MDIA 52: SCREENWRITING FOR NARRATIVE MEDIA

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Summer 2024
Units:	4
Hours:	4 lecture, 1 laboratory per week (60 total per quarter)
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Non-GE
Transferable:	CSU
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

Student Learning Outcomes

- A successful student will develop the skills necessary to create clearly defined, dynamic characters.
- A successful student will write short scripts for video and film in fiction and non-fiction formats.
- A successful student will demonstrate a command of the principles of story structure for fiction and non-fiction forms.

Description

An introductory course in screenplay writing for narrative media, including film and episodic TV. The course emphasizes visual storytelling and the creative process through an examination of story theme, structure, and character development. Students study technical screenplay formatting and writing processes, taking their ideas from concept to finished professional script.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Examine and apply fundamental principles of narrative fiction screenwriting
2. Analyze basic screenplay structure, character development, conflict, and theme
3. Understand the elements and rules of scriptwriting format, and demonstrate proficiency through application
4. Assess different methods of protecting and marketing screenplays
5. Demonstrate proficiency through the completion of a short, fictional narrative screenplay

Course Content

1. Screenwriting processes and role in media production
   a. Story ideas and visualization techniques
   b. Writing outlines, treatments, log lines, drafts
   c. Collaboration in the writing process
2. Screenwriting concepts and analysis
   a. Story structures: three and five act, hero's journey, sequence
   b. Plot points
   c. Developing characters
   d. Dialogue and visual writing
   e. Style and writing clarity
   f. Writing for genre
3. Screenwriting tools, technical and professional practices
   a. Screenwriting format, grammar
   b. Screenwriting software
   c. Storyboards, shooting scripts, shot lists
   d. Types of media scripts and genre differences
   e. Proposals, pitching, and funding
   f. Pre-production practices for traditional film/TV, internet, and new media
   g. Pre-production and scripting practices for corporate media
4. Representation in screenwriting: race, gender, class, ability

Lab Content

1. Discussion forum collaboration on pre-production and writing assignments
2. Laboratory screening and examination of films and scripts, which may include:
   a. Viewing films with the same screenplay produced in different eras
   b. Viewing films of adapted screenplays from the same source material, produced by different directors
3. Use of computer lab with professional screenwriting software for the completion of writing, research, and pre-production assignments

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

1. Student access to computers with script formatting software, Blu-ray and DVD playback.
2. An instructional presentation station, including appropriate hardware, software, and internet access.
3. Computer projection system, sound system, and lighting suitable for listening to audio media and displaying projected media.
4. When taught via Foothill Online Learning: on-going access to computer with high speed internet access, email software and capabilities, word processing software; access to Foothill course management system and portal.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Oral presentation and critique of screenwriting topics
In-class writing exercises, collaboration and critique of scripts
Proposals, pitches, character analyses, and structural outlines for narrative script projects
Short screenwriting projects
Quizzes and/or exams
Written critique of scripts

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lecture on screenwriting topics
Collaborative exercises in screenwriting
Film screenings and screenplay analysis

Group discussion and critique
Oral presentation
Guest speakers

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Field, Syd. Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting. 2005.

Howard, David, and Edward Mabley. The Tools of Screenwriting: A Writer's Guide to the Craft and Elements of a Screenplay. 1995.

Seger, Linda. Making a Good Script Great. 2010.

Snyder, Blake. Save the Cat!: The Last Book on Screenwriting You'll Ever Need. 2005.

Trottier, David. The Screenwriter's Bible. 2019.

Although several of the texts listed are older than the suggested "5 years or newer" standard, they remain seminal in this field of study.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Weekly readings
   a. Required textbooks
   b. Screenplays
2. Reading relevant articles in periodicals and journals
3. Screening of films and media for analysis
4. Story research and planning
5. Writing assignments
   a. Original film treatments, proposals, pitches, loglines
   b. Story structure and plot outlines, character studies
   c. Screenplay writing for a short film, episode, or first act of a feature
   d. Collaborative writing and research

Discipline(s)

Media Production or Film Studies