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Producing Social Justice PSAs: Fostering Students' Civic Engagement through Media Production

Mia Fischer
University of Minnesota, fisch792@umn.edu

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Producing Social Justice PSAs
Fostering Students' Civic Engagement through Media Production

Overview and Rationale

Since 2013, nationwide #BlackLivesMatter protests have brought debates about racial and economic injustice in the United States to the fore. The #BlackLivesMatter hashtag, which first emerged after George Zimmerman's acquittal in the Trayvon Martin killing in July 2013, challenges the historic and systematic dispossession of and the state-sanctioned violence enacted against people of color in an effort to affirm the value of black lives. #BlackLivesMatter experienced a renewed uptake in public discourse after the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner in 2014, and has also sought to build a broader social justice movement by forming coalitions, for example, with fast food workers fighting for livable wages. In April 2015, scenes of Baltimore erupting in protests over the death of Freddie Gray – more often than not depicted as "riots" by mainstream media outlets – were widely broadcasted.

Among media scholars, the #BlackLivesMatter movement has renewed discussions about the role of traditional legacy and social media in pursuits of social justice and social movement building. Despite the fact that socially disadvantaged communities are most likely the ones utilizing social media for activist purposes, gate-keeping practices in mainstream media continue to influence what spreads and what particular types of stories are highlighted. For example, because the national #BlackLivesMatter movement is a product of those socially disadvantaged communities (of color, lower class, etc.), mainstream media often portrays that movement not as activism, but as criminal behavior, such as "rioting" and "looting." While the "hashtag activism" of social media over the past decade has allowed marginalized and oppressed communities to document incidents of state-sanctioned violence and to contest racialized media representations, it is also important to keep in mind that social media platforms are themselves corporate entities that police and surveil their users.[1]

In COMM 3201 "Introduction to Electronic Media Production," I use current debates around #BlackLivesMatter and its use of social media to challenge racial inequalities as one of many possible topics for students to take-up in a social justice public service announcement. This class-assignment explicitly asks students to engage with video-production processes as a means of doing social justice work, to advance their own media literacy skills, and become civically

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[1] Facebook, for example, was lauded for introducing more inclusive gender options for its users in February 2014. However, the company has repeatedly shut down profiles of Native American, drag queen, and transgender users for allegedly violating their "authentic name policy." See Abby Phillip, "Online 'authenticity' and how Facebook's 'real name' policy hurts Native Americans," *Washington Post*, February 10, 2015, http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/02/10/online-authenticity-and-how-facebooks-real-name-policy-hurts-native-americans/ (accessed April 6, 2015). In December 2014, participants in a nonviolent Black Lives Matter protest at the Mall of America in Minneapolis were not only aggressively confronted by law enforcement in riot gear, but the organizers and local #BlackLivesMatter social media platforms were also, as it turns out, preemptively spied on and surveilled by local police and the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force. Lee Fang, "Why Was an FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force Tracking a Black Lives Matter Protest?" *The Intercept*, March 12, 2015, https://firstlook.org/theintercept/2015/03/12/fbi-appeared-use-informant-track-black-lives-matter-protest/ (accessed April 6, 2015).

engaged citizens by addressing social justice issues in a PSA. In doing so, students gain a better understanding of the pivotal role of media for citizenship and become actively engaged with their communities.

In COMM 3201 students learn the fundamental techniques of live-on-tape video production, they write and produce as part of a video production team, and engage in critical dialogues about theoretical aspects of visual and sound aesthetics.[2] Students are asked to craft their own PSA script that addresses a social justice and/or local community issue, which is then produced and shot in a multi-camera-studio setting.[3] In completing this assignment, students actively engage in social justice work by learning the history of PSA's and their key elements, by critically engaging in readings and discussions about racialized media representations, white privilege and racial injustice, and by learning the basic principles for proper script-writing and formatting.

A broader goal of the PSA is thereby to raise a critical consciousness beyond the classroom with a larger public (including different constituencies on campus and local communities). If all participants agree to sign appropriate release forms, I encourage students to share their PSAs with peers, family, and on social media channels. I also submit high-quality productions to our department website and for publication in an alumni newsletter.

