas. Life happens - it's not a problem, just let me know.
- We only have ten weeks together, so frequent absences or tardiness, explained or otherwise, are going to negatively impact your grade.
- Any unexcused assignments that are late will be lowered by 2% per day. So 1 day late = 8% instead of the 10% available.

### Grading Policies

- This is an introductory course, so I'm not going to be grading you on your raw skill or talent, and I'm not interested in comparing you to one another. Rather, I'm more interested in how willing you are to engage with your classmates, take risks, ask questions, learn, and improve. Screenwriting is fun, so I want our class to be too.

### The Writers' Workshop

Instruction in the Writers' Program follows the guidelines established by the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) guidelines for the teaching of creative writing, which include a "challenging writers' workshop" as a hallmark. They define this as

*...a seminar in which students critique one another's work under the mentorship of an accomplished writer-teacher. The workshop is writing intensive, offering each student multiple opportunities for submission and revision of creative work. (AWP)*

This method of instruction is considered the gold standard for developing writers at all levels of expertise, and workshopping is a key learning tool in nearly every course offered by the Writers' Program. Workshopping teaches you to read and respond to written work from a variety of perspectives, and hearing critique of your own writing will help you understand how successfully your work achieves your goals. Every student is expected to participate fully in workshopping activities as defined by and guided by Writers' Program instructors.

### Scope of Work for Instructors

Each Writers' Program instructor has signed an agreement to teach the curriculum in their course, following a syllabus of their own design with approval by the Writers' Program director. Instructors are never obligated to read, review, critique, respond to, or otherwise address student work that has not been developed for their course or in response to specific assignments in their course. Individualized instruction like this falls into the category of a consultation, which is a separate service your instructor can provide through special arrangement with the Writers' Program.

### Underage Students

As UCLA's principal provider of continuing education, the majority of UCLA Extension courses are designed for the post-baccalaureate professional-level student. Enrollment is therefore normally reserved for adult students 18 years of age and older. The Writers' Program may consent to enroll younger students based on special academic competence and approval of the instructor. Minors who enroll in a Writers' Program course without first receiving permission from **both the department and the instructor** are subject to withdrawal. To request approval, please contact the Writers' Program at 310/825-9415.

## Institutional Policies

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### Student Conduct

Students are subject to disciplinary action for several types of misconduct or attempted misconduct, including but not limited to dishonesty, such as cheating, multiple submission, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University; or theft or misuse of the intellectual property of others or violation of others' copyrights. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with policy provisions which proscribe these and other forms of misconduct at:

<https://www.uclaextension.edu/pages/str/studentConduct.jsp> (<https://www.uclaextension.edu/pages/str/studentConduct.jsp>)

### Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, UCLA Extension provides appropriate accommodations and support services to qualified applicants and students with disabilities. These include, but are not limited to, auxiliary aids/services such as sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices for hearing-impaired individuals, extended time for and proctoring of exams, and registration assistance. Accommodations and types of support services vary and are specifically designed to meet the disability-related needs of each student based on current, verifiable medical documentation. Arrangements for auxiliary aids/services are available only through UCLA Extension's Service for Students with Disabilities Office at (310) 825-7851 or by email at [access@uclaextension.edu](mailto:access@uclaextension.edu). For complete information see:

<https://www.uclaextension.edu/pages/str/studentswithDisabilities.jsp>  
(<https://www.uclaextension.edu/pages/str/studentswithDisabilities.jsp>)

### Incompletes

Your instructor may post the interim grade *Incomplete/I* if at the end of the class your overall work is of passing quality but a portion could not be submitted for understandable reasons (e.g. illness). It is your responsibility to petition your instructor for permission to submit work late and to provide an explanation, and it is his or her sole decision whether to accept the explanation. If permitted, the *Incomplete/I* grade will be posted and a time frame defined for you to submit the missing work, ranging from one to twelve weeks. *Incomplete/I* grades that remain unchanged after twelve weeks will lapse to *F*, *NP* or *U*. Receiving an *I* grade entitles you to submit only the missing work your instructor has agreed to accept late, and does not allow other work to be retaken

or oblige UCLA Extension to provide continuing access to course materials via Canvas. The *Incomplete/I* grade is not an option for courses that do not bear credit, such as 700, 800, or 900-level courses. For complete information, see:

<https://www.uclaextension.edu/pages/str/grading.jsp> (<https://www.uclaextension.edu/pages/str/grading.jsp>)

## All Grades are Final

No change of grade may be made by anyone other than the instructor, and then, only to correct clerical errors. No term grade except Incomplete may be revised by re-examination. The correction of a clerical error may be authorized only by the instructor of record communicating directly with personnel of Student and Alumni Services.

## Sexual Harassment

The University of California is committed to creating and maintaining a community where all individuals who participate in University programs and activities can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. Every member of the community should be aware that the University prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence, and that such behavior violates both law and University policy. The University will respond promptly and effectively to reports of sexual harassment and sexual violence, and will take appropriate action to prevent, to correct, and when necessary, to discipline behavior that violates our policy.

All Extension students and instructors who believe they have been sexually harassed are encouraged to contact the Department of Student and Alumni Services for complaint resolution: UCLA Extension, 1145 Gayley Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90024; Voice/TTY: (310) 825-7031. View the University's full Policy on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence at <http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/4000385/SHSV> (<http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/4000385/SHSV>).

## Additional Items

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### Course and Instructor Evaluation

UCLA Extension values your feedback on course and instructor evaluations. We ask all students to take a few minutes to complete an end-of-course evaluation survey. Updates to the course and instruction are influenced by your feedback. Understanding your student experience is essential to ensure continuing excellence in the online classroom and is appreciated by your instructor and the UCLA Extension academic leadership.

