

## WRITING 2204G – Short Flicks: An Introduction to Screenwriting Winter 2022

**Section: #001**

**Time/Room: Mondays, 12:30 – 3:30 pm,  
UC-1220**

**Instructor: Catherine Carnovale**

**Email: [ccarnova@uwo.ca](mailto:ccarnova@uwo.ca)**

**Office: UC-1425**

**Office hours: Mondays, 3:30-4:30pm or  
virtually by appointment**

### Course Description and Objectives

In this course students will analyze short and feature film scripts, workshop their own scripts and respond to the scripts of other students, and draft and revise a 10 minute short film script. Topics will include image, three-act structure, dialogue, character development, theme, scene construction, and point of view.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- craft three-dimensional and compelling characters
- understand basic three-act structure and screenplay format
- identify fundamental elements of plot and dialogue
- analyze strengths and weaknesses of narrative elements in produced short films, their own scripts as well as the work of their peers
- transform drafts of scripts by implementing constructive feedback

### Required Texts and Course Materials

Writing Short Films (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) by Linda J. Cowgill (available at Western Bookstore)  
Screenwriting Software such as Celtx (free) or Final Draft.

### Course Requirements

Character Biography	25%
Logline and Story Treatment for 10 minute Short Film	25%
Final Draft of 10 minute Short Film screenplay	40%
Attendance/Professionalism, In-Class Workshopping	10%

### Assignment Format

Screenwriting Projects must be written in proper screenwriting software such as Celtx or Final Draft and exported as a PDF. Other assignments must be written in 12 point font. All assignments must have a cover page with your name, course name, section number, and instructor's name.

## Submitting Assignments/Due dates/late submission penalties etc.

All assignments must be submitted via OWL and Turnitin.com as a PDF by the beginning of the class that they are due, unless otherwise specified. Assignments will not be accepted via e-mail.

As a writer, it is important to meet deadlines. Late assignments will be penalized by 5% per day, including weekends. Furthermore, late assignments will be graded but *may not* receive constructive feedback comments. If you need an extension for a medical reason, you must contact Academic Counselling in your home faculty. Any other extension must be asked for 48 hours in advance and must be confirmed by me in writing.

## Attendance policies

Attendance at class is required to improve as a writer. This includes being present and participating in the workshopping of your work **and** the work of your peers. 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 the University of Western Ontario ***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/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.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.

**Prerequisite(s):** At least 65% in one of Writing 2101F/G, Writing 2125F/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).

## **Academic Accommodation and Consideration**

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

## **Academic Consideration for Student Absence**

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact

their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation. All requests for consideration for assessments worth more than 30% of a final grade must be directed to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.

In this course, all requests for academic consideration must be directed to the Academic Counselling office of the student's Home Faculty if a SRA will not be used.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see [Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

### **Religious Accommodation**

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

### **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.

**Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Health and Wellness**

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. **Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends.**

## Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support and Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

## COVID-19

Although the intent is for this course to be delivered in-person, the changing COVID-19 landscape may necessitate some or all of the course to be delivered online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor. Announcements as they relate to changes in the delivery of the course will be posted on OWL.\

## Class Meeting Schedule

### Week 1 (1/10) – Intro to Short Films

Read: Cowgill, Chapters 1 & 2

### Week 2 (1/17) – Character Foundations

Read: Cowgill – Chapters 3 & 12

*Character Biography Assigned*

### Week 3 (1/24) – Plot/Structure Part 1

Read: Cowgill – Chapters 4, 5, & 9

*Character Biography Due*

*Logline and Treatment Assigned*

### Week 4 (1/31) – Plot/Structure Part 2

Read: Cowgill – Chapters 6, 7, & 8

### Week 5 (2/7) – Dialogue

Read: Cowgill – Chapters 10 & 11

*Logline and Treatment Due*

*Short Film Screenplay Assigned*

### Week 6 (2/14) – Mechanics and Formats of Screenplays

Read: Cowgill – Appendix A

### Reading Week – (2/21) –NO CLASS

### Week 7 (2/28) – In-Class Workshopping of 1<sup>st</sup> Draft Screenplay

No readings

### Week 8 (3/7) – In-Class Workshopping of 1<sup>st</sup> Draft Screenplay

No readings

**Week 9 (3/14) – In-Class Workshopping 1<sup>st</sup> Draft Screenplay**

No readings

**Week 10 (3/21) – In-Class Workshopping 1<sup>st</sup> Draft Screenplay**

No readings

**Week 11 (3/28) – In-Class Workshopping 1<sup>st</sup> Draft Screenplay**

No readings

**Week 12 (4/4) – Peer Review – 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft Screenplay**

No readings

**Final Draft Screenplay Due via OWL by 5:00pm on April 8, 2022 (LAST DAY OF THE WINTER TERM)**