Timeline

The Social Justice PSA constitutes the class's final project at the end of the semester. The assumption is that at this point in the semester, students have already acquired knowledge about basic television studio production skills and aesthetic composition principles.[4] The PSA lesson plan typically requires three to four class periods (each are 115min long) to prepare and set-up, not including the groups' actual PSA production days in the studio. There are also two homework assignments that need to be completed prior to class. After all PSAs have been produced and submitted, another 30-45min for in-class discussion should be budgeted to review and constructively critique the students' work. The assignment is easily adaptable to different studio-environments and video production requirements, class schedules, and class session lengths.

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[2] See Herbert Zettl, *Sight, Sound, Motion; Applied Media Aesthetics. 7th Edition* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Pub. Co., 2014).

[3] This assignment can also be easily adopted in production classes that do not use a live-on-tape, multi-camera setting. Using portable HD video cameras, iPhones, and/or post-production editing software are equally suitable for executing this PSA assignment.

[4] Prior to this final course assignment, students should have acquired basic knowledge about compiling a production book (including script annotations, storyboard, master shot sheet, and camera shot sheets), standard camera operations (including solid management of headroom, noseroom, leadroom, figure/ground, and shot balance), executing purposeful blocking along all 3 major axes relative to the camera, as well as proper z-axis lens articulation. Depending on the type of production class and studio-environment, familiarity with basic triangle-lighting and color energy principles (see Zettl, Chapters 2-5), as well as sound aesthetics (Zettl, Chs. 15-16) may also be beneficial.

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Detailed Lesson Plan

Part 1: What are Public Service Announcements? (Allow about 20-30minutes)

I begin this lesson plan with a general discussion of PSAs, their historic background and typical elements constituting the PSA as a genre.

- ➢ PSAs were initially introduced in the U.S. before and during WWII
- ➢ The *Ad Council* was created in 1941 and conceived the idea to use advertising to influence U.S. American society on a range of fronts.
    - o First campaigns, for example, encouraged U.S. Americans to invest their savings in government bonds.

- ➢ What is the difference between a *commercial* and a *public service announcement*?
    - o A *commercial* is an attempt to change your attitude or behavior regarding a product, for profit interest.
    - o A *public service announcement* is an attempt to change your attitude or behavior regarding a public, not-for profit good. → your primary goal is to "cultivate citizenship" and foster civic engagement

Students then watch a selection of PSAs engaging with different topics, for example, on Drunk Driving, Texting and Driving, HIV prevention, Mental Health Stigmas, Cyber Bullying, or Diversity and Inclusion. As students watch these PSAs they are asked to keep the following questions in mind:

1. What do we notice about PSAs in general?
2. Which PSAs do we think are especially good and why?
3. How are persuasive strategies used in these examples?

Afterwards, students begin to compile a list of elements that are typical for the PSA as a genre. Here is a suggested list, which is by no means all-inclusive.

Public Service Announcements:
- ➢ are fairly short (30sec–2min)
- ➢ present one single issue
- ➢ inform the viewer of key, relevant facts
- ➢ use emotional appeals, feelings, and associations to create a narrative
- ➢ have a clear call to action (oftentimes indicated through the text on screen)
- ➢ might or might not include people
- ➢ might or might not use music
- ➢ sometimes use voice-overs
- ➢ sometimes use special effects
- ➢ might use transitions/editing to enhance the video
- ➢ involve and aim to leave a lasting impact

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Part 2: What is Social Justice? (Allow at least 45min)

Prior to class students have to complete a worksheet on two readings: Peggy McIntosh's "White Privilege" (1989) and Judith Butler's interview in the *New York Times* on "What's Wrong with 'All Lives Matter'" (2015) (see the attached assignment sheet for more details). After being introduced to PSAs, students get together in small groups to discuss the following questions from their worksheet (allow at least 15 minutes of group work):

1. What is social justice?
2. What is white privilege and how does whiteness extend beyond skin color?
3. How is the perpetuation of racial injustice connected to white privilege?
4. Why is the difference between "Black Lives Matter" and "All Lives Matter" important?

We then reconvene as a class and engage with those questions and the worksheet in more detail. If pressed for time this section can be easily condensed.

