

# CAPILANO UNIVERSITY COURSE OUTLINE

MOPA 206 – SCREENWRITING II

Fall 2016

Division	School of Motion Picture Arts		
Course Name	MOPA 206 – Screenwriting II	Credits: 3	
Instructors		<a href="mailto:xxx@capilanou.ca">xxx@capilanou.ca</a>	604.986.1911 local xxx
Office			

## VISION STATEMENT

The School of Motion Picture Arts is dedicated to inspiring a new generation of independent Canadian filmmakers through the fostering and mentoring of emerging talent utilizing progressive learning environments and authentic production experiences, such that graduates make valued contributions to the global media culture.

## COURSE FORMAT

Four lecture hours per week, for 15 weeks.

## COURSE PREREQUISITES

25 credits of 100 level MOPA.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

### General

This course fosters the development of screen-based narratives from ideation to the execution of a producible short screenplay; employing conventional creative frameworks and technical considerations; advancing the student's ability to translate ethereal concepts into an audiovisual blueprint.

### Instructional

Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:

- \* Implement the fundamentals of dramatic criteria;
- \* Create screen ideas in synopsis, outline and screenplay form;
- \* Express their ideas consistent with screenplay conventions; namely dialogue, description and screen direction;
- \* Understand how to think, write and translate visually for the screen;
- \* Work with others collaboratively instead of competitively;
- \* Give and take feedback/criticism;
- \* Draw on a variety of methods to initiate the creative process;
- \* Write a short screenplay for production.

<b>PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>
<b>Program Mission</b>
We teach motion picture entertainment industry workflows by advancing student skills in the areas of technical motion picture arts practices and other professional work processes.
<b>Program Goals</b>
<p>Our program goals include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify and clarify the specific hierarchies and corresponding workflows of the diverse entertainment industry sectors;</li> <li>- Build upon students' skills in industry-standard time management, communications, human resources and team-based working processes;</li> <li>- Advance creative and technical skillsets within the context of industry standards;</li> <li>- Assist students in building critical awareness of their unique interests and aptitudes in relation to the diverse employment opportunities in the entertainment industries.</li> </ul>

<b>PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>
<p>Students successfully completing this program will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Apply creative principles used to develop a screenplay and critique scripts for production purposes;</li> <li>2. Execute basic film directing skills, including conceiving a visual strategy for telling a story using motion picture arts, working actors and leading a film crew;</li> <li>3. Design and produce sophisticated short independent films while employing protocols of professional film set procedures and advanced technical skills in a professional manner;</li> <li>4. Schedule and budget the pre-production, production and post-production of short independent films;</li> <li>5. Identify and describe major factors that influenced filmmaking over the course of cinema history.</li> </ol>

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

The Elements of Screenwriting by Irwin R. Blacker.

Further course materials provided by the instructor/s on Moodle site.

**WEEKS 1-15****WEEK 1: Introduction to Course and Story**

- Course goals and objectives
- What is story?
- Particulars for writing screen media
- Introduction to *The Elements of Screenwriting*

**WEEK 2: Premise, Theme & Conflict**

- Premise & Theme
- Creating dramatic conflict.
- Introduction to Group Project: three-minute script  
(A1) *Premise and Synopsis paper assigned. (due week 4)*  
(A5) *Group Project Three-minute Script (due week 6)*

**WEEK 3: Character**

- Character-driven narratives (cause and effect structures)
- Designing protagonists, antagonists and supporting characters
- Building character profiles
- Creating and using backstories
- Archetype versus stereotype

**WEEK 4: Plot and Structure**

- Understanding plot and structure
- The event, the scene, the act and the beat
- Writing outlines  
(A1) *Premise, Synopsis & Character profiles due.*  
(A2) *Outline assigned (due next week, week 5)*

**WEEK 5: Crafting Visuals**

- Cinema as a visual medium
- Learning to write visually
- Using word, dialogue and image combinations  
(A2) *Outline due at beginning of class.*  
(A5) *Three-minute Script due*  
(A4) *Project: First draft screenplay assigned*

**WEEK 6: Dialogue**

- Writing dialogue: approaches and practice?
- Naturalism versus stylized
- Understanding and building subtext

**WEEK 7: Genre**

- Intro to Genre
- Genre tropes, conventions and audience expectations
- Film Noir Case Study  
(A4) *1<sup>st</sup> Draft Screenplay due*  
(A3) *Term Project assigned (due week 9)*  
(A6) *Assignment of Final Draft Screenplay (due week 12)*

**WEEK 8: Rewriting**

- Rewriting strategies
- Lynda Seager's *Making a Good Script Great*
- Classroom workshop time

**WEEK 9: Review & Story Meetings**

- Curriculum Review of Weeks 1 to 6.
- Story meetings between/with students (workshop)

**WEEK 10: Workshop**

- The Instructor will lead a workshop pertaining to the skills, project work and/or issues that have developed, arisen or have been identified as problematic in the script pool.
- Instructors will give lectures based on their experience as professional writers
- Cold readings of scripts in development

**WEEK 11: Workshop**

- The Instructor will lead a workshop pertaining to the skills, project work and/or issues that have developed, arisen or have been identified as problematic in the script pool.
- Instructors will give lectures based on their experience as professional writers
- Cold readings of scripts in development

**WEEK 12: Wrap-Up**

- Discussion about script selections for production
  - Quiz
  - Advice and discussion for short film production pitches
- (A6) Final draft Screenplay due.*

**WEEK 13: Course Review**

- Course review and pitching sessions

**WEEK 14/15: Pitches**

- Pitch panels and presentations for MOPA 210 spring projects.

