EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION
FILM AND VIDEO
School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design
Department of Cinema and Media Arts
FA / FILM 2120 6.0 SECTION A
SCREENWRITING FUNDAMENTALS (PRODUCTION)
FALL 2020 / WINTER 2021

Last Modified Date: 08/20/2020

COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Introduces the craft of screenwriting, taking a general view of screenwriting and its relationship to filmmaking, storytelling and writing. This course is a prerequisite for all upper-level screenwriting courses.

Prerequisites: Film majors: FA/FILM 1010 3.00 or permission of committee. Open to Non-majors by permission of committee.

Prerequisites: Film and video majors: FA/FILM 1010 3.00 or permission of committee. Open to Non-majors by permission of committee.

INSTRUCTOR(S)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Section / Format / Term</th>
<th>Contact Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veninger, Ingrid</td>
<td>Sec. A / STDO / Y</td>
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SPECIAL FEATURES

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR TAKING THE COURSE:

In order to fully participate in this course, students will be required to take part in video conferencing via Zoom and will also appear on video (e.g., discussions, group work, presentations, etc.). In addition to stable, higher-speed Internet connection, students will need access to a computer with webcam and microphone. Additionally, students will need to acquire screenwriting software (e.g. Final Draft, Celtx, FadeIn).

Here are some useful links for student computing information:
Computing for Students Website  https://student.computing.yorku.ca/
Student Guide to eLearning at York University  http://elearning-guide.apps01.yorku.ca/
Learning Skills Services  https://lss.info.yorku.ca/online-learning/
Zoom@YorkU User Reference Guide
Zoom@YorkU Best Practices

To determine Internet connection and speed, there are online tests, such as Speedtest:
https://www.speedtest.net/

EMAIL POLICY AND OFFICE HOURS:
Email Policy:
Course Instructor will aim to answer emails within 48 hours of receipt between September 5 and April 12, pending unforeseen circumstances. If students have a time-dependent matter to discuss, please make an appointment with Instructor during virtual office hours.

Virtual Office Hours via Zoom:
• THURSDAYS 9am-1pm

To set up a meeting, please contact Course Instructor via email: ingridv@yorku.ca.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course introduces students to a view of screenwriting at the intersection of filmmaking, storytelling and writing. Students engage in a variety of craft building exercises and writing assignments to gain a deeper understanding of the screenplay form and its various components: plot, chronicle, character, conflict, structure, theme, dialogue, subtext and style. This course is a prerequisite for all upper-level screenwriting courses.

LIST OF LEARNING OUTCOMES AND EXAMPLES OF COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:

As a result of participating in this course – that is, successfully completing all readings, group activities, course assignments, participating regularly in online class discussions, and reflecting actively on the subject matter at hand – students will be able to:

1. Identify core principles of short narrative fiction screenwriting.
2. Illustrate how these principles are put into practice by completing three original narrative fiction screenplays, as well as one adaptation based on other source material.
3. Refine capabilities for pitching and presenting written work and build writing portfolios.
4. Apply knowledge by presenting peers with detailed script analysis and constructive feedback.
5. Expand knowledge by developing skills to identify the ‘bigger picture’ principles of writing feature film screenplays in preparation for upper year screenwriting courses.

Note: Some of the original screenplays created in this course by film production majors may eventually be produced in the film production program. A pitch session will be held in early February for production majors.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE:
This is an online course, which occurs synchronously via Zoom. Classes will be conducted through lectures, readings, participatory exercises, writing assignments, and discussions. Lectures will be complimented by screenings of short films through York’s associated streaming platforms such as, Kanopy and Criterion On Demand. LINK: https://www.library.yorku.ca/web/smil/collections/streaming-collections/#video

Regarding Original Material: Unless otherwise instructed, students may not adapt or base original screenplays on pre-existing material. Additionally, screenplays may not be co-written, since assessment is based on individual delivery.

Attendance and participation in online class activities and written assignments will be essential for the successful completion of this course. More detailed information will be posted and updated weekly on the Moodle site.

COURSE REQUIRED READING:
Please secure a copy of the required reading textbook. This EBook is free to read online. Most chapters are downloadable as PDFs.
• The Way of the Screenwriter by Amnon Buchbinder

To access: Students need to login with Passport York and accept the terms for Electronic Resources.
Additional readings may be assigned and/or recommended during the course and distributed online. Please check Moodle regularly for updates.

**GRADED ASSESSMENT**

Note: Prior to deadlines, the Course Instructor will present detailed assignment sheets and evaluation rubrics. Course Instructor reserves the right to make changes, however, any changes to syllabus, schedule and/or assignments will be communicated to students in a timely manner.