➢ What is social justice?
   o Social justice is "justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society" (The New Oxford American Dictionary)
   o Students formulate their own definitions of social justice

➢ What is "white privilege"?
   o More than just a skin color
   o Often functions as a silent and invisible package of unearned assets
   o We are conditioned into oblivion about its existence
       ▪ "White privilege is like an invisible weightless backpack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks." (McIntosh, 1989, 1)
       ▪ "We usually think of privilege as being a favored state, whether earned or conferred by birth or luck. Yet some of the conditions I have described here work to systematically overempower certain groups. Such privilege simply confers dominance because of one's race or sex" (McIntosh, 1989, 4)

➢ How do interlocking oppressions function not just individually but systemically?
   o Multiple identity categories relating to race, gender, sexuality, ableism, and class present intersecting systems of oppression and do not function separately from one another
       ▪ Examples?
   o "In my class and place, I did not see myself as a racist because I was taught to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of my group, never in invisible systems conferring unsought racial dominance on my group from birth" (McIntosh, 5)
       ▪ EX: Jon Stuart and Bill O'Reilly discuss "white privilege"

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➢ What does Butler mean when she argues that black lives are "disposable"? How is the current disposability of black lives connected to histories of violence in the U.S.?
  o Some lives matter more than others and are recognized while others are not valued at all; they can be killed and/or disposed of with very little to no consequence.
  o This disposability can be traced back to slavery, segregation, the policing of communities of color, and the expansion of the prison system.

➢ How does whiteness function as "a social power reproducing its dominance in both implicit and explicit ways" (9)?
  o Dominance of whiteness is perpetuated in daily acts which may not seem racist at all precisely because they are considered 'normal.'
  o EX: The 'norm' that 'black lives do not matter,' is built-up over time, through everyday practices, public discourse, and how schools, work, prison, law, and media are organized.

➢ How does Butler's conception of racism differ from common understandings of racism?
      ▪ EX: University of Minnesota-Duluth students appearing in blackface
      ▪ EX: University of Oklahoma SAE Frat Scandal

➢ How is the perpetuation of racial injustice connected to white privilege?
  o EX: Legal system's alleged colorblindness reproduces whiteness
      ▪ Racial profiling by police/ police brutality
      ▪ Ability to claim self-defense is "reserved for those who have a publicly recognized self to defend" (Butler, 3)
          • Examples?
      ▪ Disproportionate imprisonment of people of color
          • Role of the PIC (prison-industrial-complex)

➢ Why does Butler consider slogans such as 'All Lives Matter' problematic?
  o A universal, colorblind proclamation that "all lives matter" misses the fact that black and brown lives have yet to be fully recognized and valued as human.
  o It is thus important to name the lives that have not mattered, and are struggling to matter in the way they deserve; to recognize their humanness.

After this discussion, students are then asked to brainstorm and begin compiling a list of potential social justice topics that they could address in their own PSA scripts.

➢ What are *local community/social justice issues* that are impacting our *campus community* and call for civic engagement that you could address in a PSA?

  1. University of Minnesota's removal of racial descriptors on crime alerts
  2. Whose University? Campaign: diversity in higher education
  3. Access to higher education: cost of tuition
  4. Sexual Assault on Campus

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5. Domestic violence
6. ….

At the end of this class period students receive a homework assignment, which further helps them to generate a suitable topic for their PSA and asks them to conduct initial research by creating an annotated bibliography (see the attached hand-out).

Part 3: Writing a Script for a Social Justice PSA (Allow 20min)

In the following class-period, students are then provided with detailed guidelines for proper script-writing and formatting for their PSA (see the attached hand-out for details) and the final production's requirements.

- ➢ **Important questions to consider as you are crafting your PSA:**
    - o Is it a PSA that engages with a social justice issue?
    - o Does it follow the key elements of a PSA?
    - o Is it clear who the target audience for the PSA is?
    - o Does the PSA focus on one single issue?
    - o Does it present a critical and thoughtful reflection on your topic?
    - o Does it inform the viewer of key/relevant facts?
    - o Does it have a clear call to action?
    - o Does it aim to leave a lasting impact by invoking certain feelings and associations?
    - o Does it affect social norms?

Final Production Guidelines
- ➢ Write a properly formatted **2 to 3 page script** for a television public service announcement.
- ➢ Use **CelTx t**o help you format.
- ➢ The script you write must be shootable in our multi-camera studio.
- ➢ It can have at most 3 on-camera talent.
- ➢ On the script due date **(DATE)**, you will pitch your script to the class and we will vote and select three scripts to shoot.

