EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION

FILM AND VIDEO
School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design
Department of Cinema and Media Arts

FA / FILM 5110 3.0 SECTION A
SCREENWRITING
FALL 2017 / WINTER 2018

Last Modified Date: 08/23/2017

COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Screenwriting. A required course that analyzes the writing of fictional and non-fictional scripts from the perspectives of script idea, story, character, dialogue and background atmosphere and includes practical assignments in scriptwriting and student presentations of work in progress.

INSTRUCTOR(S)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Section / Format / Term</th>
<th>Contact Email</th>
<th>Contact Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wiseman, Howard M.</td>
<td>Sec. A / STDO / F</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hwiseman@yorku.ca">hwiseman@yorku.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SPECIAL FEATURES

FA/FILM 5110 3.0 A - Course Outline
Graduate Screenwriting Fall 2017 – 12 weeks
Course Director: Howard Wiseman
Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
CFT Rm. 239
Course Webpage:
HYPERLINK
Moodle@yorku.ca
Film 5110 (Passport York ID necessary for access)
Course Director: Howard Wiseman
Office: CFT 229
e-mail: hwiseman@yorku.ca
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30- 2:15 p.m. or Thurs. 1-2

TOPICS AND CONCEPTS

This course will serve as an advanced overview of the major elements of screenwriting craft building towards thesis proposals – primarily dramatic/fiction thesis proposals. It is geared towards both Screenwriting Majors (feature film proposals) and Production Majors (short fiction proposals and scripts). Our focus will be on the students’ original work: dialogue and story exercises, and in evolving at least two potential story ideas for the thesis, then focusing on one.

Other areas to be explored: adaptation, short dialogue-based scripts, premises for short and feature length film stories, screenplay pages, outlines for shorts and features, and completed short screenplays or in-depth feature outlines. These short screenplay and feature film outlines will serve as significant steps in the development of your thesis proposal.
The class will be conducted through a series of lectures and discussions, as well as intensive writing workshops, story-editing sessions, and ongoing writing assignments. The lectures will be supplemented by screenings of shorts and feature film excerpts.

Each student will, on a regular basis, share their ongoing writing in smaller groups. Students are expected to have already written short screenplays and/or fiction story-based treatments, to be familiar with the screenplay form, and to have a screenwriting software program ready to use by the second week of class. This is not an introductory course.

Objectives
This course intends to guide emerging screenwriters toward a deeper level of craft and process, and to expose them to the professional world of screenwriting. Students will learn to conceptualize and develop ideas, develop a variety of characters, write a variety of scenes, explore some ‘true-life,’ fictional, and in some cases more experimental stories, as well as the process of outlining an original short film and feature stories (for screenwriting majors). They will be exposed to the advanced building blocks of screenwriting through hands-on experience with dramatic conflict, plot, structure, character development, theme, scene making, and dialogue. They will also be exposed to the professional environment of a working screenwriter and of the film and television industry.

Students will undertake a series of assignments and exercises that will help them explore the above components finally focus on developing an original screen story and thesis proposal.

LIST OF LEARNING OUTCOMES AND EXAMPLES OF

Required Texts:
John Truby “The Anatomy of Story”
Robert McKee’s “Story”
"Writing Short Films” by Linda Cowgill

Recommended:
Amnon Buchbinder’s “The Way Of The Screenwriter.”
Blake Snider’s “Save the Cat”
Linda Seger’s “Advanced Screenwriting”

GRADED ASSESSMENT

Grading Breakdown:  For SW majors only
Adapted Short Screenplay (from a short story) Sept. 26 - 10%
(Class #3)
Original Short Screenplay Outline (Class #4) ----- ungraded
Original Short Screenplay (10-15 pages) Oct.10 - 15%
(Class #5 )
Two Feature Story Treatments (5 pages each) Oct 24 - 15%
(Class #7)
One First Act outline and screenplay pages (24-30 pages) Nov. 14 - 20%
(class #9)
Feature Outline (detailed 10-12 page outline in 3 acts) Dec. 5 - 30%
(class #12)
Participation 10%

For Production Majors only
Adapted Short Screenplay (from a short story)                  Sept. 26 – 10%
(Class #3)

Original Short Screenplay Outline (Class #4)                    ---- ungraded

One Original Short Screenplay (10-15 pages)                  Oct. 10 15%
(Class #5)

Original Short Detailed Outlines (5 pages each)               Oct. 24  15%
(Class #7)

Second Original Short Screenplay (10-15 pages)              Nov. 7   20%
(Class #9)

Third Original Screenplay (15-20 pages)                          Dec. 5   30%
(Class #12)

Participation                                                                               10

Evaluation of creative materials will be based on the student’s handling of creative and technical elements. These include the creation, execution, and compelling nature of story, plot and character, strength of dramatic structure and effective use of accepted screenplay format.

