COMM 3305: Short-Form Screenwriting and Analysis
Monday / Wednesday 9:30 – 10:50 am
Anthropology Bldg. Room G15

Professor: Stacy Barton
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Office Location: Humanities 220
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 10am – 3pm (and most other times via email)
*If you choose to email vs. dropping by, please allow at least 24 hours for a response. You may also call during office hours in lieu of stopping by if you have a relatively brief issue.

Course Description:
Students will learn the fundamentals of dramatic writing: story, narrative structure, character, and imagery. In consideration will also be primary terminology, formatting, basic practice, and literary conventions for the screen. You will demonstrate your knowledge in all these aforementioned areas through a series of quizzes and written assignments. It is the intent of this course to instruct you in writing scripts that are fiscal and applicable to your other media production classes.

Course Learning Objective:
This is a writing workshop where students will engage in storytelling structure and its implementation in the creation of short form scripts and other video production documents. Note that this is also the writing-intensive course for two of our departmental concentrations, so extreme attention will be given to the technical, structural, and grammatical components of writing.

Course Learning Outcomes:
• Distinguish and identify the fundamentals of compelling dramatic writing: including imagery, character, plot, narrative structure, primary terminology, formatting, basic practice, and literary conventions for the small and large screen
• Distinguish effective strategies for the appropriate context of page vs screen
• Practice constructive criticism
• Embrace the heartfelt nature of a story
• Recognize the inherent value of rewriting
• Begin to understand of the medium’s function as a means of communication and creative expression

Textbook Requirement:
Your Screenplay Sucks! 100 ways to make it great
By William M. Akers (available at the bookstore)

Software Requirement:
The free download software Celtx will suffice for the course but note that it doesn’t automatically format to industry standard in all accounts, to which you are responsible for. A valuable tool is the software program Movie Magic Screenwriter, or Final Draft is another option… BUT, both cost money. (I assure you that either is well worth the investment)
Assignments & Grading (100 points):

Monologue (10 points) – ½ page (minimum) to 1 page (maximum), single-spaced monologue spoken by a single character.

Shopping Trip Script (15 points) – 3-4 pages, standard script format, 3 characters maximum, only 2 may speak. Protagonist is shopping inside a store (of choice) for something they will use that evening. They interact with a stranger, and that interaction changes their original plans for the night.

Family Gathering Script (20 points) – 5 pages maximum, standard script format. Relatives have gathered for an event, and drama/conflict ensues when someone delivers life-altering news.

Treatment (5 points) – 1 page, single-spaced. Your complete final script story written in prose format.

Final Script (25 points) – 10 pages maximum, no minimum. Content of choice, but must be feasible for production by a college student with available resources similar to your own.

Logline (2.5 points) – 1-2 sentence teaser of your Final Script.

Synopsis (2.5 points) – 2-5 sentence teaser of your Final Script.

Reading Quizzes x 5 (10 points) – To test comprehension of textbook reading assignments.

Participation (10 points) – Gauged by quality of peer critiques (both written and oral as applicable), willingness and engagement during in-class readings, and attendance as it relates to in-class participation.

Make sure whenever uploading your script that it is in Adobe pdf format, which means you will need to EXPORT all drafts for turning in (as opposed to SAVE AS).

Attendance & Late Work Policy:

If you miss more than 5 class sessions you WILL fail the course. Excessive tardiness will ALSO result in grade reduction, at my discretion. You are considered tardy if I have already taken roll. Be here and be on time to achieve a satisfactory grade.

Please do NOT email me when you are absent. In fact, there's no need to mention it. If you know a day or more ahead of time you will have to be absent and an assignment or a quiz is scheduled/due that day, you may turn it in beforehand only for full credit.

Each project will be completed and turned in on time in the correct format and follow all guidelines as outlined by the assignment to achieve an A. If expecting an A, don't turn in late work. Projects turned in “next class period late” will start with a 25% reduction in the total points possible, or from a C. Projects turned in after this time will not receive a passing grade.
**Grading Scale:**

100 – 90 = A; 89 – 80 = B; 79 – 70 = C; 69 – 60 = D; 59 and Below = F

**Other Course Policies:**

**Students with Disabilities:**
To ensure students with disabilities (temporary or permanent) can meet all course objectives and requirements, appropriate accommodations will need to be agreed upon by Professor and student. Please provide me with a copy of your packet from Student Services after contacting UWG Accessibility Services (678) 839-6428. Arrange to speak with me during office hours and we can discuss your particular needs.

**Conduct:**
The classroom will be a safe space for diversity and students must remain aware and accepting of each other. Comments of intolerance, including prejudice or bullying, will not be tolerated, nor will sexual harassment. See the student code of conduct for more information.

**Mature Content:**
Some examples used in this course may be explicit and therefore offensive to some. If you have an issue with this at any point in this semester, please speak with me privately.

**Plagiarism:**
It is assumed that all work will be created by you, and you only. Work that has been plagiarized in any way will be given a zero, and reported to the university for further punishment. You also may not use copyrighted work of any kind. Do your own work.

**Presentation:**
Because creative work is meant to be seen and talked about, you will be required to share your work with the class. This means you will be required to include your ideas in class discussion and must present your writing in class.