Script Writing and Formatting

- ➢ Consult the Production 3 script guidelines doc (see the attached hand-out)
- ➢ Download a copy of the free script-writing software Celtx
- ➢ Font: Always Courier New
- ➢ Margins: Celtx will format this for you
- ➢ Script must be properly formatted because…
    - ▪ It has to be the right time (1 page = 1 min)
    - ▪ It is the language that all media people use
- ➢ Scene headers: Denotes change of scenes, time/location
    - o INT. RALPH'S LIVING ROOM – AFTERNOON
    - o EXT. A PARK – EARLY MORNING

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> ➢ Stage direction/Blocking/Description: deals only with what you *see* or *hear*, no back story.
>   - o EX: Ralph runs in. He is tired from running 5 miles.
>   - o EX: Ralph runs in. He is panting. He bends over in exhaustion.
> ➢ Anything really important goes in all caps. First meeting of a character goes in all caps.

New Requirements for the final PSA production (these will vary depending on what type of production course you are teaching):

> ➢ An inductive or deductive shot sequence with a clear message
> ➢ Utilize at least one example of idea-associative montage
> ➢ Use the character generator on-screen or still-store
> ➢ Clearly be visually constructed to "look into" an event, with an understanding of point of view
> ➢ Audio must take into account literal and non-literal sound, and utilize both internal and external orientation.
> ➢ Production demonstrates an understanding of PSA techniques
> ➢ Complete set of paperwork: script annotations, story board, mastershot sheet, and camera shot sheets, a lighting and floor plan, as well as lighting, audio, and floor design documents.

Part 4: Script Selection and Final Production Project Requirements

On the scripts due-date, each student pitches his/her script to the class in a brief elevator speech. The class then votes on their top script choices. How many scripts are selected will depend on group sizes. I usually shoot three productions where each groups consists of 5-6 above-the-line members (Director, Assistant Director, Floor Director, Lighting Director, Technical Director, and Audio Director). Each individual script is graded with a grading rubric (see attached grade sheet).

> ➢ **Looking through the scripts and voting on them, think carefully about how well they lend themselves to:**
>   - o An inductive or deductive shot sequence with a clear message
>   - o Utilize at least one example of idea-associative montage
>   - o Use the character generator on-screen or still-store
>   - o Clearly be visually constructed to "look into" an event, with an understanding of point of view
>   - o Audio must take into account literal and non-literal sound, and utilize both internal and external orientation.
>   - o Production demonstrates an understanding of PSA techniques: emotional appeals, key stats, call to action etc

Part 5: Review of Productions

After every group has shot their production, we reconvene in the classroom to look each of them and provide constructive feedback and criticism. As we watch the productions, the following questions serve as guidelines:

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> ➢ **Consider the following areas of expertise**:
>   - o Lighting
>   - o Color
>   - o Composition
>   - o Z-axis blocking and lens articulation
>   - o Visualization
>   - o Design
>   - o Audio: literal/non-literal sounds
>   - o Idea-Associative montage
>   - o Inductive/Deductive shot sequence
>   - o Did we see key elements of a PSA?

All the productions are made available to students via the course website. High-quality productions may be distributed with the larger public if all participants have signed appropriate release forms.

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PSA Handouts and Assignment Sheets

COMM XXXX Intro to U.S. Electronic Media   Name: _____

"White Privilege" and "What's Wrong with 'All Lives Matter'?"

Part I

1. Before you read the articles please briefly describe and define in a paragraph your understanding of "social justice" (feel free to do some googling and consult relevant articles that can help you articulate your understanding of the term).
2. According to McIntosh's article what is "white privilege"?
3. McIntosh suggests, "hierarchies in our society are interlocking" (p.1) – what does she mean here? How are these "interlocking oppressions" functioning not just individually, but systemically?
4. Why does McIntosh consider meritocracy in the U.S. a myth?
5. After reading this piece from 1989, think about a recent <u>local</u> or <u>campus-related</u> event that has renewed debates about "white privilege." Briefly state and explain how that particular event relates to the article. Please also <u>post a link to a clip</u> (e.g., from a news station, YouTube etc.) that refers to your event on the Moodle discussion board.