The final grade for the course will be based on the following items weighted as indicated:

**FALL TERM**

**ASSIGNMENT #1 (10%): DUE September 29, class #3.**
No Dialogue Screenplay Assignment: 6-8 page original screenplay (6-10 scenes). Screenplay format with title page, including logline.

**ASSIGNMENT #2 (10%): DUE November 3, class #7.**
Adaptation Assignment: 8-10 page screenplay (6-12 scenes), based on a fairy tale (selection to be provided by Course Instructor). Formatted with title page, including logline.

**ASSIGNMENT #3 (15%): DUE NOVEMBER 26, class #10.**
Original Narrative Fiction I: 8-10 page first draft original screenplay. Formatted with title page, including logline.

**ASSIGNMENT #4 (5%): DUE DECEMBER 3, class #12.**
Feedback Notes: 2-3 page analysis/critique of peer’s original narrative fiction (Assignment #3). Partners will be assigned. Formatted with 12 pt. font, 1.5 spacing, and ragged right margins. Include title page.

**WINTER TERM**

**ASSIGNMENT #5 (10%): DUE JANUARY 25, class #15.**
Re-write Original Narrative Fiction: 8-10 page final draft (Assignment #3). Re-write is based on feedback from partner, peer group, and instructor. Delivery must also include Re-write Notes (2-3 pages) outlining intentions. Re-write notes formatted with 12 pt. font, 1.5 spacing, ragged right margins. Number pages and include title page.

**ASSIGNMENT #6 (15%): DUE FEBRUARY 23, class #18.**
Original Narrative Fiction II: 10-12 page first draft original screenplay. Formatted with title page, including logline.

**ASSIGNMENT #7 (5%): DUE MARCH 9, class #20.**
Feedback Notes: 2-3 page analysis/critique of peer’s original narrative fiction (Assignment #6). Partners will be assigned. Formatted with 12 pt. font, 1.5 spacing, ragged right margins. Number pages and include title page.

**FINAL ASSIGNMENT #8 (15%): DUE MARCH 30, class #23.**
Re-write Original Narrative Fiction: 10-12 page final draft (Assignment #6). Re-write is based on feedback from partner, peer group, and instructor. Delivery must also include Re-write Notes (2-3 pages) outlining intentions // OR // Students may choose to write a new original Narrative Fiction Screenplay (10-12 pages).

**PARTICIPATION (15%):** Includes attendance, Zoom participation, breakout room exercises, homework completion, attitude, collaboration with others, (being late to log onto zoom or absent from class, except in cases of verifiable illness or family emergency, will result in a reduction of the participation mark).
Late: At the start of each class, there will be a 10-minute participatory exercise worth 1% of the participation mark. Students arriving late, forfeit the mark.

Absence: Being absent for valid reasons such as illness, or family emergencies, may be considered by the Course Instructor but will require advance notification and/or supporting documentation (e.g., a doctor’s letter). Otherwise, each absence will result in 2% reduction of the final participation mark.

Assignment Delivery: Unless otherwise specified, all assignments are to be submitted via Moodle before the start of class, on the due date.

All screenplays should be properly formatted utilizing industry standard. Assignments that are not screenplays (e.g. Feedback Assignment) should be formatted as follows: 1.5 spacing, 12 pt. font (for screenplays it must be courier), and ragged right margin. Make sure to number pages and include a title page.

Title page should include:
1. Student Name and Number:
2. Course Name: Screenwriting Fundamentals
3. Course Number: 2120A
4. Course Instructor: Ingrid Veninger
5. Assignment Title:
6. Delivery Date:

Every delivery file should be labeled: Student Name_Assignment Name_Date.

Marks will be deducted for poor formatting, spelling, grammatical errors, and lateness.

Lateness Penalty: Assignments received later than the due date will be penalized 5%/day (up to 7 days late). Following 7 late days, overdue Assignments may receive 0%. Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, or family emergencies, may be considered by the Course Instructor but will require advance notification and/or supporting documentation (e.g., a doctor’s letter).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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Drop Dates:
Term Fall (F) Term Winter (W) Full Year (Y)
Last date to drop courses without receiving a grade Nov. 6, 2020 Mar. 12, 2021 Feb. 5, 2021

For other important information refer to Registrar’s Office website:
https://w2prod.sis.yorku.ca/Apps/WebObjects/cdm

York University COVID-19 Protocols and resources:
https://yubettertogether.info.yorku.ca/important-links-resources/

Anti-Black Racism Action Plan:

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
Additional information:

- **Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**
- **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://myacademicrecord.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.

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

Moodle @ York University