

WRITING 2204F — Short Flicks: An Introduction to Screenwriting Fall 2026

1. Course Description

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 15 minute short film script. Topics will include image, three-act structure, dialogue, character development, theme, scene construction, and point of view.

2. Required Texts and Course Materials

Required Texts

- *Writing Short Films*, 2nd Edition by Linda J. Cowgill (approx. CAD \$25).

Required Software

- Celtx screenwriting software (free online) or other screenwriting software (FinalDraft or FadeIn)

Recommended Texts

- *The Writer's Journey*, 25th Anniversary Edition by Christopher Vogler
- *Anatomy of Story* by John Truby

3. Course Requirements

Grading Scheme and Assessment Dates

The overall course grade will be calculated as listed below:

Assignment	Weight	Due Date
Loglines & Synopsis	10%	Week 3 (Sep 23)
5 Minute Short Film Script	15%	Week 4 (Oct 7)
Pitch Presentation & 1-Page Proposal	20%	Weeks 6 & 7 (Oct 22 & 29)
First Draft (10-Minute Script)	15%	Week 9 (Nov 18)
Final Draft (10-Minute Script)	20%	Week 12 (Dec 2)
In-Class Participation & Discussion	10%	Ongoing
Workshop Peer Review	10%	Week 6,7 & 11
TOTAL	100%	

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/>) regularly for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class. If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted

by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

4. Assignment Format

All scripts must be produced using industry-standard screenwriting software in proper screenplay format (12-point Courier; proper slug lines, action, and dialogue blocks). Non-script assignments should be word-processed in 12-point font, double-spaced. All submissions must include the student's name, course name (Writing 2204F), section number (001), and the instructor's name on the first page, with page numbers throughout. Final versions are submitted via OWL Brightspace as PDFs to Turnitin.com. First drafts for the workshop must be submitted by the date specified so peers have time to read before class.

Submitting Assignments/Due dates/late submission penalties etc.

Students are expected to submit each written assignment by the deadline listed. Should extenuating circumstances arise, students do not need to request academic consideration and are permitted to submit up to 48 hours past the deadline without a late penalty. Beyond 48 hours past the deadline, a late penalty of 5% per day (including weekends) will be applied. Academic consideration requests may be granted only for extenuating circumstances that began before the deadline and lasted longer than the no-late-penalty period. This flexibility does not apply to the Pitch Presentation or the Workshop Peer Review sessions, all of which are tied to fixed in-class dates.

5. Attendance Policies

Attendance at class is required to improve as a writer. Here is the Writing Studies attendance policy in this class:

If you miss nine unexcused hours of class (the equivalent of up to three full weeks of class), your final grade will be reduced by 10 marks (e.g., an earned final grade of 80% will be reduced to a final grade of 70%; a grade of 70% will be reduced to 60%).

If you miss a total of more than nine unexcused hours of class (the equivalent of more than three weeks of class meetings) your final grade will be reduced by 15 marks (e.g., an earned final grade of 80% will be reduced to a final grade of 65; a final grade of 70 will be reduced to 55).

This policy will be waived only if you have either undocumented or documented academic consideration. You may only use the undocumented consideration option once each term. If your absence is extended and prolonged (over one week of continuous non-attendance), then you must discuss it with your academic advisor in your home faculty, and submit documentation to support your request for academic consideration. (See Academic Consideration 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.

6. Scholastic Offences, including Plagiarism

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:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf#Policy

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 Western and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In this course, the use of AI (such as automatic translation tools, grammar checkers, ChatGPT...) is **prohibited**, unless there has been discussion with and agreement by the instructor before beginning an assignment. If AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and/or other materials used in preparing assignments. Students are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, students may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against them.

7. Prerequisites

The prerequisite for this course is:

At least 65% in one of Writing 2101F/G, Writing 2111F/G, Writing 2130F/G or Writing 2131F/G; or at least 65% in one of Writing 1000F/G, Writing 1031F/G or Writing 1035A/B; or at least 65% in each of MediaCom 1020E (or both of MediaCom 1021F/G and MediaCom 1022F/G) and MediaCom 1025F/G; or permission of the Department (consult the Undergraduate Program Director, Writing).

8. Academic Consideration Policy

University policy on academic considerations is described [here](#). This policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation.

Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests through the Student Absence Portal, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:

https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/index.html

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made **within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline**.

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation, which may include a Student

Medical Certificate. Recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course. However, the following assessment is excluded from this, and therefore always requires formal supporting documentation:

- Final Draft (10-Minute Script)

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:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

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

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays and should give reasonable notice in writing (email), prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance.

Statement on Gender-based Sexual Violence

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/studentsupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Other Student Support Services

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

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

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

Academic Support and Engagement <https://academicsupport.uwo.ca/index.html>

9. Intellectual Property and Copyright

All instructor-written materials (e.g., PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright.

You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

10. Land Acknowledgement

Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Attawandaron peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This land continues to be home to diverse Indigenous peoples whom we recognize as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors to our community.