Part II

Before turning to Judith Butler's *New York Times'* interview (the arguments in the article are very complex, be prepared to read it multiple times):

6. Quickly do some research on #BlackLivesMatter: how, when, where and by whom did the hashtag originally get started?
7. Look-up the meaning of the term "prison-industrial-complex": what is its connection to race? (you may want to search for Angela Davis' *Are Prisons Obsolete?* or Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow* online).
8. What does Butler mean when she argues that black lives are "disposable"? How is the current disposability of black lives connected to histories of violence in the U.S.?
9. How is white privilege permeating "stand-your-ground" and "self-defense" rulings according to Butler?
10. How does Whiteness extend beyond skin color?
11. "'Black Lives Matter,' which always risks being misheard ('What? Only *black* lives matter?') or not heard at all ('these are just people who will protest anything')" – why does Butler consider slogans such as 'All Lives Matter' problematic?
12. Thinking back to some of the discussions we had earlier this semester, how do media representations contribute to the perception of certain racialized bodies as "threats"?

This worksheet is **DUE IN CLASS on DATE**!

PSA Assignment – Generating a Topic

Write a **1-2 page** (double-spaced, 12PT Font, 1inch margins, and page numbers) paper in which you explain your choice of a PSA on a social justice/community issue relating to our campus community. **Due DATE by 5pm via email**.

Read through the PSA Assignment guidelines doc before getting started on this!

You should (1) describe your topic in 1-2 paragraphs and (2) provide an annotated bibliography of at <u>least 3 academic sources</u> (i.e. these are NOT random web pages or Wikipedia entries, BUT journal articles, book chapters, newspaper or magazine articles). Each source should be accompanied by a **4-5 sentence annotation** that explains why or how the source is useful for crafting your PSA. Citations must use MLA or APA style (the complete guide is at the library; abbreviated guides are easy to find online).

A note on annotations:
- Annotations are not summaries. Each annotation should assess the source by noting the particular **contribution** it provides for your PSA.
- Each source should be recognizably **credible**. This implicates, in part, web pages. Web s/cites generally are less credible than published sources. When a web site *does* offer credible content, it often is reproducing material that already has been published in printed form, and *that* (the primary version) is what you should seek out and cite, not the web page (*note here* the difference between a web page and a secured database that you access *using* the web, such as MNCAT, EBSCO, JStore, or AcademicSearchPremiere).
- Each citation needs to be **complete**—this includes page numbers and url links. Your citations should give readers the ability to track down and confirm each source on their own.
- Each citation needs to employ **correct** form. Be sure that you consult the complete style guide instead of SIMPLY AND LAZILY CUTTING and PASTING CITATIONS from databases you use.

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Production 3 Script – Due in-class DATE

For Production 3, you will write your own script to produce rather than selecting among a group of prewritten ones. Your assignment is to write a properly formatted 2-3 page script for *a Public Service Announcement* engaging with an *issue of Social Justice*.

Formatting Guidelines
- Your script should meet standard screenplay formatting (see below for more details). Use previous scripts from Prod. 1 and 2 as guides.
- I highly recommend downloading and using CelTx to help you format (it's free and available to download online). Doing so will make your life much, much easier. There is a tutorial on using CelTx on the course website, as well as links to download sites for Mac and PC. If those links don't work, the software can be found easily through a Google search. Please don't subscribe to any free trials or buy anything. You should be able to just download the program directly.

Content Guidelines
- Make sure you don't exceed the 2-3 page requirements. Each script translates to roughly 1 minute of runtime, so scripts running longer than 3 pages will be very difficult to produce for this class.
- The script must be shootable in the studio under a 3-camera setup. When writing the script, pay heed to how a group would realistically be able to manage its blocking, lighting, audio, and camera placements.
- The script can have <u>at most</u> 3 on-camera talent.
- The script should be able to satisfy or exceed the minimum Prod. 3 criteria (see the assignment sheet attached the end of the syllabus).
- The script must be a PSA. Utilize our lecture and discussion day as a guide for what constitute the techniques of Public Service Announcements.

Note on Content
- Be mindful that not everyone in class is alike. When choosing a topic for your script and when discussing scripts together, be sensitive to the feelings and values of those in the class who may be different from you. You've worked hard together and you'll work closely together on this project as well; respecting each other is the surest way to build a positive experience for all. I ask you to *seriously engage with a social justice/community issue that matters to you and presents a critical and thoughtful reflection on a contemporary event or socio-political issue. Your PSA should clearly aim to foster the civic engagement of your target audience.*

Topic suggestions
- Sexual Assault on college campuses
- Twin City campus crime alerts
- Affordability of college education
- Whose University? Campaign: How diverse is our campus really?
- Racial profiling: Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin etc.

