Tompkins Cortland Community College

Master Course Syllabus

Course Discipline and Number: ENGL 274 **Year: 2023-2024**

Course Title: Marketing the Screenplay **Credit Hours: 1**

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: Examines approaches screenwriters use to get their work read by the film industry. Major topics include networking, querying, and pitching. Students develop an understanding of how agencies, management companies, production companies, studios, entertainment attorneys, and writer unions interact. Writers' groups, conferences, film festivals, fellowships and competitions, and other resources are discussed. Legal concerns including copyright and wga registration, release forms, and option contracts are explored. Treatments, loglines, query letters, cover letters, and other tools are developed. Prerequisites: ENGL 102; prior completion or concurrent enrollment in RDNG 116 if required by placement testing. 1 Cr. (1 Lec.) Spring semester.

Course Context/Audience

This course is intended for students taking courses in the screenwriting concentration of the Creative Writing A.A. degree and Certificate programs. The course may also be of interest to the college community.

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

Students taking this course:

a) Complete hands-on activities designed to help them market their screenplays to appropriate film industry entities.

b) Understand the basic legal and business concerns faced by screenwriters.

c) To become familiar with resources used by screenwriters.

d) To become familiar with how screenwriters interact with agents, management companies, production companies, studios, and entertainment attorneys.

Course Objectives/Topics

Objective/Topic	% Course
Marketing tools (queries, treatments, loglines, pitches, meetings)	40%
Networking (conferences, film festivals, writers groups)	15%
Legal and business concerns (options, copyright and wga registration, release forms, representation)	15%
Resources (print and online, competitions, fellowships, workshops)	15%
Process (from script to screen)	15%

General Education Goals - Critical Thinking & Social/Global Awareness

Critical Thinking Outcomes	How does the course address Critical Thinking (include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used.)
➢ Students will be able to develop meaningful questions to address problems or issues. ➢ Students will be able to gather, interpret, and evaluate relevant sources of information. ➢ Students will be able to reach informed conclusions and solutions. ➢ Students will be able to consider analytically the viewpoints of self and others.	Students gather, interpret, and evaluate information about the film industry as they develop the tools necessary to submit their screenplays to the film industry and explore screenwriting and filmmaking resources. Students learn how to interact with film industry entities by identifying appropriately targeted companies to query about their screenplays. In addition, they participate in role-playing activities such as pitch meetings. Learning to pitch involves learning what it is about a story that resonates with a particular audience. In order to pitch well, students must consider the viewpoints of others and self.

Social/Global Awareness Outcomes	How does the course address Social/Global Awareness (include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used)
➢ Students will begin to understand how their lives shape and are shaped by the complex world in which they live. ➢ Students will understand that their actions have social, economic, and environmental consequences.	Students consider universal story archetypes as they learn how to present their work to producers, agents, managers, and other film industry entities. Understanding how people in various cultures and places use the art of cinema to explore the human condition prepares students to submit their work to a global filmmaking industry. Today screenwriters have the opportunity to collaborate with filmmakers around the world. It's not at all unusual for an indie film project to be co-written by screenwriters in different countries, shot in another country, edited in another, and scored in another with the help of digital collaboration tools. Navigating this global artistic community is part of learning how to "market a screenplay." Students study 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. Also, we discuss social responsibility issues that artists and writers grapple with as they develop cinematic stories.

Instructional Methods
Lecture, discussion, collaborative activities, writing activities.

Methods of Assessment/Evaluation

Method	% Course Grade
Development of marketing tools (query letter, logline, pitch, etc.)	40%
Short response papers (legal and business concerns, script to screen process, resources)	25%
Class participation (collaborative activities, including role-playing)	20%
Development of targeted submission list for screenplay (agents, managers, production companies, or other appropriate entities)	15%

Text(s)
Recommended:

Suppa, Ron. Real Screenwriting:Strategies and Stories from the Trenches. Boston: Thomson, 2006.

Additional readings provided by instructor.

Bibliography

Association of Writers & Writing Programs. AWP Director's Handbook A Compendium of Guidelines and Information for Directors of Creative Writing Programs. 2003. © 5 Nov. 2004.

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

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.

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

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

Litwak, Mark. Dealmaking in the Film and Television Industry: From Negotiations to Final Contracts. 2nd ed. Los Angeles: Silman-James Press, © 2002.

Trottier, David. A Complete Guide to Writing, Formatting, and Selling Your Script. Los Angeles: Silman-James, © 1995.

Other Learning Resources

Audiovisual
No resources specified

Electronic
Library databases (Proquest, Infotrac, Worldcat, and others) used for research.

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
Internet and email access.

Online access to Hollywood Reporter, Variety, Creative Screenwriting, Script Magazine, NYScreenwriter, the Hollywood Creative Directory, and others.

Appropriate instructional technology including VHS/DVD use, internet access and projection, and computer lab access (word processing and screenplay format software).