

WRITING 2204F: SHORT FLICKS: AN INTRODUCTION TO SCREENWRITING

SECTION: 001

TIME/ROOM/LOCATION: Tuesdays, 1:30-4:30pm, SH-3305

PROFESSOR: Kathryn Mockler

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OFFICE: 3270 Lawson Hall

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 11:00am-1:00pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

DESCRIPTION

This introductory screenwriting course explores the elements of screenwriting in a workshop environment. Students will be guided through the process of writing a short film starting with idea generation and moving through the stages of pitching, outlining, drafting, giving and receiving feedback, and finally incorporating feedback into a revision. Assignments and weekly discussions focus on the fundamental elements of screenwriting including image, three-act structure, dialogue, character development, theme, scene construction, and point of view.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have demonstrated the ability to

- communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a range of audiences;
- identify the fundamental elements of narrative screenwriting;
- analyze and respond critically to published scripts and to the work of their peers;
- generate story ideas and write a 5-minute script and a 10-minute script: and
- incorporate feedback into revisions.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS/RESOURCES/SOFTWARE

- Writing the Short Film, 3rd Edition by Pat Cooper and Ken Dancyger (available at Western Bookstore)
- Access to the Internet/Sakai/Tumblr/Celtx Screenwriting Software (free program)
- Resources for New Screenwriters & Filmmakers: <http://canadianscreenwriters.blogspot.com>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Method of Evaluation	Grade Value	Deadline
5-Minute Script	20%	Week 5 (Draft due in Week 3)
Class work (quizzes, peer review, week 8 online discussion & analysis)	10%	Weeks 2-8
Tumblr Blogs	5%	Week 8
Proposal and Pitch of 10-Minute Script	15%	Weeks 9 & 10
10-Minute Script Final Draft and Revision Notes	40%	Week 12
Final Presentation	10%	Presentation: Weeks 12 & 13
Total	100%	

ASSIGNMENT FORMAT

All assignments must be word-processed in a 12-point Courier font for scripts and a 12-point for other assignments. Scripts must be in proper screenplay format as described in class. Students must use the free Celtx software or another screenwriting program. If assignments are submitted on paper, they are to be

typed, double-spaced, and stapled. All assignments must have your name, course name, section number, and instructor's name on the first page. Please include page numbers and staple your assignments.

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

In this course, you will be required to submit the final version of each of your assignments electronically via Sakai as a PDF to Turnitin.com and provide your instructor with a hard copy in class the day the assignment is due.

Late assignments will receive a penalty of up to 10% per day including weekends. If you need an extension for a medical reason, you must contact the Academic Counselling of your home Faculty.

If necessary, please submit assignments to the Writing Department Drop Box outside Lawson Hall Room 3270, making sure you include your instructor's name and your section number. However, do not fax or email assignments. Keep copies (electronic, paper, or both) of all assignments submitted.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Students experiencing general difficulty with the course material may contact the Student Development Centre in UCC, Suite 210 or at (519) 661-3031 for counselling and tutoring services. The Student Development Centre also has staff members who specialize in assisting students with various disabilities to adjust to the university environment. Please advise me at the beginning of the term if you have any special needs.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is required to improve as a writer. If you miss more than six hours of class meetings (the equivalent of two weeks of class meetings) your final grade will be penalized a full letter grade (for example, an earned grade of 80% would be reported as a 70%); if you miss more than nine hours of class meetings, you will not be given a passing grade for the course.

This policy will only be waived for medical or compassionate reasons. If you have good reasons for waiving an absence of one class meeting, discuss these with your instructor within one week of that absence. If your absence is extended and prolonged (over one week of continuous non-attendance), then you should discuss it with your academic advisor in your home faculty, who may require documentation. That advisor may then contact all of your instructors. See also: 'Medical Accommodation Policy' below.

Note: a class meeting missed in order to write a test, exam, or other form of 'make-up class' in another course will count as non-attendance, and will attract penalties as defined above if applicable. Instructors at the University of Western Ontario are **not permitted to require** a student to write a make-up test or similar at times which conflict with that student's other scheduled class times. If you are asked or 'required' to do this, you should immediately contact an academic counsellor in your Dean's office. If you elect to miss a class in order to write such a test, that is your choice; your absence will not be excused.

Attendance also extends to tardiness. If you are more than 20 minutes late, you will be penalized an hour of attendance. Please make every effort to be on time as late entry can disrupt the flow of discussion in our class. Early departures from class, which have not been previously arranged with the instructor, will also be counted as an absence. If you leave during the break, you will be docked an hour of attendance.

SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES, INCLUDING PLAGIARISM

i) Scholastic Offences: "Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, which can be found here http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of

text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence. All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.”