**Research:**
Screening a diverse variety of films, videos, and TV shows at home is necessary to learn to address the medium with a critical eye, and this research will carry over into your class work. Similarly, reading a lot and often is also necessary practice for a successful writer (and college student), so do it.

**UWG Email Policy:**
The University considers students’ MyUWG e-mail account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. It is the student’s responsibility to check email frequently for class, department, and University information.

**No Screens:**
Cell phones, tablets, laptops, and especially text messaging and social media of any kind are not allowed during class sessions. Focus and participate. Period.

**No Eating or Drinking:** It is not allowed in this classroom. No exceptions.
Departmental Information:

Film and Video Production Concentration Learning Outcomes:

- Students will gain an awareness of the established forms and modalities of film and video production, the associated technologies and methodologies, as well as the medium’s function as a means of communication and creative expression.

- Students will develop their understanding of the forms and modalities of film and video production, the associated technologies and methodologies, as well as the medium’s function as a means of communication and creative expression.

- Students will demonstrate their proficiency with the technologies, modalities and methodologies of film and video production in the application of analytical skills within the medium.

Department of Mass Communications Learning Outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate awareness of mass communications scholarship, i.e., theory/research; paramount economic, ethical, legal/policy, social, and technological issues; and the role of principle personalities and stakeholders within the context of freedom of speech, freedom of press, media competition, media convergence, diversity, and/or social responsibility. ACEJMC defines awareness as familiarity with facts, concepts, theories, laws and regulations, processes and effects.

- Students will demonstrate understanding of mass communications scholarship, i.e., theory/research; paramount economic, ethical, legal/policy, social, and technological issues; and the role of principle personalities and stakeholders within the context of freedom of speech, freedom of press, media competition, media convergence, diversity, and/or social responsibility. ACEJMC defines understanding as assimilation and comprehension of information, concepts, theories and ideas.

- Students will demonstrate effective application of mass communications scholarship, i.e., relate and/or apply concepts, theory/research, and professional principles to analyze and synthesize information, create, develop, produce, and/or write for converging digital, multi-media, and traditional media. ACEJMC defines application as competence in relating and applying skills, information, concepts, theories and ideas to the accomplishment of tasks.

Common language for course syllabi:
Please carefully review the following Common Language for all university course syllabi at this url:
http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf
It contains important material pertaining to university policies and responsibilities. Because these statements are updated as federal, state, university, and accreditation standards change, you should review the information each semester.
## Course Schedule:  

**WEEK** | **DATE** | **AGENDA** | **DUE NEXT CLASS**  
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1 | Mon. 8/24 | Syllabus
Intro to Scripting | Purchase Textbook  
| Wed. 8/26 | Inspiration | Read pgs. 1 – 40  
2 | Mon. 8/31 | Character |  
| Wed. 9/2 | Reading Quiz 1
The Monologue | “Monologue” Assignment  
3 | Mon. 9/7 | Labor Day – No Classes |  
| Wed. 9/9 | Monologue Due (2 hard copies)
Monologue Presentations | Written Peer Critique  
4 | Mon. 9/14 | Monologue Presentations Wrap-up
Peer Critiques Due | Read pgs. 43 – 79  
| Wed. 9/16 | Dramatic Structure
Short Form Scriptwriting |  
5 | Mon. 9/21 | Reading Quiz 2 | Read pgs. 80 – 123  
| Wed. 9/23 | Dialog |  
6 | Mon. 9/28 | Reading Quiz 3
Subtext | Read pgs. 125 – 161  
| Wed. 9/30 | Standard Script Format | “Shopping Trip” Script Assignment  
7 | Mon. 10/5 | Shopping Trip Presentations 1 |  
| Wed. 10/7 | Shopping Trip Presentations 2 | Read pgs. 162 – 194  
8 | Mon. 10/12 | Shopping Trip Presentations 3
Reading Quiz 4 | “Family Gathering” Script Assignment  
| Wed. 10/14 | Conflict, Climax, Denouement | “Family Gathering” Script Assignment  
9 | Mon. 10/19 | Writing a Treatment | Read pgs. 195 – 239  
| Wed. 10/21 | “Family Gathering” Presentations 1 | Final Script Treatment  
10 | Mon. 10/26 | “Family Gathering” Presentations 2 |  
| Wed. 10/28 | “Family Gathering” Presentations 3
Reading Quiz 5 | Final Script first draft Group 1  
11 | Mon. 11/2 | Final Script Presentations Group 1 | Final Script first draft Group 2  
| Wed. 11/4 | Final Script Presentations Group 2 | Final Script first draft Group 3  
12 | Mon. 11/9 | Final Script Presentations Group 3 | Final Script second draft Group 1  
| Wed. 11/11 | Final Script Presentations Group 1 | Final Script second draft Group 2  
13 | Mon. 11/16 | Final Script Presentations Group 2 | Final Script second draft Group 3  
| Wed. 11/18 | Final Script Presentations Group 3 |  
14 | Mon. 11/23 | Thanksgiving Recess – No Classes |  
| Wed. 11/25 | Thanksgiving Recess – No Classes | Final Script final draft  
15 | Mon. 11/30 | Final Script Presentations |  
| Wed. 12/2 | Final Script Presentations |  
**Finals Week** | Wed. 12/9
9:30 am | Logline & Synopsis | Logline & Synopsis
Due in class  

*Subject to Change*