EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION

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

FA / FILM 3120 6.0 SECTION A
FEATURE SCREENWRITING I
FALL 2018 / WINTER 2019

COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Focuses on the initial stages of writing a feature-length screenplay. Explores idea of development, story groundwork and principles of story structure. Leads students through craft challenges in the creation of a fully developed story outline. The first of two year-long courses. Prerequisite: FA/FILM 2120 6.0; or FA/FILM 2121 6.00 and permission of the Film Department.

Focuses on the initial stages of writing a feature-length screenplay. Explores idea of development, story groundwork and principles of story structure. Leads students through craft challenges in the creation of a fully developed story outline. The first of two year-long courses. Prerequisite: FA/FILM 2120; or FA/FILM 2121 and permission of the Film Department.

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>Dorey, Maureen</td>
<td>Sec. A / STDO / Y</td>
<td><a href="mailto:doreym@yorku.ca">doreym@yorku.ca</a></td>
<td>4167388643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buchbinder, Amnon</td>
<td>Sec. A / STDO / Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SPECIAL FEATURES

FA/FILM 3120 6.0 is an intermediate screenwriting workshop, the first of two courses that focus on feature film screenwriting, with an emphasis on story development.

Writing a screenplay is like creating a living world. A concept takes hold: intangible, ephemeral, the spark of life. But to develop it, one needs a gut understanding of the dynamics a story world requires, the tools to shape that world, and the will to persevere in the writing. Perhaps the most important ingredient is the passion which brings the world to life, hiding all traces of its fabrication, inspiring the filmmaking team’s deepest commitment and capturing the audience’s belief. It takes more than one screenplay to really master this process, but much can be achieved with commitment, not only to this course but also to your own development as a screenwriter.

This course’s focus is not on the entire process of writing a screenplay, but on its most difficult and crucial aspect: story development. We will examine in depth the writer’s conceptual toolkit. We will treat the classroom as a collaborative writers’ room, while still privileging the individual process of inspiration.

The course will require you to engage with multiple potential screen stories over 24 weeks. Each student will develop multiple story concepts to an elementary stage. Then, the class will collaboratively develop five of these story concepts. Finally, students will individually develop their own feature film story to short treatment stage.

The course will proceed through four stages.
1) We will examine the tools of story structure as applied by feature film screenwriters. Students are expected to gain a proficient understanding of 15 key tools of structure and will submit an analysis of a feature film of their choice to identify the operation of these tools. (Sept 13 – Oct. 25)

2) Students will submit multiple story concepts. We will work with these collaboratively to test their viability, identify issues and strengths, and to deepen our understanding of the tools of structure. (Nov. 1 – 29)

3) Selecting 5 story concepts out of the pool submitted, we will collaboratively develop full story structures for these. (Jan 3 – Feb 14)

4) Each student will fully develop a story concept of their choice. (Feb 28 – Mar 28)

It takes breakthrough to become a screenwriter, and breakthrough takes hard work and persistence through internal obstacles and moments of utter uncertainty. Be ready for that. Your full and patient immersion in this course will be worth the work of many screenplays written independently.

GRADED ASSESSMENT

Evaluation

Evaluation is based on assessment of both creative and technical components in the assignments. The “studio” assignments reflect in-class and moodle contributions to collaborative story analysis and development.

Assignment/Grading Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 27/Oct 18</td>
<td>Story Analysis</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 25/Nov 1</td>
<td>Story Proposals</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 29</td>
<td>Studio Contribution, term 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 14</td>
<td>Studio Contribution, term 2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 28</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2nd dates refer to deadline for follow-up discussion in Moodle)

The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments will bear a letter grade designation.

(For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar - http://calendars.registrar.yorku.ca/pdfs/ug2004cal/calug04_5_acadinfo.pdf)

Required Text:


Recommended Text:

Read screenplays, lots: <www.script-o-rama.com>
Additional readings and/or film viewings may be assigned or recommended during the course.

**Important information**
- Attendance at classes is mandatory. Classes begin promptly at 2:30 so plan to arrive a few minutes early. Late arrivals are disruptive.
- Assignments are to be submitted via course Moodle or in hard copy, as indicated. Assignments will not be accepted by email.
- 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! Upload to moodle as pdf.
- Late assignments will not be accepted, other than under extraordinary circumstances and by prompt arrangement with the course director. When late work is accepted, a grade penalty will be applied (except in medical situations) of one half letter grade for first day and another half letter grade for every three days thereafter.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**INFORMATION FROM THE UNIVERSITY**

- Last date to drop a full year (Y) course without receiving a grade: **February 8, 2019**

**Academic Policies / Information**
The Senate Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy Committee (ASCP) provides a Student Information Sheet that includes:
- York's Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures / Academic Integrity Web site
- Access/Disability
- Ethics Review Process for Research Involving Human Participants
- Religious Observance Accommodation
- Student Code of Conduct
- http://secretariat.info.yorku.ca/files/CourseInformationForStudentsAugust20121.pdf
- Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities
- Alternate Exam and Test Scheduling
- Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy
The Senate Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy stipulates that (a) the grading scheme (i.e. kinds and weights of assignments, essays, exams, etc.) be announced, and be available in writing, within the first two weeks of class, and that, (b) under normal circumstances, graded feedback worth at least 15% of the final grade for Fall, Winter or Summer Term, and 30% for ‘full year’ courses offered in the Fall/Winter Term be received by students in all courses prior to the final withdrawal date from a course without receiving a grade.
- Important University Sessional Dates (you will find classes and exams start/end dates, reading/co-curricular week, add/drop deadlines, holidays, University closings and more. http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/enrol/dates/index.htm
- Manage my Academic record
  http://mvacademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/
- "20% Rule"
No examinations or tests collectively worth more than 20% of the final grade in a course will be given during the final 14 calendar days of classes in a term. The exceptions to the rule are classes which regularly meet
Friday evenings or on Saturday and/or Sunday at any time, and courses offered in the compressed summer terms.

Final course grades may be adjusted to conform to Program or Faculty grades distribution profiles.

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

Moodle @ York University