COMM 3305-01: Short-Form Screenwriting and Analysis  
Monday / Wednesday 12:30 – 1:45 pm  
Anthropology Bldg. Room G15

Professor: Stacy Barton  
Email: sbarton@westga.edu  
Office phone: (678) 839 – 4935  
Office Location: Humanities 214  
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 10:00am – 3:00pm (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.

No Eating: It is not allowed in this classroom. No exceptions.

Course Description:  
Students will learn the fundamentals of dramatic writing: story, narrative structure, character, and imagery. Also covered are standard industry terminology, formatting, basic practice, and literary conventions for the screen. You will demonstrate gained knowledge through written creative assignments and an exam. Writing scripts that are fiscal and applicable to your other media production classes will be the guiding principle.

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 online platform Celtx at celtx.com will suffice for the course.

Grading Scale:  
100 – 88.5 = A; 88 – 78.5 = B; 78 – 68.5 = C; 68 – 58.5 = D; 58 and Below = F
Assignments & Grading (100 points):

Reading Exam (15 points) – To test comprehension of imperative textbook concepts.

Shopping Trip Script (15 points) – 3 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.

Peer Proofreading Exercise (5 points) – Trade Shopping Trip scripts with a partner and mark-up mistakes including grammar, typographical, and formatting. Suggest substantial character, plot, and structure edits in a verbal rap session.

Shopping Trip Rewrite (5 points) – Incorporate peer proofreading feedback into a content revision draft including substantial grammar & formatting edits.

Family Gathering Script (15 points) – 4 pages maximum, standard script format. Relatives have gathered, and drama/conflict ensues when someone delivers life-altering news.

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

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

Synopsis (2.5 points) – 2 to 5 sentence plot summary of your Final Script.

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.

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

Attendance & Late Work Policy:

When you are absent from class, you cannot participate. As such, more than 4 unexcused absences (2 weeks) WILL result in significant grade reduction. Excessive tardiness will ALSO result in grade reduction. 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 or mediocre 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.
**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, as may scripts written by your fellow classmates. 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, an additional 10 points will be taken off the final grade, and you may be reported to the university. 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.

**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.

**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.
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.
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<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>AGENDA</th>
<th>DUE NEXT CLASS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wed. 8/10</td>
<td>Syllabus, Intro to Scripting</td>
<td>Purchase Textbook</td>
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<td>Read pgs. 1 – 40 and pg. 162 - 170</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Mon. 8/15</td>
<td>Inspiration, Character</td>
<td>Read pgs. 43 – 79 and pg. 125 - 161</td>
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<td>Wed. 8/17</td>
<td>Character continued, A-B-ing Dialog exercise</td>
<td>Read pgs. 80 – 124 and pg. 171 - 194</td>
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<td>Mon. 8/22</td>
<td>Dramatic Structure</td>
<td>Read pgs. 195 – 239</td>
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<td>Wed. 8/24</td>
<td>Standard Script Format</td>
<td>Reading Exam Monday</td>
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<td>Mon. 8/29</td>
<td>Reading Exam, Celtx Demo</td>
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<td>Wed. 8/31</td>
<td>Subtext, Shopping Trip</td>
<td>Shopping Trip Script due Wednesday</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Mon. 9/5</td>
<td>Labor Day – No Classes</td>
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<td>Wed. 9/7</td>
<td>Shopping Trip Presentations 1</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Mon. 9/12</td>
<td>Shopping Trip Presentations 2</td>
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<td>Shopping Trip Presentations 3</td>
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<td>Mon. 9/19</td>
<td>Shopping Trip Presentations 4</td>
<td>Proofread &amp; Feedback due Wednesday</td>
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<td>Wed. 9/21</td>
<td>Feedback Rap Sessions, Family Gathering</td>
<td>Shopping Trip Rewrite due Monday</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mon. 9/26</td>
<td>Conflict, Climax, Resolution</td>
<td>Family Gathering Script due next Monday</td>
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<td>Wed. 9/28</td>
<td>Treatment, Logline, Synopsis</td>
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<td>Mon. 10/3</td>
<td>Family Gathering Presentations 1</td>
<td>Treatment due Monday</td>
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<td>Family Gathering Presentations 5</td>
<td>Logline &amp; Synopsis due Wednesday</td>
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<td>Wed. 10/19</td>
<td>Review Logline &amp; Synopsis in class</td>
<td>Logline &amp; Synopsis Revision due Monday</td>
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<td>Mon. 10/24</td>
<td>Final Script Draft 1 Group 1</td>
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<td>Final Script Draft 1 Group 2</td>
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<td>Final Script Draft 1 Group 3</td>
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<td>Wed. 11/16</td>
<td>Final Script Draft 2 Group 3</td>
<td>SSUFF Event Saturday</td>
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<td>Mon. 11/28</td>
<td>Final Script Draft 2 Group 4</td>
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<td>Wed. 11/31</td>
<td>Final Script Draft 2 Group 5</td>
<td>Final Script Final Draft due on Finals Day</td>
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<td>Wed. 12/7</td>
<td>Present Final Drafts</td>
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<td>11:00am–1:00pm</td>
<td>Course Evaluations</td>
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