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- Violence against LGBT communities: high school bullying, violence against trans women
- The 99% versus the 1%: CEO versus average worker compensation in the U.S. or the salary of the UMN president/deans versus your tuition dollars
- Immigration: Unaccompanied minors at U.S. borders
- Washington Redskins name controversy
- Minimum wage levels
- Net neutrality
- The digital divide
- Ebola crisis

A checklist of what I will be looking for when grading your script is attached.

I recommend exploring the topic that you want to engage with for this this final production early, so that you have some time to write and format your script appropriately. Your script is due in paper form in-class on **DATE.** On that day, you will pitch your script to the class and everyone will vote and select three scripts to shoot.

Script Grade Checklist

Script formatting and writing:
- Is it a correctly formatted screenplay?
- Does it follow the basic rules of writing a script?
- Is it visual?

Public Service Announcement:
- Is it a PSA that engages with a social justice issue?
- Does it follow the key elements of a PSA?
- Is it clear who the target audience for the PSA is?
- Does the PSA focus on one single issue?
- Does it present a critical and thoughtful reflection on your topic?
- Does it inform the viewer of key/relevant facts?
- Does it have a clear call to action?
- Does it aim to leave a lasting impact by invoking certain feelings and associations?
- Does it affect social norms?

Feasibility:
- Is it shootable in our studio?
- Does it have AT MOST three on-screen talent?

Project Minimum Criteria:
- Does it hit the major elements of the minimums of the production assignment?

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- Does it utilize an inductive or deductive shot sequence?
- Is there an idea-associative montage?
- Does it utilize a switcher effect?
- Is there a clear opportunity for color energy?
- Does it demonstrate a general grasp of PSA techniques?

Script Writing Tips

Proper screenplay format is surprisingly easy. In this class, it is very important that you follow proper screenplay format, since it is a very good guide of runtimes. The ratio is approximately 1 minute per page. The longer the screenplay, the more accurate this gets.

In terms of writing a screenplay, you need to write in terms of what we can see or hear. You also need to write in the present tense, because this is how the audience experiences it. Including backstory, motivations, internal thoughts, justifications, and the like are NOT proper screen writing, since this is information that your audience will not know. ONLY INCLUDE WHAT CAN BE SEEN OR HEARD. Use imagistic or descriptive language, but in general it should not be too precise, since the screenplay should act as a blueprint for the final production. You should follow ALL rules of proper grammar, punctuation, etc. in your scene descriptions or blocking, and your dialogue probably needs to make sense given the world you're writing about or in.

Characters should generally speak and look "authentic" to the world they inhabit. The world should follow a set of rules that probably makes sense given that world. Backstory in dialogue is also generally a bad idea. If we need to know something, work it into the dialogue in a way that doesn't sound like a character's info dump (e.g. the character saying important things about themselves in an obvious way).

In terms of formatting, the rules may seem a bit confusing, but they're there for a reason. The page margins should be 1 1/4 inches on all sides; some guides will say 1.5" on the left and 1" on the right to allow for binding, but in this class I don't care. The dialogue header (who is speaking) should be an additional 2 inches indented. The actual dialogue should be indented a further inch on the left and an additional 1 1/4 on the right from the normal margins. All paragraphs are NOT indented, but are block style, meaning there is a double-strike between paragraphs. All paragraphs are single-spaced. Everything is written in the Courier New font. The first page is unnumbered and doesn't include ANYTHING other than the script, so your name, etc. need to go on a title page BEFORE the screenplay starts. All other pages are numbered in the top right, inside the 1 1/4 inch margin (so you have to use your header space for that), and scenes that continue onto further pages have (CONTINUED) in the lower right, inside the margin, and then CONTINUED: in the upper left of the next page, inside the margin. The page numbering is important and must be included, and NOT outside the margin.

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Also, and this may seem odd, but we should have two spaces after a sentence ending punctuation mark, two spaces after a colon or semicolon. Put one space after a punctuation mark that is used to abbreviate something, or after a comma. All sentences end with a punctuation mark.

