EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION

FILM AND VIDEO
School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design
Department of Cinema and Media Arts
FA / FILM 4120 6.0 SECTION A
FEATURE SCREENWRITING II
FALL 2019 / WINTER 2020

Last Modified Date: 09/25/2019

COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Develops the student's existing story outlines into full feature-length screenplays and through several rewrites. The course will also examine the realities of working as a writer in the Canadian and international film industries. Prerequisite: Grade of B+ or better in FA/FILM 3120 6.00.

In this course students develop their existing story outlines into full feature-length screenplays and through several rewrites. The course will also examine the realities of working as a writer in the Canadian and international film industries. Prerequisite: Grade of "B+" or better in FILM 3120.

INSTRUCTOR(S)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Section / Format / Term</th>
<th>Contact Email</th>
<th>Contact Phone</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dorey, Maureen</td>
<td>Sec. A / BLEN / Y</td>
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<td>4167388643</td>
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SPECIAL FEATURES

FA/FILM 4120 6.0 Y involves the writing of a feature-length screenplay through two drafts. A commitment to an existing story outline or treatment, and the will and skill necessary to fully craft this into a screenplay, is required. The course will parallel the creative and technical process of developing a complete feature film screenplay. Our emphasis will be on the practical methods screenwriters use to maximize meaningful impact and emotional involvement in the stories they tell. The spirit of the class will be one of creative adventure. The rewards for us all will depend a great deal on your own enthusiasm and commitment.

Complete development of this screenplay and a focus on the techniques of rewriting will be supplemented by story analysis of peer work, and preparation of pitch material for further story ideas. These writing and development activities will be supported by in-class discussion and investigation of films that illuminate screenwriting and filmmaking technique and inspire the writer. The course should expand your skills and imagination as a writer, but also as a reader, analyst and story editor. As a class and in small teams, we will look at elements of screenwriting and techniques to create a screenplay that is more than the treatment promised.

The first draft of the screenplay will be written in the first term and then in the second term we will move on to the critical process of re-writing. The final classes will be focused on the role of the screenwriter in the industry, and students will pitch their projects to an industry panel.

A simple course Moodle will be used for posting and sharing work, as well as for grading purposes, and administering any online portions of the course.

Students will be encouraged to read one another’s work, and will be assigned to teams of 3 that will be responsible for participating in one another’s script development, particularly in the second term.
**Prerequisite / Co-requisite:** FA/Film 3120 6.0 (for 4120). If the student is not using a treatment from 3120, the same requirements and deadlines will apply. Students are required to keep pace with the schedule.

**TOPICS AND CONCEPTS**

The first term will focus on refining the events of the core conflict of a treatment into the structural framework of a feature film script. Students will either review the treatment they developed in 3120 to intensify its action and extend its meaning, or, if beginning with a new treatment, to accelerate its development to provide an early foundation for a first draft script.

Classes in this term will focus on the details of the turning points and shape of each individual act of the script to assist in the translation of treatment to script. This would include exploration of dialogue tools, as well as examination of scripts as they compare to their screen incarnations.

The second term will focus on the process of rewriting and further developing scripts, as well as the process of assessing the written script’s elements and providing considered, analytic feedback to writers. Students will undertake detailed analysis of two other writers’ works and have extensive meetings to share their thoughts. Additionally, the course director will look at each script in group discussions to draw out insights for specific scripts and general instruction. Clinics will be held to examine key or problematic scenes as chosen by the writers, and will include examples of comparable scenes from finished films. Finally, throughout the year, students will use the practice of pitching to demonstrate their changing understanding of their work and its appeal, culminating in a pitching session with industry professionals.

An expanded version of this outline, including anticipated schedule, will be provided to students on Moodle.

