

THEATRE 342-Screenwriting

May term - 2023

M-F 9:00-12:00, State Farm Hall 108

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Course Objectives:

- To develop a concrete, coherent and logical approach to the craft of dramatic writing for the screen.
- To encourage individual and collaborative creativity through various writing experiences.
- To develop and exercise a discerning, critical awareness by responding truthfully and constructively to the work of fellow writers.

Required Reading:

Selections from:

Writing the Short Film – Pat Cooper, Ken Dancyger

This book is available on Amazon in paperback, (New or Used) at the link below:
(Purchase either the 2nd or 3rd Edition. Either is fine.)

https://www.amazon.com/Writing-Short-Second-Patricia-Cooper-dp-0240803698/dp/0240803698/ref=mt_other?_encoding=UTF8&me=&qid=

Available for free, on-line at:

https://archive.org/stream/Writing_The_Short_Film/Writing_The_Short_Film_djvu.txt

Attendance Policy: In the May term, missing one class is the equivalent of missing an entire week in fall or spring semester. Further, although writing is often a solitary pursuit, this course is not. Thorough preparation for every class, focused involvement in discussions, mutual support and constructive criticism are not only encouraged; they are required. Please be aware that participation constitutes 25% of your final grade. **Only legitimate concerns will constitute an excused absence. Do not miss this class.**

Course Requirements:

(This is a Writing Intensive course. Every three-hour class meeting in a May term course offers content equal to that delivered in a week of class during fall or spring semester. Also, this is your only class during May. Therefore, you will be writing every day, in and out of the classroom.)

Short Screenplay: Each student will conceive, develop, and craft an original, 6-8-page screenplay, inspired by a selected myth, folk tale, or fairy tale, which will be submitted in “second-draft” form, at the final exam, (Friday, 6/2).

Featurette: Each student will conceive, develop and craft an original 20-30 page, dramatic, fictional screenplay, which will be submitted in “second-draft” form, at the final exam, (Friday, 6/2).

Meetings: During the last week of the term, each student must arrange and attend one, 60-minute meeting with the instructor, outside of class, to discuss the development of their screenplays.

Collaboration/Mutual Support: All students must participate as staged-reading actors for in-class readings of classmates’ screenplays. Each student must provide electronic copies, (via Google Docs or Celtx) of their scripts for everyone in the class on days they will be read.

Journals: Each student will keep a journal/portfolio of all writings generated for this class, in a Google Doc, which will be shared with the instructor. It will be “collected” at the Final Exam, (Friday, 6/2). It will be comprised of several types of entries.

- All typed exercises, assignments, and notes generated in and for this class.

- All typed notes and/or commentary on any/all aspects of this class

- Typed notes on screenplay development

- Short Screenplay (In Celtx Studio)

- Featurette Screenplay (In Celtx Studio)

(Any/All HAND WRITTEN JOURNAL CONTENT should be kept in a binder and must be submitted at the final exam -Thursday, 5/27)

Assignments:

Unless otherwise, explicitly stated, all assignments, written and read, are due at the next class meeting.

Late Paper/Presentation Policy: Late papers/assignments and missed presentations are not acceptable in this course. If a paper/assignment is not

presented on time, or a scheduled presentation is missed, the resulting grade will be an F.

Point Distribution:

-Short Screenplay	25%
-Featurette Screenplay	25%
-Participation	25%
-Journal	25%

Course Outline:

(Warning: Adjustments to this schedule may be necessary.)

DAY ONE:

W 5/10

- **READING DUE: Writing the Short Film, pp. 1-36**
- Go over syllabus
- Go over electronic submission platforms and hardcopy submissions.
- Discuss: Textbook
 - Story
 - Journey
 - Ritual Occasion
- **DUE: A FIRST ASSIGNMENT p. 15**
 - Share: First Assignment
 - Discuss: Textbook
 - Images
 - Feeling Tones
 - 3 Openings
 - View: An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge
 - Discuss: scene from Dangerous Liaisons
- **IN-CLASS WRITING**
 - Exercise 1 p. 26
 - Exercise 2 p. 27
- **Assignments: Due Tomorrow**
 - **Second Assignment p. 27**
 - **Exercise 3 p. 34**