Scene heads (or headings) start off a scene; a scene is a continuous batch of time and space. If a character moves to another location, it also needs a new scene. If there is a change in time, then there needs to be a new scene. Scene heads denote whether it is shot inside or outside, where the scene takes place, and what time of day. Again, these descriptions need to be meaningful to an audience, so saying the scene takes place at 4:04PM is meaningless, since what does 4:04PM look like? You'd have to say "afternoon" instead. They are written in ALL CAPS, and are formatted like this: INT. or EXT. for interior or exterior. Then a space. Then the LOCATION. Then a space, a dash, and a space. Then the TIME. So, for example, you would use:

```
    INT. A LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
```

to indicate the subsequent scene is happening inside a living room at night. Another example:

```
    EXT. A PARK - MORNING
```

would indicate the scene is taking place outside at a park in the morning.

Sometimes the time is meaningless, like if you set a scene in a refrigerator with a door that doesn't open. So, you might list the scene heading as:

```
     INT. A FRIDGE
```

and leave it at that. If the door opens, then the time might be significant. In that case, you would include the time information.

If you later go back to a location, in this case, maybe the "Living Room" space, you would write:

```
    INT. A LIVING ROOM - LATER
```
or
```
    INT. A LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT DAY
```

if we can tell that it is the next day and so on.

The scene description and stage direction are written as block paragraphs, much like how I am writing here. That means that there is a double-strike (or blank line) before and after scene heads, before and after paragraphs, before and after dialogue. It is very important that you think and write visually and in terms of sound here. Internal stuff is a no-no.

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When you introduce a significant character, you should put their name in CAPS the first time. Subsequent times you do not. It's okay to name them, even if we don't see or hear their name on screen, since this is a useful guide to the audience. I leave them unnamed until they ARE named on screen, but that's not a rule. Unessential characters are not capitalized, but if they have a speaking role, they are essential. Any significant sounds are in CAPS, but non-essential ones you leave out; it's common to include the "sound verb" as well. So, you might start a scene like this:

```
INT. A PARK - MORNING

A MAN runs down a path.  He is in his late 50s, and is
sweating profusely through his running clothes.  He slows
to a jog, then stops, his hands on his side.  He GASPS for
breath, and he falls to the ground.  His HEARTBEAT POUNDS
louder and louder.  He loses consciousness.
```

You'll notice that I do not include motivations, backstory, or anything like that. If we needed to know why he's running, we should include a scene that explains it. You'll notice I never say that he's having a heart attack either, because we only know what is happening via what we see or hear. You can't see a heart attack (typically), but you can see signs of one. In this case we also hear a sort of subjective sound of the heartbeat, since an outside person probably wouldn't have heard his heart actually beating.

You'll also notice that I did not include camera direction. A screenplay is **not** a shot sheet. Do not include shots; do not direct your story. Write it.

When you want to write dialogue, you indent the character's name 3 1/4" in, and write it in CAPS. THERE IS NO COLON AFTER THE NAME! Then, you block paragraph their name, using 2 1/4" margins on the left, and 2 1/2" margins on the right. DO NOT BREAK THE DIALOGUE INTO PARAGRAPHS. So, dialogue for a scene might look something like this:

```
                    JIM
I can't believe you threw out my
homework!  You know how important
that project is.

                    RALPH
Well, don't blame me.  You left it
next to the garbage, so how was I to
know?

                    JIM
Oh, gee...  My name was on it and --

                    RALPH
```

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```
                You label everything you own!

                          JIM
                I came from a big family!
```

... and so on. You'll notice that the ellipsis (...) is used to indicate a person "trailing off" and the double-dash (--) is used to denote interruption.

If you need to include some vocal direction, you can put it in parentheses, but it generally is a sign of bad writing. If we can't tell how a person would deliver a line based on the scene or the dialogue, then you've got problems as a writer. But you might need to use them sparingly, so I am going to show you now:

```
                        SALLY
                      (angrily)
                You stole my monkey!
```

You'll notice the parenthetical is another 1/2" margin in.

If you need to include stage direction, DO NOT DO IT IN THE PARENTHETICAL. Simply add stage direction before the next line. As in:

```
                        FRANCIS
                I'm not going anywhere!

        She sits on the sofa.

                          RAUL
                You've got to.  My uncle will be
                home at sun-up.

