COMM 3305 Short-Form Screenwriting and Analysis 80649
Fall 2018 TUE/THUR 2:00 pm - 3:15 pm Anthropology Mac Lab (G-15)

Instructor: Christopher Sailor
Office: Humanities 213
Email: csailor@westga.edu
Office Hours: T/R 11:30 am - 1:30 pm (Virtual office hours available by appointment)

Prerequisites: COMM 1154 with a minimum grade of C and ENGL 1102 with a minimum grade of C

Course Overview: This is a writing workshop where students will investigate various storytelling styles, structures and techniques, and implement these analyses in the development of stories written for the screen. Students will also engage with marketing and promotional texts within the field.

This will take the form of an intensive writing workshop in which students will be learning the fundamental technical and narrative components of screenwriting, and then apply them to the writing of their own short-form screenplays. Students will also apply concepts in peer reviews of the work of their classmates. As this is the writing-intensive course for two departmental concentrations, extreme attention will be given to the technical, structural, and grammatical components of writing.

Required Materials:
- There is no required text for this class. Readings will be assigned via handout or CourseDen.
- **Paper and pen.** This will be required every class meeting, as we will frequently be doing in-class writing exercises. No electronic submissions will be accepted.
- **Celtx** (www.celtx.com), or an equivalent **industry standard screenwriting software**
  (ask me if you need confirmation, as formatting will figure **heavily** into your grade).
- **64 GB flash drive** to store your work
- Access to **printer** and/or **photocopier** on a consistent basis

Recommended Course Reading:
- The Hollywood Standard: 2nd Edition, by Christopher Riley
- On Writing, Stephen King
- The Art of Dramatic Writing, by Lajos Egri
- The Crafty Art of Playmaking, Alan Aykbourn
- Screenwriting: The Sequence Approach, by Paul Gulino
- Screenwriting 101, by Film Crit Hulk
Course Learning Outcomes

Students will

1. Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information. (SLO 5)
2. Think critically, creatively and independently. (ACEJMC SLO 7)
3. Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve. (ACEJMC SLO 9)
4. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness. (ACEJMC SLO 10)

Assessment Measure: Final Screenplay

Mass Communications Program Learning Outcomes

ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies: As a unit seeking accreditation from the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC), the Department of Mass Communications is committed to preparing students with the requisite knowledge and skills to be successful in the media and communications industries after graduation. The Department has adopted as its degree program learning outcomes ACEJMC’s 12 professional values and competencies that all graduates of an ACEJMC accredited program should be aware of and able to demonstrate as scholars and professionals in the discipline. These include the six (6) values and six (6) competencies listed below. For the detailed list of the ACEJMC professional values and competencies, see the UWG Undergraduate Catalog or ACEJMC - Standard 2. Curriculum and Instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values:</th>
<th>Competencies:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Freedom of Speech &amp; Press</td>
<td>1. Think Critically &amp; Creatively</td>
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<td>2. History</td>
<td>2. Research &amp; Evaluate</td>
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<td>3. Diversity</td>
<td>3. Write Effectively</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Theory</td>
<td>5. Apply Numbers &amp; Statistics</td>
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<td>6. Ethics</td>
<td>6. Apply Technology</td>
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Assignments (details will be provided when assigned)

- Participation: 15%
- Exercises: 15%
- Script Analysis: 5%
- Shopping Trip Script: 10%
- Romantic Dinner Script: 15%
- Family Gathering Script: 15%
- Final Project: 25%

Late Work Policy

I reserve the right to not accept any late assignments. This will be a very regimented class, and a failure of participation on any one of your assignments may seriously inhibit the progression of your peers. In the event that late work is deemed acceptable, it will be severely penalized (i.e., you will make no higher than a C, likely lower).

For your final script, I will not accept any late submissions under any circumstances.
Grade Breakdown

A: 90% - 100%
B: 80% - 89%
C: 70% - 79%
D: 60% - 69%
F: Below 60%

Attendance and Participation

This is a workshop-style class, and as such it requires active participation from everyone at all times. If you are not in class, you are not only depriving yourself of the feedback that will make your own work above average, but you are also depriving your classmates and doing them a great disservice and disrespecting their time and effort.

Additionally, there will be something due every week of this semester. Given the workshop nature of the course, it will be imperative to take notes on completed assignments. To miss class is to turn your work in late.

Class begins at 2:00 pm. If you are not present and ready to begin by that time, you will be considered late. Any lateness will affect your participation grade at my discretion. It is possible that, if consistent, tardiness can affect your final grade by as much as a letter.

If you are more than ten minutes late, you will be considered absent.

Because of the intensive nature of this workshop, if you miss more than 25% of class meetings for whatever reason, you will not be able to pass the course. This includes absences for cell phone use (see below).

Participation will entail being present and actively engaging in class workshops - this means providing insightful comments for each scene/script that is read in class, and input in our discussions and reviews of story element assignments that demonstrates engagement with and understanding of topics covered. This may also include any In-Class Exercise and Peer Reviews.

Everyone in the course is entitled to the same level of feedback, so while you should always be respectful in how you present your criticism, you should always be as honest as possible so as to encourage you and your fellow students’ development as writers.

Many assignments will have multiple phases. You will not get an A if you do not follow instructions or stick to the deadlines provided, or if you fail to complete any one phase of an assignment. These phases will be detailed in individual handouts provided throughout the semester.
This course requires the utmost concentration not only for the sake of your own work but for that of your classmates as well. No sleeping, emailing, web browsing, or otherwise not paying attention will be tolerated. We will be creating and enforcing a space of absolute focus and concentration, free from outside distractions so as to best immerse ourselves within the worlds and characters that your fellow students are creating.