Please note that the above required statements do not rule out additional cautions by the instructor. Above all, every instance of egregious plagiarism "with intent to deceive" must be reported to the Writing Program Office, in order to determine the penalty with the authority of the Director of the Writing Program, and to check for previous offences. A second offence will result in more serious penalties at the Dean's level. *Some instructors use the "Turnitin" program, available through Weldon Library and Sakai (OWL), for on-line checks; others simply use the Google search engine.

ii) Prerequisites: “Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.” The prerequisite for registration in this course is a) a final grade of 65 or more in one of Writing 2101, 2121, 2111, or 2131, or b) a final grade of 85 or more in Writing 1000F/G, or c) Special Permission of the Program.”

MEDICAL ACCOMMODATION POLICY

For UWO Policy on Accommodation For Medical Illness, see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf (downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading)

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical or other grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth 10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds cannot be granted by the instructor or the Program in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication, and the Program requires students in these circumstances to follow the same procedure when seeking academic accommodation on non-medical (i.e. non-medical compassionate or other) grounds.

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth less than 10% of their final grade** must also apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Where in these circumstances the accommodation is being sought on **non-medical grounds**, students should consult in the first instance with their instructor, who may elect to make a decision on the request directly, or refer the student to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive medical documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons (e.g. to explain an absence from class which may result in a grade penalty under an ‘Attendance’ policy in the course). **All** medical documentation **must** be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student’s home Faculty.”

CLASS MEETING SCHEDULE

DATE	MEETING FOCUS	READINGS (subject to change – always check Sakai for updates)
WEEK 1 Sept 11 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to course • Coming up with ideas 	Buy textbooks from UWO Bookstore
WEEK 2 Sept 18, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Quiz • 5-Minute Script Assigned • Guest Speaker: Alyssa Evetts – Film equipment info & camera demo 	<p><u>Writing the Short Film</u>: "Storytelling in General," p. 9-15, "Telling a Story in Images," p. 17-28, "Telling the Dramatic Story," p. 47-64 View: "Neighbours," and "Two Men and a Wardrobe"</p>
WEEK 3 Sept 25 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Quiz • Three-act structure • 5-minute script workshop 	<p><u>Writing the Short Film</u>: "The Need for Storytelling," p. 89-100, "Visualization Strategies," p. 101-112, and "Dramatic Strategies," p. 113-126 View: "The Red Balloon" <u>Writing Short Scripts</u>, "Rock of Hope"</p>
WEEK 4 Oct 2, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Quiz • Creating multi-dimensional characters 	<p><u>Writing the Short Film</u>: "Discovering and Exploring a Main Character," p. 37-46 and "Characterization Strategies," p. 127-140 "Vincent," p. 235-240 Read: "Five Feet High and Rising"</p>
WEEK 5 Oct 9, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Quiz • Dialogue • 5-Minute Script Due (20%) • Proposal and 10-minute script assigned and sign Up 	<p><u>Writing the Short Film</u>: "Writing an Original Screenplay," p. 65, "More on Dialogue Strategies," p.141-150, and "Pigeon," p. 249-256</p>
WEEK 6 Oct 16, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various short film screenings 	<u>Writing the Short Film</u> : "The Melodrama," p. 151-169
WEEK 7 Oct 23, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various short film screenings • Idea Brainstorming 	<p><u>Writing the Short Film</u>: "The Docudrama," p. 171-186 View: "Drunk History Vol. 5" and "Breaking News"</p>
WEEK 8 Oct 30, 2012 Online Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Synopsis and Analysis (submit online) • This week class will take place online. Check Sakai for details and instructions. • Tumblr Blogs Due (5%) 	<p><u>Writing the Short Film</u>: "The Hyperdrama," p. 187-204 Choose a script from Appendix B and write a 1-sentence synopsis and 200-word analysis</p>
WEEK 9 Nov 6, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal Presentations (15%) • Peer Review of Proposals 	<p><u>Writing the Short Film</u>: "The Experimental Narrative," 205-220 View: "Meat Love," "La Jetee," "Lumiere," and "Night Mayor"</p>
WEEK 10 Nov 13, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal Presentations (15%) • Peer Review of Proposals 	View: "Andy and Zach" and "If I See Randy Again..."
WEEK 11 Nov 20, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10-Minute Script Workshops in Groups 	<u>Writing the Short Film</u> : "On Revision," p. 79-86
WEEK 12 Nov 27, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Evaluations • Revised 10-Minute Script and Revision Notes Due (40%) • Final Presentations (10%) 	Film and Screenwriting Resources
WEEK 13 Dec 4, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Presentations (10%) 	Producing and Directing 101