Each assignment will be graded on the basis of creativity/originality, content, mastery of the form from lessons learned in class, language skills, and clarity of communication.

Students are expected to fully participate in all workshops and classes. All submitted work must be properly formatted, typed, proofed and stapled, and submitted in hard copy. Marks will be deducted for poor presentation, spelling and grammatical errors and lateness.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Important information

- Attendance at classes is mandatory. Staying away from class to work on an assignment is **not** a valid excuse.

- Classes begin promptly at 2:30 so plan to arrive a few minutes early. Late arrivals are disruptive. Arriving more than 15 minutes late will not count towards attendance for that class.

- Written work is to be computer-printed in suitable font, presented free of errors in spelling, grammar and format. Spell Check can only do so much; make a habit of proofing your work!

- Unless otherwise indicated, assignments should be formatted as follows: double-spaced, 12 pt. font, ragged right margin. Pages should always be Numbered. **A Cover Sheet clearly indicating the Student's Name, Course Name and Number, and Assignment number/Title, is also required. Always Staple pages so that they are not lost.**

- The screenplay assignments must be submitted in correct screenplay format. For students not in possession of suitable screenwriting software, software can be purchased from Data Integrity in the York Lanes Mall with a discount. Also, online, ScreenPro97 (http://www.passarella.com/screenpro/details.html). You can buy the Movie Magic Screenwriter program on line with student I.D. http://dramatica.stores.yahoo.net/movmagscreen4.html
• **Late assignments** will not be accepted, other than under extraordinary circumstances and by prompt arrangement with the course director. Assignments received later than the due date will be penalized (one-half letter grade per day that the assignment is late), with a grade of F after one week. Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness or compassionate grounds will require supporting documentation (e.g., a doctor’s letter). We have a very tight syllabus; those who miss assignments will quickly fall behind. Students who fail to hand in assignments on time will also miss out on significant feedback in the development of their material.

• **Pacing**

The structure of the assignment schedule assumes that students will be working steadily on the development of their story throughout the year. Beginning work on assignments at the last minute will yield poor results. There will be a Course Materials Fee of $10.

**Submission of Work:**

Work is to be submitted as a hard copy, in person at the start of class on the due date. Email submissions will not be accepted. If in-person submission is not possible, work may be left in the course director’s mailbox in CFT 229, (please don’t slide them under the door as they may get trampled or lost). Your work is not considered received until it is in the course director’s hands, and no responsibility is assumed by the course director or the department for work so submitted. Also, BACKUP YOUR WORK at every stage. Don’t lose your script because you didn’t create a back-up copy.

**A Note on Email:**

The course director will use email or Moodle when necessary to communicate information to the whole class, (make sure I have your current email), but prefers not to engage in individual correspondence other than in exceptional circumstances. Please make use of office hours; face-to-face communication is preferred. Desperate night-before-due-date emails are discouraged.

**Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism is a serious issue. It is also damaging to yourself as a writer and a student, as well as being grounds for severe academic penalties, as indicated in the undergraduate catalogue. Website: http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity/students.htm

The Instructor requires that each class member has taken the tutorial associated with Academic Honesty.

**IMPORTANT COURSE INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS**

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information:

- Academic Integrity Website http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity
- Accessibility/Disability Services: course requirement accommodation for students with disabilities, including physical, medical, learning and psychiatric disabilities www.yorku.ca/cds
- Religious Observance Accommodation
  https://w2prod.sis.yorku.ca/Apps/WebObjects/cdm.woa/wa/regobs

• Student Conduct http://www.yorku.ca/univsec/policies/document.php?document=82 Please note that
this information is subject to periodic update. For the most current information, please go to the CCAS
webpage (see Reports, Initiatives, Documents):

Many courses utilize Moodle, York University’s course website system. If your course is using Moodle,
click here to access it.
Moodle @ York University