

## Writing 2224G: Writing for the Big Screen – Winter 2020

**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 and a first draft and revision of the first act of a feature-length film.

### 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 Book Store at Western)
2. *Writing Intersectional Identities: Key Words for Creative Writers* by Janelle Adsit and Renee M. Byrd, 2019 (Available at Western Bookstore)

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Method of Evaluation	Grade Value	Deadline
5-Page Scene Assignment	25%	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	40%	Week 12
<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 English and Writing Studies Department Drop Box located in UC 2431, 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**

"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:

At least 65% in one of [Writing 2101F/G](#), [Writing 2125F/G](#) (or the former Writing 2121F/G), [Writing 2111F/G](#), [Writing 2130F/G](#) or [Writing 2131F/G](#); or at least 65% in one of [Writing 1000F/G](#), [Writing 1030F/G](#), or [Writing 1031F/G](#); or at least 65% in each of [MIT 1020E](#) (or both of [MIT 1021F/G](#) and [MIT 1022F/G](#)) and [MIT 1025F/G](#); or permission of the Department (consult the Undergraduate Program Director, Writing).

### **MEDICAL ACCOMMODATION POLICY**

Writing Studies: New Accommodation Policy

#### **Medical Accommodation Policy**

Western has a comprehensive policy covering requests for accommodation by students who are not registered with Student Accessibility Services. All students should review this policy here, under the heading 'Accommodation for Illness – Undergraduate Students', noting the procedures, restrictions, and notice requirements:

[http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page\\_12](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_12)

In Writing courses, students covered by this policy who are seeking academic consideration must proceed as follows.

**Writing Studies' Basic Policy:** students seeking academic consideration **on medical or any other grounds** for any missed tests/exams, class attendance/participation components, or late or missed assignments must either initiate a Self-Reported Absence (**for a grade component worth up to 30% of their final grade, but excluding final exams scheduled during the exam period**) or apply in person to the Academic Counselling or Undergraduate office of their home Faculty and provide a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) or other supporting documentation as required in accordance with official Western policy (linked above).

Students seeking academic consideration **must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by either:

- i. A Self-Reported Absence, or
- ii. Academic consideration supported by the Academic Counselling Office.

**Exception:** in Writing Studies courses, a student seeking academic accommodation **on non-medical grounds** for any missed in-class tests/exams, class attendance/participation components, or late or missed assignments **worth less than 10% of a final grade** *may* first consult directly with her or his instructor, who will – in his or her discretion – elect either to make a decision on the request directly or instruct the student to follow the procedures set out in **Writing Studies' Basic Policy**.

**Please note** that individual instructors will **not under any circumstances** accept or read medical documentation directly offered by a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds or for related 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 or Undergraduate office of a student's home Faculty.

**Students who are or who feel they should be covered under Student Accessibility Services** should review Western policy here:

[http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page\\_10](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_10)

**Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:** (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/>) 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.