

ENGL G127: INTRODUCTION TO SCREENWRITING

Item	Value
Curriculum Committee Approval Date	11/02/2021
Top Code	150700 - Creative Writing
Units	4 Total Units
Hours	72 Total Hours (Lecture Hours 72)
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)
Local General Education (GE)	• GWC Arts, Lit, Phil, Lang (GC)

Course Description

This course focuses on scriptwriting for movies and television, with particular attention given to traditional formatting, narrative, plot and structure, staging, scene design and development, and character. Students will learn techniques to improve these writing and narrative abilities and leave the class ready to compose a complete and cohesive screenplay in the medium of their choice. PREREQUISITE: ENGL C1000 or ENGL C1000E. Transfer Credit: CSU; UC.

Course Level Student Learning Outcome(s)

1. Course Outcomes
2. Apply scriptwriting conventions to the process of developing an original script.
3. Identify various conventions of scriptwriting.
4. Analyze how scriptwriting conventions support and develop an author's themes.

Course Objectives

- 1. Identify the basic techniques of storytelling as derived from a study of modern screenplays and television scripts.
- 2. Develop a disciplined writing schedule and a method of composition that will lead to the successful completion of a full-length manuscript.
- 3. Analyze the work of contemporary writers of film and television.
- 4. Write and revise pages of a script and present them for evaluation.
- 5. Discuss manuscripts in a professional manner, backing up opinions with technical and theoretical principles.
- 6. Examine dramatic art through written and verbal analysis of published works and student works in progress.

Lecture Content

Introduction to the Tradition of Dramatic Writing for the Screen Brief History of motion pictures, television, and film school Similarities and differences between film, television, and stage, including strengths and limitations of each. Fundamentals of writing for the screen Fundamentals of writing for television Introductory Methods of Criticism

and Analysis Reading writing script coverage Analysis of structure, style, and theme Applying judgments to filmed and published work Applying judgments to other students work Getting Started Structural Paradigms (Heros Journey, Hourglass, Rags-to-Riches, Riches-to-Rags, Triumph Over Adversity, Boy-Meets-Girl, etc.) Approaches to the opening scenes The Synopsis The Story Capsule The Step Outline Elevator Pitch/Treatment/Blurb Manuscript Formatting Introduction to basic dramatic techniques Premise / Concept Plot Structure Character Dialogue Setting Beats, Scenes, Sequences Objectives Obstacles Framing, Backstory, and Foreshadowing Style, Pacing, Tone Peripeteia Dramatic Irony Movement and Modulation Introductory Writing Schedule Page Count Hour Count Writers Block Prewriting Revising Editing Study of Appropriate Business Models Movies vs. television Mainstream vs. independent Identification of Genre Marketability and malleability Contests, agents, managers, and breaking in

Method(s) of Instruction

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

Instructional Techniques

Lectures on creative writing techniques and critical thinking strategies about the craft of screenwriting. Demonstration of models of modern and contemporary scripts from various genres (drama, comedy, dramedy, action/adventure, romance, mystery, sci-fi, horror, and others). Discussions on reading and writing assignments and topics (social, political, cultural, etc.) introduced in class. Use of internet to access information about writers and to view relevant motion pictures, television episodes, and screenplays. Videos from television, film, and other dramatic works, as well as interviews with filmmakers and authors discussing their methods. Group discussions of each others written assignments and manuscripts. Individual conferences throughout the semester

Reading Assignments

Students evaluate screenplays, including classic, modern, and contemporary work from various genres. Students then discuss the works relative strengths and weaknesses according to the application of standards established in class. Students demonstrate the ability to apply these critical standards to contemporary film, television, and other dramatic work. Students must also read and critique their colleagues manuscripts each week, in seminar fashion, according to specific protocols that require them to analyze, critique, and assess one another's manuscripts according to fundamental dramatic techniques, such as plot, character development, scene, and setting. Critical thinking helps determine the technical solutions to problems in the in-progress manuscripts.

Writing Assignments

Students will produce a substantial amount of dramatic writing outside of class, 30-60 pages over the course of the semester, which will be submitted for workshop. Students will analyze their own work and others work in terms of technical and stylistic sophistication. Students may analyze a screenplay of their choice against the dramatic standards established in class.

Out-of-class Assignments

Students will produce a substantial amount of dramatic writing outside of class, 30-60 pages over the course of the semester, which will be submitted for workshop. Students may keep journals on the process

of writing and on observations that may be included in their creative work. Students may develop a final portfolio of the best revision of their manuscript. Students may analyze a screenplay of their choice against the dramatic standards established in class.

Demonstration of Critical Thinking

Analysis of ones own writing, including creating and revising portions of the manuscript, is evaluated in terms of the students ability to critique using specific elements of dramatic art, such as plot, dialogue, character development, structure and scene, and story arc. Analysis of the writing of others, including the evaluation of professional manuscripts and of peer submissions, is evaluated on the basis of completion, effective summary, and level of analysis. Criteria include clarity, knowledge of studied material, attention to the manuscript being discussed, and utility of the critique.

Required Writing, Problem Solving, Skills Demonstration

Substantial writing, including creating and critiquing 30-60 pages of the manuscript, is evaluated in terms of the students ability to complete written responses and manuscripts that are timely, grammatically correct, and relevant to the assignment and that incorporates the specific elements of dramatic writing discussed in class, such as plot, character, dialogue, scene development, and structure. Skills Demonstration: Students are evaluated on their class performances; that is, their reading of their creative work in class. They are also evaluated on their level of critique and comments during group discussions, and their analysis of their own work and the work of others. Portfolio: Students are evaluated on a final portfolio of their best revision of their manuscript and on the basis of timely submission, clarity of presentation, and technical merit.

Eligible Disciplines

English: Masters degree in English, literature, comparative literature, or composition OR bachelors degree in any of the above AND masters degree in linguistics, TESL, speech, education with a specialization in reading, creative writing, or journalism OR the equivalent. Masters degree required.

Textbooks Resources

1. Required Snyder, Blake. *Save the Cat!*, ed. Michael Wiese Productions (Classic), 2005 Rationale: Considered the standard textbook for screenplays. 2. Required Field, Syd. *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*, ed. Delta (Classic), 2005 Rationale: Standard book for screenplay writing 3. Required Aristotle. *Poetics*, ed. Penguin (Classic), 1997 Rationale: Standard book on narrative and narrative structure 4. Required Ball, David. *Backwards Forwards: A Technical Manual for Reading Plays*, ed. Southern Illinois University Press (Classic), 1983 Rationale: Standard book on screenplay analysis 5. Required Casey, Daniel John. *Screenwriting Tribe: Workshop Handbook for Writing and Polishing Film and TV Spec Scripts*, 1st ed. Santa Monica: Oakonic, 2018

Software Resources

1. <https://www.celtx.com>. Celtx, Most current ed. Free scenewriting software