Your participation in a survey is voluntary, and your responses are confidential. After instructors submit grades, they will be given an evaluation report, but this report will not contain your name.

### About Your Online Course Materials

Please note the following about online course components at UCLA Extension:

- Students must have basic computer skills, including the use of word processing software, email, and the ability to use internet browsers, such as Safari, Firefox, or Chrome.
- Students are responsible for meeting the technical requirements of Canvas and familiarizing themselves with the Canvas Learning Management System.
  - What are the basic computer specifications for Canvas? - <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10721> (<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10721>)
  - Which browsers does Canvas support? - <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10720> (<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10720>)
- Students are responsible for keeping a copy of all assignments and work submitted, and to be aware of all assignments, due dates, and course guidelines.
- Students are encouraged to keep and/or download a local copy of their assignment files, as **access to the online environment of a specific course is limited to 30 days after the final course date**, as listed in the course catalog.

To download all your assignment submissions in Canvas, please refer to the [online support guide](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10606). (<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10606>) for more information or contact Canvas Support via the help menu within Canvas.

# UCLA Extension Canvas and Learning Support

For immediate 24/7 Canvas technical support, including holidays, click on **Help** (located on the menu to the left) where you can call or chat live with a Canvas Support representative.

## UCLA Extension Instructional Design and Learning Support

The UCLA Extension Learning Support staff assists both students and instructors with Canvas-related technical support, as well as general and administrative questions.

Learning Support staff is available Monday through Friday, from 8 AM to 5 PM (Pacific Time), except holidays:

- Email: [support@unexonline.zendesk.com](mailto:support@unexonline.zendesk.com)
- Website: <http://support.uclaextension.edu> (<http://support.uclaextension.edu/>)

## Campus Safety Escorts

For students taking classes held on the UCLA campus and in and around Westwood Village, the UCLA Police Department provides a free walking escort service every day of the year from dusk until 1 a.m. Community Service Officers (CSOs) are available to walk students, faculty, staff members and visitors to and from anywhere on campus, in Westwood Village, and in the village apartments. CSOs are uniformed students who have received special training and are employed by the UCLA Police Department. To obtain an escort, please call (310) 794-9255 and allow 15 to 20 minutes for your escort to arrive. For complete information, see: <https://www.ucpd.ucla.edu/services/community-service-officers-csos/evening-escorts> (<https://www.ucpd.ucla.edu/services/community-service-officers-csos/evening-escorts>)

## Schedule

When	Lesson	Notes
Week 1	Introductions	<p><b>Lesson Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review syllabus and make introductions.</li><li>• Discuss screenwriting software options.</li><li>• Discuss the basics of screenwriting.</li></ul> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Download a screenwriting software/program.</li><li>• Read a selected script for a TV show and write script coverage.</li><li>• Come up with 2-3 ideas and write loglines.</li></ul>
Week 2	Big Picture	<p><b>Lesson Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Workshop loglines.</li><li>• Discuss three act structure and tentpole moments.</li><li>• Sign up for script workshop dates.</li></ul> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Write a 1:3:3. 1 sentence logline on your series, 3 sentences on your season, and 3 paragraphs (beginning, middle, and end) on your pilot. No more than 2 pages double spaced.</li><li>• Complete a short writing exercise.</li></ul>

When	Lesson	Notes
Week 3	Beat Sheets and Outlining	<p><b>Lesson Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop student treatments.</li> <li>• Discuss outlines.</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students in Group A will send out the outline for their web pilot two days before class.</li> <li>• Students in Group B will be expected to complete a short writing exercise due two days before class AND be ready two pieces of feedback for each outline.</li> </ul>
Week 4	Character Arcs	<p><b>Lesson Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop group A outlines.</li> <li>• Discuss character arcs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students in Group A will be expected to complete a short writing exercise due two days before class AND be ready two pieces of feedback for each outline.</li> <li>• Students in Group B will send out the outline for their web pilot two days before class.</li> </ul>
Week 5	Building a Scene	<p><b>Lesson Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop Group B outlines.</li> <li>• Discuss how to construct a scene.</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students in Group A will email the first half of their script (5-8 pages) in PDF format to me and your classmates two days before class.</li> <li>• For those not producing pages: complete a short writing exercise due two days before class + have student feedback prepared.</li> </ul>
Week 6	Dialogue	<p><b>Lesson Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop Group A pages.</li> <li>• Discuss writing dialogue.</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students in Group B will email the first half of their script (5-8 pages) in PDF format to me and your classmates two days before class.</li> <li>• For those not producing pages: complete a short writing exercise due two days before class + have student feedback prepared.</li> </ul>
Week 7	Writing Action	<p><b>Lesson Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop Group B pages.</li> <li>• Discuss writing action.</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students in Group A will email the second half of their script (5-8 pages) in PDF format to me and your classmates two days before class.</li> </ul>

When	Lesson	Notes
Week 8	Professionals on the Page	<p><b>Lesson Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop Group A pages.</li> <li>• Discuss mistakes that beginners make and how to avoid them.</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students in Group B will email the second half of their script (5-8 pages) in PDF format to me and your classmates two days before class.</li> </ul>
Week 9	Series Bibles	<p><b>Lesson Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop Group B pages.</li> <li>• Discuss series bibles.</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone: write a series bible, including logline, series synopsis, pilot synopsis, overview of your main characters, and ideas for future seasons. The length should be around 3 - 5 pages.</li> </ul>
Week 10	Wrapping Up!	<p><b>Lesson Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop bibles.</li> <li>• Discuss development and production.</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise your scripts and bibles!</li> </ul>