

Tompkins Cortland Community College
Master Course Syllabus

Course Discipline and Number: ENGL 200
Course Title: Screenwriting

Year: 2019-2020
Credit Hours: 3

Attendance Policy: *To maintain good grades, regular attendance in class is necessary. Absence from class is considered a serious matter and absence never excuses a student from class work. It is the responsibility of all instructors to distribute reasonable attendance policies in writing during the first week of class. Students are required to comply with the attendance policy set by each of their instructors. Students are not penalized if they are unable to attend classes or participate in exams on particular days because of religious beliefs, in accordance with Chapter 161, Section 224-a of the Education Law of the State of New York. Students who plan to be absent from classroom activity for religious reasons should discuss the absence in advance with their instructors. See college catalog for more information.*

Services for Students with Disabilities: *It is the College's policy to provide, on an individual basis, appropriate academic adjustments for students with disabilities, which may affect their ability to fully participate in program or course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Coordinator of Access and Equity Services, to discuss their particular need for accommodations. All course materials are available in alternate formats upon request.*

Course Description

Creative Writing Course: This course introduces students to the fundamentals of developing and writing screenplays for film and television. Story analysis, concept development, the writing process, and script format are emphasized. Other topics include networking, marketing, and screenwriting resources. ENGL 200 fulfills the SUNY General Education requirement in the Arts. Prerequisites: Prior completion or concurrent enrollment in ENGL 100; RDNG 116 if required by placement testing.

3 Cr. (3 Lec.) Fall and spring semesters.

Course Context/Audience

This is a required course in the screenwriting concentration of the Creative Writing Certificate program and the screenwriting concentration of the Creative Writing A. A. program. This is also a required course in the Digital Cinema A.S. Program. The course can be used by students in other programs to satisfy an English, liberal arts, humanities, or an unrestricted elective requirement. In addition, ENGL 200 fulfills the SUNY General Education requirement in the Arts. Students with a general interest in cinema, creative writing, screenwriting, video/film production, visual media, and the creative process will find this course of interest.

Basic Skills/Entry Level Expectations

Writing: WC College level writing skills are required. See course co-requisites or pre-requisites.

Math: M0 Course requires very little or no math.

Reading: R3 Course may be taken concurrently with RDNG 116.

Course Goals

This course introduces students to

1. the characteristics of story ideas that are appropriate for film and television
2. writing for the camera
3. theme, setting, plot, character, and dialogue
4. the structures, formats, and conventions of feature film screenplays and teleplays
5. the processes involved in planning, developing, and writing a story for the screen.

6. screenwriting as a career.

Course Objectives/Topics

Objective/Topic	% Course
Writing process including planning, organization, and revision	5%
Developing story concepts and exploring theme	10%
Story structure	10%
Character	10%
Dialogue	10%
Stage directions (writing action and description)	10%
Visual story telling	10%
Script format for feature films and television	5%
Networking and marketing	15%
Screenwriting resources	5%
Introduction to teleplay and webisode development and structure	10%

General Education Goals - Critical Thinking & Social/Global Awareness

CRITICAL THINKING OUTCOMES	HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)

<p>Students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ develop meaningful questions to address problems or issues. ➤ gather, interpret, and evaluate relevant sources of information. ➤ reach informed conclusions and solutions. ➤ consider analytically the viewpoints of self and others. 	<p>Students develop, analyze, critique, write, and revise stories for the screen. As they work through these processes, students learn to develop meaningful questions and define and solve screenwriting problems. The following are examples of meaningful questions about a fledgling story concept: what visual elements of this concept make it more suitable for the screen than a stage play? How can the concept be opened up, visually, for the screen? What story archetype does this concept follow?</p> <p>When students develop their story concepts, they must explore where their concepts fit in the tradition of screen stories. For example, has this story been told in other films, and if so, how? Also, students must gather, interpret, and evaluate information as they research and create settings, characters, themes, dialogue, and plot. “Research” for a setting might involve reading about a time and place or visiting a location. For example, to write a story set in a bowling alley, a screenwriter could visit a bowling alley and learn about the customs, jargon, visual imagery, and other elements that make up an authentic setting.</p> <p>Students will have opportunities to analyze, evaluate and synthesize their own ideas and the ideas of others in course readings, discussions, film clips, their own writings, the writings of their peers, and pitch sessions. In addition, students collaborate on in-class projects.</p>
<p>SOCIAL/GLOBAL AWARENESS OUTCOMES</p>	<p>HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students will begin to understand how their lives are shaped by the complex world in which they live. ➤ Students will understand that their actions have social, economic and environmental consequences. 	<p>Students begin the course by considering which screen stories resonate with them personally, and why. Next, they study films (including foreign films) with similar themes and archetypes. Studying universal story archetypes helps students understand how people in various cultures, places, and time periods have used the art of cinema to explore the human condition. Also, we discuss social responsibility issues that artists and writers grapple with as they develop cinematic stories.</p> <p>Students are introduced to the business of screenwriting and how financial and legal concerns shape film projects in today’s changing world of film development, production, and distribution. Examples of current topics include new film distribution approaches, the role of social networking in film promotion, and the making of “green” films.</p>

Instructional Methods

Lecture, discussion, and in-class writing should be the principle modes of instruction.

Methods of Assessment/Evaluation

Method	% Course Grade
Student screenplay, Act I (25 pages) for feature-length screenplay	30%
Step outline for student screenplay (feature-length)	30%
In-class assignments and homework	30%
Class participation (critiques of student work and discussion of study films)	10%

Text(s)

Required:

Snyder, Blake. Save the Cat! The Last Book on Screenwriting You'll Ever Need. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions, 2005.