**Important Dates**

- August 14: First day of UWG classes
- August 20: Last day to add/drop a class 11:59 pm
- Aug 23-27: Roster Verification
- September 2: Labor Day Holiday (offices closed, no classes)
- October 3-4: Fall Break (no classes, offices open)
- October 9: Last day to withdraw (W) from full-term UWG courses
- November 25-29: Thanksgiving Recess and Holiday
- December 6: Classes End
- Dec 7-13 Final Exams
- Dec 16: Grades Due by Noon

**Schedule**

This course will be broken into roughly two halves. The first half we will focus on general story structure and discussing the fundamentals of not only how to write effectively, but specifically how to write SCREENPLAYS effectively, both in terms of formant and technique. The second half of the semester will be dedicated mainly to the development of student-written scenes leading up to your final script.

Please note that this schedule is merely a template, and as such is scheduled to change as needed. Note also that Exercise assignments, while not listed in the schedule, will be assigned throughout the semester.

Open Drop ends at 11:59 pm Tuesday, August 20th  
Open Add ends at 11:59 pm Tuesday, August 20th  
Wednesday October 9th - Last Day to Withdraw with a grade of W

| Week 1   | Thur 8/15 | Intro, Syllabus, Expectations  
|          |          | Assign: Screenplay Examples, Self-Assessment |
| Week 2   | Tue 8/20, Thur 8/22 | Story vs. Premise, Structure  
|          |          | DUE: Starting the Engine |

Drop/Add Period Ends
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Tue 8/27, Thur 8/29</td>
<td>Character</td>
<td>Observation Report</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Tue 9/3, Thur 9/5</td>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Exercise</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Tue 9/10, Thur 9/12</td>
<td>Writing with Images</td>
<td>Exercise</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Tue 9/17, Thur 9/19</td>
<td>Screenplay Format</td>
<td>Script Analysis</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Tue 9/24, Thur 9/26</td>
<td>Loglines</td>
<td>Discuss Script 1</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Tue 10/1, Thur 10/3</td>
<td>Pitch Ideas, Script 1</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Tue 10/8, Thur 10/10</td>
<td>Feedback, Table Reads Script 1</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Tue 10/15, Thur 10/17</td>
<td>DUE: Script 1 Finals</td>
<td>Discuss &amp; Assign Script 2</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Tue 10/22, Thur 10/24</td>
<td>Feedback, Table Reads Script 2</td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Tue 10/29, Thur 10/31</td>
<td>DUE: Script 2 Finals</td>
<td>Discuss &amp; Assign Script 3</td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Tue 11/5, Thur 11/7</td>
<td>Feedback, Table Reads Script 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>Tue 11/12, Thur 11/14</td>
<td>DUE: Script 3 Finals</td>
<td>Discuss &amp; Assign Final Script</td>
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<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Tue 11/19, Thur 11/21</td>
<td>Pitch Final Scripts</td>
<td>Industry Lecture</td>
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<td>Week 16</td>
<td>Tue 11/26, Thur 11/28</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break - No Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 17</td>
<td>Tue 12/3</td>
<td>Feedback, Table Reads</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thur 12/5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam Period</td>
<td>Tue 12/10</td>
<td>2:00 - 4:00 pm</td>
<td>DUE: Final Scripts</td>
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<td>Finish Table Reads, if needed</td>
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Class Policies

Cell Phone Policy: Cell phones have no place in the classroom whatsoever. Turn them off and put them away before you come into class. If I see your cell phone, you will be marked absent for the day, which will also mean that any work you turn in that day will, at best, be considered a late submission if accepted at all.

In the EXTREME CASE that you have a situation in which you may have to take a call in class (ie, a severed personal or family situation that you may need to be updated on/attend to immediately), let me know beforehand, and I will determine whether or not I consider it an acceptable circumstance and allow you to leave the room to deal with the matter.

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 his or her email frequently for class, department, and University information. I frequently email documents and class-related updates - not checking your email is no excuse for not completing work on time.

I try to answer emails as quickly as possible, but do note that it may take as long as 24 hours (48 over the weekend) for me to respond. Do not email me at the last minute expecting an immediate response. Similarly, I will never email you with less than 24 hours notice with any course demands or changes.

DO NOT email me through D2L/CourseDen.

Students With Special Needs: If you are a student who is disabled as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act and requires assistance or support services, you may seek assistance through Accessibility Service. An AS Counselor will coordinate those services, and provide you with the necessary documentation to give to me. Students who need accommodations for learning or who have particular needs should then share these concerns or requests with me early in the term (no later than week 3 of the course). See the above link.

Classroom Etiquette: Exercising personal freedom is an appealing part of adult life. In order to create an atmosphere where individual expression and social interchange are respected, please observe the following guidelines: (1) address each other with respect; (2) contribute to discussions often, without dominating them; (3) stay focused on the topic being discussed. Side-chatter is distracting for everyone, especially myself, and is wasted energy; focus that energy into the discussion. Disruptive behavior in the classroom is not acceptable.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty will NOT be tolerated in this or any other UWG course. This includes plagiarism in your written work, and cheating on tests or quizzes. It will result in failure on assignment(s), failure of the course as a whole, as well as possible disciplinary sanction(s) as stipulated by University rules. See the link above.
Equal Opportunity Statement: No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age, or disability, be excluded from employment or participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by The University of West Georgia.

Affirmative Action Statement: The University of West Georgia adheres to affirmative action policies to promote diversity and equal opportunity for all faculty and students.

Common Syllabus Language

Students should review the following information regarding ADA, UWG Email Policy, Credit Hour Policy, and UWG Honor Code.

https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/common-language-course-syllabi.php.