        He looks out the window.
```

If you need to do it between a character's lines, it's easy. You just add a (CONT'D) after the person, as in:

```
                        KIMMY
            Let's see…

        She runs her fingers across the spines of the books.

                        KIMMY (CONT'D)
            Yep, here it is.
```

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```
She pulls a large black book from the shelf.
```

If there are other formatting issues you have, or questions you need help with, be sure to ask me!

M. Fischer   *Social Justice PSAs*

COMM XXXX Intro to Electronic Media Production   Name:_____

Production 3 Individual PSA Script

Script formatting and writing (__/20)
- Is it a correctly formatted screenplay?
- Does it follow the basic rules of writing a script?
- Is it visual?

Public Service Announcement (__/40)
- Is it a PSA that engages with a social justice issue?
- Does it follow the key elements of a PSA?
- Is it clear who the target audience for the PSA is?
- Does the PSA focus on one single issue?
- Does it present a critical and thoughtful reflection on your topic?
- Does it inform the viewer of key/relevant facts?
- Does it have a clear call to action?
- Does it aim to leave a lasting impact by invoking certain feelings and associations?
- Does it affect social norms?

Feasibility (__/10)
- Is it shootable in our studio?
- Does it have AT MOST three on-screen talent?

Project Minimum Criteria (__/30)
- Does it hit the major elements of the minimums of the production assignment?
- Does it utilize an inductive or deductive shot sequence?
- Is there an idea-associative montage?
- Does it utilize a switcher effect?
- Is there a clear opportunity for color energy?
- Does it demonstrate a general grasp of PSA techniques?

Grade: ___/100
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Course Readings

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McIntosh, P. (1990). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Independent School*, Vol. 49, No. 2. (Winter 1990), pp. 31-35.

Yancy, G. and Butler, J. (2015, January 12). What's wrong with 'All Lives Matter'? *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/01/12/whats-wrong-with-all-lives-matter/

Zettl, H. (2014). *Sight, sound, motion; applied media aesthetics. 7th edition*. Belmont, Calif: Wadsworth Pub. Co.

PSA Resources

Hampton, C. (2014). Section 7. Preparing public service announcements. *Community Tool Box*. Retrieved from http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/participation/promoting-interest/public-service-announcements/main

In general, examples of PSA video clips and PSA resources can be easily found by searching on Google and YouTube.

The Ad Council's website also hosts numerous resources about different PSA campaigns, including clips (http://www.adcouncil.org/Our-Campaigns)

The website PSA Bibliography provides a useful historical overview of the development of PSAs since the Civil War (http://www.psaresearch.com/bib9830.html)

Time Magazine also has a Top 10 PSA list that includes older noteworthy PSAs (http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1920454_1920455_1920431,00. html)

Video-Clips

Buzzed Driving Prevention (2015). The Ad Council. Retrieved from http://adcouncil.org/Our-Campaigns/Safety/Buzzed-Driving-Prevention

Diversity & Inclusion (2015). The Ad Council. Retrieved from http://adcouncil.org/Our-Campaigns/Family-Community/Diversity-Inclusion

Glee: Texting and Driving Prevention (2013, November 10). YouTube. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6UmFStfegM
RED Celebrity Video on HIV Prevention (2010, April 29). YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKrtG724Cek

The Daily Show with Jon Stewart (2014, October 15). Bill O'Reilly Segment. Retrieved from http://thedailyshow.cc.com/videos/4u4hqr/bill-o-reilly

We Can Help Us (2010, April 15). The Ad Council. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpfdMy3FgCs

Words Really Do Hurt (2008, June 13). YouTube. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2kFVXDzKFc

Biography

Mia Fischer
University of Minnesota
fisch792@umn.edu

Mia Fischer is currently a Schochet interdisciplinary doctoral fellow and PhD candidate in the Department of Communication at the University of Minnesota focusing on Critical Media Studies. Working at the intersections of critical media studies, gender, queer, and surveillance studies, her dissertation "Terrorizing Gender: Transgender Visibility and the Surveillance Practices of the U.S. Security State," explores how the media representation of transgender people is connected to the surveillance practices enacted against non-normative bodies at the hands of the state. Mia's larger teaching and research interests revolve around questions of social justice, specifically how mediated visibilities of marginalized communities impact the material realities of those communities, principally in terms of their access to national belonging and U.S. citizenship.