Other:

Screenwriting software (Final Draft or Celtx).

Access to screenplays and videos for film studies

Access to email accounts and the internet

Bibliography

Adams, Max. The Screenwriter's Survival Guide – or Guerrilla Meeting Tactics and Other Acts of War. New York: Warner Books, 2001.

Aronson, Linda. Screenwriting Updated – New (and Conventional) Ways of Writing for the Screen. Los Angeles: Silman-James, 2000.

Atchity, Kenneth and Chi-Li Wong. Writing Treatments that Sell - How to create and Market Your Story Ideas to the Motion Picture and TV Industry. New York: Henry Holt, 1997.

Briemer, Stephen, F. The Screenwriter's Legal Guide. 2nd ed. New York: Allworth, 1999.

Cole, Hills R., Jr. and Judith H. Haag. The Complete Guide to Standard Script Formats Part I-Screenplays. North Hollywood: CMC Publishing, 1991.

Field, Syd. Four Screenplays: Studies in the American Screenplay. New York: Dell, 1994.

Field, Syd. Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting. New York: Dell, 1982.

Field, Syd. The Screenwriter's Problem Solver: How to Recognize, Identify, and Define Screenwriting Problems. New York: Dell, 1998.

Gillis, D.B. The Screenwriter Within – How to Turn the Movie in Your Head Into a Salable Screenplay. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2000.

Goldman, William. Which Lie Did I Tell: More Adventures in the Screen Trade. New York: Vintage, 2000.

Goldman, William. William Goldman: Four Screenplays With Essays: Marathon Man, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, The Princess Bride, Misery. New York: Applause Books, 1995.

Hunter, Lew. Lew Hunter's Screenwriting 434. New York: Perigee, 1993.

Inglesias, Karl, and Lew Hunter. The 101 Habits of Highly Successful Screenwriters: Insider's Secrets from Hollywood's Top Writers. Holbrook, Mass: Adams, 2001.

Kenworthy, Christopher. Master Shots – 100 Advanced Camera Techniques to Get an Expensive Look on Your Low Budget Movie. Studio City, CA: Michael Weise Productions, 2009.

Leach, Jennifer. 500 Ways to Beat the Hollywood Script Reader – Writing the Screenplay the Reader Will Recommend. New York: Fireside Books, 1999.

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- Litwak, Mark. Dealmaking in the Film and Television Industry: From Negotiations to Final Contracts. 2nd Ed. Los Angeles: Silman-James Press, 2002.
- Lucey, Paul. Story Sense: Writing Story and Script for Feature Films and Television. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996.
- Martell, Bill. The Secrets of Action Screenwriting. Studio City, CA: First Strike Productions, ©2000.
- Mernit, Billy. Writing the Romantic Comedy. New York: Harper Resource, 2000.
- McKee, Robert. Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting. New York: Regan Books, 1997.
- Rabiger, Michael. Directing – Film Techniques and Aesthetics. 4th Ed. New York: Focal, 2008.
- Seger, Linda. Advanced Screenwriting: Raising Your Script to the Academy Award Level. Los Angeles: Silman-James Press, 2003.
- Seger, Linda. The Art of Adaption: Turning Fact and Fiction into Film. New York: Henry Holt, 1992.
- Seger, Linda. Creating Unforgettable Characters. New York: Henry Holt, 1990.
- Seger, Linda. Making a Good Script Great: A Creativity Workbook for Screenwriters. Los Angeles: Silman-James, 1999.
- Snyder, Blake. Save the Cat Goes to the Movies. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions, 2007.
- Snyder, Blake. Save the Cat Strikes Back...More Trouble for Screenwriters to Get Into – and Out of. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions, 2009.
- Snyder, Blake. Save the Cat! The Last Book on Screenwriting You'll Ever Need. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions, 2005.
- Suppa, Ron. Real Screenwriting – Strategies and Stories from the Trenches. Boston: Thomson, 2006.
- Trottier, David. The Screenwriter's Bible: A Complete Guide to Writing, Formatting and Selling Your Script. 4th Ed. Los Angeles: Silman-James, 2005.
- Van Still, Jennifer. Cinematic Storytelling – the 100 Most Powerful Film Conventions Every Filmmaker Must Know. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions, 2005.
- Vogler, Christopher. The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers. 2nd Ed. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions, 1998.
- Voytilla, Stuart. Myth and the Movies: Discovering the Mythic Structure of 50 Unforgettable Films. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions, 1999.
- Walter, Richard. Screenwriting: The Art, Craft, and Business of Film and Television. New York: Penguin, 1992.

Other Learning Resources

Audiovisual: Study Films: instructor selects appropriate study films

Electronic

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences www.oscars.org

Creative Screenwriting <http://www.creativescreenwriting.com>

Directors Guild of America <http://www.dga.org>

Entertainment Careers <http://www.entertainmentcareers.net>

Film Festivals <http://www.filmfestivals.com>

Hollywood Reporter <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com>

Internet Movie Database <http://www.imdb.com>

Internet Movie Script Database <http://www.imsdb.com>

Moviebytes

<http://www.moviebytes.com>

Producer's Guild <http://www.producersguild.com>

Script Magazine <http://www.scriptmag.com>

Sundance Institute <http://www.sundance.org>

Variety

<http://www.variety.com>

Walt Disney Writing Fellowship Program <http://www.abctalentdevelopment.com>

Women in Film <http://www.wif.org>

Wordplayer <http://www.wordplayer.com>

Writers Guild of America <http://www.wga.org>

Writers Guild of America <http://www.wgae.org>

Other: No resources specified