DAY 2

R 5/11

- Introduce: CELTX screenwriting program
- Explain: the Master-scene Format
- Stimulating the “mind’s eye”
- Present tense
- **IN-CLASS WRITING**
 - Third Assignment p. 34
 - Exercise 4 p. 35

- Exercise 5 p. 35
- **Assignments: Due Tomorrow**
 - **Fourth Assignment**
 - **Exercise 6 p. 35**
 - **Read: pp. 37-46**

DAY 3

F 5/12

- **READING DUE: pp. 37-46**
- **IN-CLASS WRITING**
 - Do: Fifth Assignment p. 36
- **DISCUSSION**
 - Discuss: Habitual Behavior p. 37
 - Discuss: Action p. 39
 - Discuss: Screenplay Shorthand
 - Discuss: Examples from Student Scripts
- **Assignments: Due Monday**
 - **Sixth Assignment p. 43**
 - **Exercise 7 p. 44**
 - **Seventh Assignment p. 45**
 - **Exercise 8 p. 45**
 - **Eighth Assignment p. 46**
 - **Read: pp. 47-64**

DAY 4

M 5/15

- **READING DUE: pp. 47-64**
- Share: Eighth Assignment
- Discuss: Dramatic Structure p. 47
- Discuss: Definitions p. 48
- Discuss: 8 Questions p. 51
- **IN-CLASS-WORK**
 - Choose a myth or fairy tale and ask the 8 questions
 - Finding a Structure p. 55
 - In-class: Structuring Your Short Screenplay
- **Assignments: Due Tomorrow**
 - **Ninth Assignment p. 63**
 - **Bring: materials for Tenth Assignment to class tomorrow**

DAY 5

T 5/16

- Share/Discuss: Ninth Assignment
- **IN CLASS WRITING: Tenth Assignment**
- Discuss: Tenth Assignment
- **Assignments: Due Tomorrow**

- **Eleventh Assignment**
- **Read: pp 65-78**

DAY 6

W 5/17

- **READING DUE: pp. 65-78**
- **IN-CLASS WRITING:** Revise: Eleventh Assignment
- Share/Discuss: Revised Eleventh Assignment
- **IN-CLASS WRITING:** Exercise 9 p. 67
- Discuss: Exposition p. 68
- **IN-CLASS WRITING:** Exercise 10 p. 70
- **Assignments: Due Tomorrow**
 - **Twelfth Assignment p. 74**
 - **Review your journal p. 74**

DAY 7

R 5/18

- Share/Discuss: Twelfth Assignment
- **IN-CLASS WRITING:** Exercise 11 p. 75
- **Assignments:**
 - **Thirteenth Assignment p. 75**
 - **Exercises 12 and 13 pp. 76-77**

DAY 8

F 5/19

- **DUE: Thirteenth Assignment p. 75**
- **IN-CLASS WRITING:** Fourteenth Assignment p. 77
- Share/Discuss: Fourteenth Assignment
- **Assignments: Due Monday**
 - **Fifteenth Assignment (For short screenplay/fairy tale adaptation)**

DAY 9

M 5/22

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- **Workshop: Short Scripts 1, 2, 3, 4**
- **Assignments: Due Tomorrow**
 - **Fifteenth Assignment (For Featurette/dramatic fiction)**

DAY 10

T 5/23

- **DUE: Fifteenth Assignment (For Featurette/dramatic fiction)**
- **Workshop: Short Scripts 5, 6, 7, 8**

DAY 11

W 5/24

- **Workshop: Short Scripts 9, 10, 11**

DAY 12

R 5/25

- **Workshop: Featurettes 1, 2, 3, 4**

DAY 13

F 5/26

- **Workshop: Featurettes 5, 6, 7, 8**

DAY 14

M 5/29

- **Workshop: Featurettes 9, 10, 11**

DAY 15

T 5/30

- TBD

DAY 16

W 5/31

- TBD

DAY 17

R 6/1

- TBD

DAY 18 - FINAL EXAM

F 6/2

DUE:

- **SECOND DRAFT OF SHORT SCREENPLAY**
- **SECOND DRAFT OF FEATURETTE**
- **JOURNAL**