# Writing For the Small Screen: From Broadcast to Streaming to Web Syllabus

**Instructor**

Mary Ruth Clarke

**Quarter:** Summer 2022  
**Start – end date:** Jun 18th – Aug 13th  
**Session day/time:** Saturday, 10am – 12:30pm  
**Course Code and Section:** WRIT21802 22U1

**Email**

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**Modality**

Remote learning

## Course Overview

TV is where the action is. With the proliferation of streaming services, as well as traditional outlets, with the popularity of limited series, as well as the more familiar sit coms and episodic dramas, there are so many rich opportunities for writers in the medium of television. (And DIY web series, also.)

This class focuses on how to realize your story idea and how the game of TV writing works. It is for anyone who has an idea (comedy or drama, any genre) that could make a great episodic show or limited series and who wants to learn the crucial basics of how to write for the medium.

We will study and analyze successful pilots. We will tease out/explore the inherent possibilities in your idea, where it fits in the vast TV landscape, how to position the idea, what makes a great TV character, visual storytelling, the imperative of a solid story structure, budgetary considerations, and formatting. And you will write and rewrite.

You will leave the workshop with:

- The makings of a pitch document
- A grasp of the show template, structure, core cast, and the ongoing character revelations as opposed to character development
- A grasp of the process of creation that optioned shows go through
- A better grasp of the language that writers/producers/agents speak
- The beginnings of a rough draft of a television pilot

## Accessing remote courses

Remote courses are taught through our Canvas platform. Approximately two weeks before your class begins, we will add you to your canvas site using the email address you provided at the time of registration. An invitation will then be sent to that email. Click the “Get Started” button in the email to begin the Canvas login process. For step-by-step instructions, please visit [https://grahamschool.uchicago.edu/academic-](https://grahamschool.uchicago.edu/academic-).
Accessibility information

Student Disability Services (SDS) works to provide resources, support and accommodations for all students with disabilities and works to remove physical and attitudinal barriers, which may prevent their full participation in the University community. Students that would like to request accommodations should contact SDS in advance of the first class session at 773.702.6000 or disabilities@uchicago.edu.

UChicago CARES Statement:

The University and its faculty are committed to creating a safer and more inclusive learning environment for all students. At the University, all faculty, staff, graduate student instructors, and teaching assistants are considered “Individuals with Reporting Responsibilities” and are required to let the University’s Title IX Coordinator know about any disclosures they receive from students about experiences of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and sexual harassment). This includes disclosures of experiences that happened before their time at the University. This is to ensure that all students who have experienced sexual misconduct receive support, options, and information about their rights and resources. Students are not obligated to respond to this outreach, and this will not generate a report to law enforcement.

For more information, please see this handout for students as well as the University’s Policy on Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct and Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment. You can also reach out directly for services and support from the Office for Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Support by emailing titleix@uchicago.edu.

If you, or another student you know, wishes to speak to a confidential resource who does not have this reporting responsibility, please contact the Sexual Assault Dean on Call through the UChicago Safe App or at 773.834-HELP.

Questions? Contact Zoë Eisenman at zmel1@uchicago.edu.