Fourth hour: includes screenings, project meetings and group project work.

EVALUATION PROFILE	
(A1) Synopsis, Premise & Character profiles	10%
(A2) Outline	10%
(A3) Term Project	20%
(A4) 1 <sup>st</sup> Draft Screenplay	15%
(A5) Group Project Three-Minute Screenplay	10%
(A6) Final Draft Screenplay	15%
Quizzes	10%
Participation, Professionalism and Attendance	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Grading Profile			
A+ = 90-100%	B+ = 77-79%	C+ = 67-69%	D = 50-59%
A = 85-89%	B = 73-76%	C = 63-66%	F = 00-49%
A- = 80-84%	B- = 70-72%	C- = 60-62%	

<b>OPERATIONAL DETAILS:</b>
Capilano University has policies on Academic Appeals (including appeal of final grade), Student Conduct, Cheating and Plagiarism, Academic Probation and other educational issues. These and other policies are available on the University website.
<b>ATTENDANCE:</b>
Attendance will be taken daily and will form part of the final grade (See Evaluation Profile). When students are absent from class, they are still responsible for the material covered during their absence, including announcements, assigned readings and hand-outs.
<b>PUNCTUALITY:</b>
Punctuality is essential and forms part of the participation grade. Late attendance will be reflected in the student's final grade.
<b>LATE ASSIGNMENTS:</b>
All assignments must be delivered at the place and time specified by the instructor. Late assignments will only be accepted if prior approval for a late submission date has been given by the instructor.
<b>MISSED EXAMS AND QUIZZES:</b>
Missed exams and quizzes will be assigned a grade of zero. Students will be allowed to make up exams and quizzes only under the following conditions: if a doctor's certificate of illness is provided; if, in the case of the death of a close family member, a death certificate is provided; if prior approval of the instructor has been obtained.
<b>CHEATING/PLAGIARISM:</b>
Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's work or ideas as if they were one's own. Plagiarism is both dishonest and a rejection of the principles of scholarship. All students should familiarize themselves with the University Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism (See the University website) as such behaviour can result in suspension from the University.
<b>INCOMPLETE GRADES:</b>
Grades of Incomplete "I" will be granted only if there is a valid reason for extending the evaluation deadline and if students have a reasonable chance of improving their grade to pass the course.
<b>ENGLISH USAGE:</b>
All written work submitted must use good academic English and follow the guidelines provided in the Capilano University Guide to Writing Assignments (available from the University Bookstore). It is the responsibility of students to proof-read all their writing for any grammatical, spelling and stylistic errors.
<b>STUDIO/FILMING DISCIPLINE:</b>
Students must be dressed appropriately. Wet and cold weather requires waterproof and warm clothing. Students are required to wear work clothes for technical and production sessions. Clothing may be subjected to dirt, paint and dust. Sturdy shoes are a must. No food or beverages are allowed on set during production activities and during technical classes. Disruptive students will be asked to leave.
<b>COMPUTER COURSE REQUIREMENTS/RESPONSIBILITIES:</b>
You are expected to abide by the Statement of Appropriate Use of Information Technology Facilities and Services in any use of computers at the University. This statement can be obtained from your department, the Library, Computer Services or on the University website.
<b>ELECTRONIC DEVICES/LAPTOPS:</b>
Use of electronic devices is not allowed during class time, except at the discretion of the instructor.

**COMPUTER LAB USAGE:**

No food or beverages are allowed in the University's computer labs at any time. Students must not abuse internet privileges by visiting inappropriate or illegal websites. Students are expected to abide by the Statement of Appropriate Use of Information Technology Facilities and Services in any use of computers at the University. This statement can be obtained from the department, the Library, Computer Services, or on the University website. Intentionally opening and/or altering other students' projects will not be tolerated. Respect for other students' work is of utmost importance. Offences regarding the above will result in the "0" mark in the participation grade, and restricted access to facilities.

**PARTICIPATION/PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR:**

The grade for class participation is based on both the frequency and the quality of students' comments, questions and observations, with the emphasis on quality. The quality is determined by, among other things, the relevance, insight and clarity of remarks. Students are expected to demonstrate a professional attitude and behaviour towards their work, fellow-students, and their instructor. Students should demonstrate reliability, respect for and co-operation with colleagues. A willingness to work calmly and courteously under difficult conditions as well as a determination to achieve first-class work while meeting deadlines is necessary in this course. Students should have respect for equipment and systems, and a constructive response to criticism.

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:**

Students should familiarize themselves with emergency procedures posted in the classroom.