**LIST OF LEARNING OUTCOMES AND EXAMPLES OF**

The specific objectives of the course are that students will by able to:
- complete and fully rewrite a feature-length screenplay of professional calibre
- develop and strengthen a distinctive writing voice
- skillfully balance the rigours of screenwriting craft and their own inspiration
- apply story editing techniques constructively to serve the intention and inspiration of the other writer.
- Identify the role of the screenwriter in the industry

**GRADED ASSESSMENT**

4. **Graded Assessment**

**Assignments, Due Dates, and Grading Percentages:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 23</td>
<td>Revised Outline</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 21, Nov 4, Nov 18, Dec 2</td>
<td>First Draft (graded when complete)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 20</td>
<td>Story Analyses</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 3</td>
<td>Rewrite Plan</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 30</td>
<td>Revised full draft</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 30</td>
<td>Pitches</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**TOTAL** 100%
Final grade may be rounded by up to +/- 15% (accounting for exceptional course contribution completion offailure to complete non-graded assignments, attendance, late arrival/early departure, in-class contributions, etc.)

Last date to drop this course without receiving a grade: February 3, 2020

Grading, Assignment Submission,

Grading: 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 and tests* will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 90, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.)

(For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar - https://calendars.students.yorku.ca/2019-2020/programs/film

Assignment Submission: Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Accordingly, assignments for this course must be received on the due date specified for the assignment. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE FOR THE DEC. 4 DEADLINE OF THE FIRST DRAFT. Whatever you have on Dec. 4 IS your first draft. Assignments are to be handed in electronically via the course Moodle site.

Lateness Penalty: Assignments received later than the due date will be penalized by 2 marks out of 100, per day, up to a maximum of 5 days. After that, assignments will not be accepted unless there has been a conversation with the course director. Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., may be entertained by the Course Instructor but will require supporting documentation (e.g., a doctor’s letter).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please make note of when the class meets. Go to the course Moodle site for more information and updates on any information provided here.

Submission of Work:

Work is to be submitted as a soft copy, on Moodle, on the due date. For specific classes, work must be submitted prior to the start of the class on that day, as it will be used in the class. Email submissions are the instructor’s first choice, unless there are technical problems. Students may also be responsible for providing their work to fellow students. Please do not submit material directly to the instructor in hard copy or via personal e-mail. Work should not be left in the department’s drop-box. Your work is not considered received until the course director has confirmed receipt in writing. No responsibility is assumed by the course director or the department for work submitted in any other fashion. Please remember to BACK UP YOUR WORK at every stage. Don’t lose your script because you didn’t create a back-up copy.

Written work is to be computer-generated in suitable font, presented free of errors -- 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: 1.5 spacing, 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.

Screenplay assignments must be submitted in correct screenplay format.

Lateness penalties:
Late assignments will not be accepted, other than under extraordinary circumstances and by arrangement with the course director before the due date. **Assignments received later than the due date may 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.

**Attendance at classes is mandatory, for your benefit as well as your fellow writers. Staying away from class to work on an assignment is not a valid excuse. Classes begin promptly so plan to arrive few minutes early. Late arrivals are disruptive.**

Assignments are to be submitted via course Moodle or via e-mail, if there is any technological issue with Moodle. Assignments will not be accepted in hard copy, except in rare cases where the hard copy is needed for sharing in 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! Upload to moodle as pdf.

**A Note on Email and class decorum:**

The course director will use email and Moodle to communicate information to the whole class, (please make sure I have your current email). Please make use of office hours; face-to-face communication is preferred. Desperate night-before-due-date emails are also discouraged.

Last date to add a course without instructor permission (Y): September 17, 2019  
Last date to add a course with instructor permission (Y): October 22, 2019  
Last date to drop a fall term (F) course without receiving a grade: November 8, 2018  
Last date to drop a winter term (W) course without receiving a grade: March 13, 2019  
Last date to drop a full year (Y) course without receiving a grade: February 3, 2019

**ACADEMIC POLICIES/INFORMATION**

- The Senate Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy (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](http://secretariat.info.yorku.ca/files/CourseInformationForStudentsAugust20121.pdf)

Additional information:

- 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
  
• "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