CAPILANO UNIVERSITY COURSE OUTLINE
MOPA 106 – SCREENWRITING I

Fall 2016

Division	School of Motion Picture Arts	
Course Name	MOPA 106 – Screenwriting I	Credits: 3
Instructor	xxx@capilanou.ca	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
None.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

General

To give students an understanding of screen story structures and the screenplay's importance in the film making process.

Instructional

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

* Analyze films from a writer's point of view.
* Identify both internal and external screenplay structures.
* Identify and apply the basic tools of screenplay writing.
* Write short scripts in proper screenplay format.
* Understand the concepts of story and character arc and text and subtext.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Program Mission

The Motion Picture Arts Certificate program is designed for students who wish to gain an understanding of the basic functions of a film set and the professional practices of an industry-standard production. Areas of study include story development, pre-production, production, and post-production, with a focus on film crafts (camera, lighting, sound, grip, sets, props, etc.) technical skills and professional behaviour. Lecture, labs and project work combine to create a realistic and effective learning environment. The goal is to prepare students for an entry-level position in the professional motion

picture industry and to provide a foundation for independent filmmaking. This Certificate forms the 100-level of the Bachelor of Motion Picture Arts Degree program and of the Motion Picture Arts Diploma program.

Program Goals

Knowledge:
To introduce and provide access to current technologies and protocols of the motion picture production process from concept to completion at an introductory level.
To articulate, demonstrate and provide practice in the roles of various crew positions on a set.

Skills:
To enable students to apply appropriate management practices and procedures.
To encourage proper set etiquette and crew team-work.

Value:
To demonstrate and encourage industry standard professionalism.

PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the certificate, students should be able to:

1. Describe the motion picture production process and demonstrate an introductory understanding of the roles of the producer, director, production designer, writer, editor and various crew positions on the set.

2. Implement at an entry level the scripting, development, production design, pre-production, production, post-production and delivery of short dramatic narrative independent films in a collaborative manner utilizing professional standard communication skills, protocols and techniques.

3. Acquire and apply appropriate management practices and procedures including the computational, intuitive, creative and technical skills involved in pre-production, production, post-production, such as screenplay development, breakdown, scheduling and budgeting, for small-scale projects.

4. Demonstrate keys to success, including attitude, teamwork, set etiquette, human/public relations, professional behavior and self-marketing in the established and emerging motion picture industry sectors.

5. Determine how aesthetic engagement can enable cultural contributions through the effective use of media.

REQUIRED TEXTS

No required text, but bring a thin 3 ring binder for handouts you'll need to keep referring back to.

WEEKS 1-15
WEEK 1:
Course introduction and outline * Definitions of basic screen story components * Scene by scene analytic screening of part of a film with a very basic screen story * **Putting it on paper**—the basic screenplay format * **Homework**—write 2 pgs/3 scenes of properly formatted screenplay
WEEK 2:
* Completion of analytic screening of film with basic screen story * Discussion of character cast and subplots used in the film * **Putting it on paper**—what to include/what not to, and relate it to 2 page/3 scene * Story beginning, middle and end * **Homework**—rewrite 2 page/3 scene exercise scripts using added knowledge from class 2
WEEK 3:
* **DUE DATE**: **Assignment #1 -** Delivery of 2 Page/3 Scene exercise scripts * Introduction of the paradigm for single protagonist three act structure * Scene by scene analytic screening of part of a film with single protagonist structure * Discussion of characteristics, character and character arc * **Putting it on paper**—Introduction of Concepts/High concepts * **Homework**—Create and write a concept for a 3 page scene
WEEK 4:
* Completion of analytic screening of a single protagonist film * A system of work flow to get from idea to draft script * Critique of student—read aloud—3 page scene concepts * **Homework**— Create and write the event and structure for the 3 page scene
WEEK 5:

Student "Writer and story editor" teams read aloud and give "notes" on 3 page scene
     event/structures
   Homework—Write 3 page scenes

WEEK 6:
* **DUE DATE**: **Assignment #2 -** Delivery of 3 page scenes * Introduction of Multi Protagonist screenplay structure * Scene by scene analytic screening of a film with multi protagonist story structure * Discussion of characters arcs/similarities and differences re single protagonist structure.
WEEK 7:
* Introduction of structural tools for the Action screenplay * Scene by scene analytic screening of part of an Action film * Introduction of guidelines for pitching a screenplay * Rough, in class practice pitches by students critiqued and adjusted by instructor * **Homework**– Prepare a WRITTEN AND VERBAL pitch for a 5 page script.
WEEKS 8 & 9:
* **DUE DATE**: **Assignment #3 -** Delivery of written five page script pitches (**Week 8**) * Students give verbal pitches for 5 page scripts and receive critique and questions from the instructor   and other students.

WEEK 10:
*Return of student 5 page script pitches with development notes *Introduction to the tools of "entertainment writing" - kinds of scenes, levels of conflict *Scene by scene analytic screening of a film using entertainment writing tools ***Homework**– Write first draft of a 5 page script.
WEEK 11:
* Screenplay dialogue—what it is, how it works * Analytic screenings illustrating different usage of dialogue in film * Introduction of the screenplay's usual journey from idea to silver screen * The basic structure of studios, production companies and agencies * Readers and the importance of their coverage * Usage of show scripts and spec scripts * **Homework**—Rewrite the dialogue in the 5 page scripts
WEEK 12:
* Introduction to the basic building blocks of character driven drama * Relation of the building blocks to the classic 3 act structure * Scene by scene analytic screening of part of a character driven drama film * Discussion of rewriting for the mythic beats in the story * **Homework**—Complete/rewrite the 5 page script for submission
WEEK 13:
* **DUE DATE**: **Assignment #4 -** Delivery of the 5 page scripts * Completion of the analytic screening of character driven drama film * View and analyze some bad screenwriting ***REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM**
WEEK 14:
FINAL EXAM
WEEK 15:
Student feedback, meetings, discussions re homework, test marks and grades.

Fourth hour: May include screenings, project meetings and project work.

EVALUATION PROFILE	
Assignments**	60%
Final exam	30%
Participation and Attendance	10%
Total	**100%**

**ASSIGNMENTS	
Assignment #1: 2 page/3 scene exercise scripts	10%
Assignment #2: 3 page scene	20%
Assignment #3: 5 page script pitch	10%
Assignment #4: 5 page script	20%
Total	60%

*ASSIGNMENTS DELIVERED ON DUE DATE WILL GET FULL MARKS.

*ASSIGNMENTS DELIVERED UP TO 24 HOURS LATE WILL HAVE 10% DEDUCTED

*ASSIGNMENTS DELIVERED UP TO 48 HOURS LATE WILL HAVE 20% DEDUCTED.

*ASSIGNMENTS DELIVERED MORE THAN 48 HOURS LATE WILL NOT BE READ AND WILL RECEIVE A MARK OF ZERO.

*HANDWRITTEN HOMEWORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

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%	

OPERATIONAL DETAILS:
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.
ATTENDANCE:
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.
PUNCTUALITY:
Punctuality is essential and forms part of the participation grade. Late attendance will be reflected in the student's final grade.
LATE ASSIGNMENTS:
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.
MISSED EXAMS AND QUIZZES:
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.
CHEATING/PLAGIARISM:
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.
INCOMPLETE GRADES:
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.
ENGLISH USAGE:
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.

STUDIO/FILMING DISCIPLINE:
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.
COMPUTER COURSE REQUIREMENTS/RESPONSIBILITIES:
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.
ELECTRONIC DEVICES/LAPTOPS:
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. 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.