

## Writing 2224G: Writing for the Big Screen – Winter 2019

Section: # 001

Professor: Kathryn Mockler

### DESCRIPTION

This screenwriting course explores the art of writing a feature-length screenplay in a workshop setting. Course work focuses on the fundamental elements of screenplay theory while the workshop guides students through the stages of the screenwriting process: concept, character breakdown, drafting, and revision. Students will write a 5-minute scene, complete the first act of a feature-length film, and will work on a group pitch.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

1. identify the fundamental elements of feature screenwriting;
2. analyze and respond critically to published tv and film scripts, feature films, and to the work of their peers;
3. generate story ideas and write the first act of a feature-length film;
4. incorporate feedback into a polished first act;
5. work collaboratively on a group pitch.

### REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

1. Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting by Syd Field, Delta; REV edition, 2005 Edition (available at the Bookstore at Western)
2. The Art of Dramatic Writing by Lajos Egri, Touchstone, 2004 Edition (available at the Bookstore at Western)

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Method of Evaluation	Grade Value	Deadline
5-Page Scene Assignment	20%	Week 4
First 10 Pages Assignment	25%	Between Weeks 6 to 11
In-class Peer Critiques	10%	Weeks 6 to 11
First Act Revision Assignment & Revision Notes	35%	Week 12
Group TV Show Pitch	10%	Week 13
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**IN-CLASS PEER CRITIQUE (10%)** The in-class Peer Critique Assignment is evaluated on the feedback you give to your peers during the First Ten Pages Workshop. You will be graded on your ability to take course concepts and provide constructive critical feedback to your peers.

### EMAIL COMMUNICATION

Please note that I do not give feedback or discuss grades over email. I'm happy to answer quick questions over email that cannot wait until our next class. If you have a concern or would like additional feedback, please visit me during the office hours listed above. If you are not available during that time, email me to schedule an appointment during my alternate time slot.

**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. 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 OWL 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 5% 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 at class is required to improve as a writer. Here is the Writing Studies attendance policy in this class:

- You may miss up to three hours (the equivalent of one week of class) of class meetings during the term without explanation. That means that the first three class hours you miss will be recorded as absences but *excused provided you don't miss any more*.
- However, if you miss a total of four to nine class hours (the equivalent of up to three full weeks of class), your final grade will be reduced by 10% (e.g. an earned final grade of 80% will be reported as a final grade of 72).
- If you miss a total of more than nine hours of class meetings (the equivalent of more than three weeks of class meetings) your final grade will be reduced by 15% (e.g. an earned final grade of 80% will be reported as a final grade of 68).

This policy will be waived only for medical or compassionate reasons. If you have good reasons for waiving an absence of one class meeting (e.g. if you've missed three hours, and need or want to miss another class meeting) discuss these reasons 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.

**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.

**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 Western shall not 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.

### **SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES, INCLUDING PLAGIARISM**

The University Senate requires the following statements, and Web site references, to appear on course outlines:

"Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.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 (see Scholastic Offence Policy as above).

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>).

### **PREREQUISITES**

The University Senate requires the following statement to appear on course outlines:

"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 70 or more in Writing 1000F/G or Writing 1030F, or c) Special Permission of the department.*

### **MEDICAL ACCOMMODATION POLICY**

For UWO Policy on Accommodation For Medical Illness, see: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/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 Writing Studies, and Writing Studies 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.

**"Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help."**

#### **SPECIAL REQUESTS: SPECIAL EXAMINATIONS, INCOMPLETE STANDING, AEGROTAT STANDING**

Please refer to the "Information for All Students in a Writing Course" for more detailed information. Briefly, remember that your instructor does not have the discretion to initiate, consider, or grant (or not) such requests; you must go directly to the Dean's office of your home faculty.