

**College of San Mateo
Official Course Outline**

1. **COURSE ID:** FILM 154 **TITLE:** Expanded Scriptwriting Skills
Units: 3.0 units **Hours/Semester:** 48.0-54.0 Lecture hours; and 96.0-108.0 Homework hours
Method of Grading: Grade Option (Letter Grade or Pass/No Pass)
2. **COURSE DESIGNATION:**
Degree Credit
Transfer credit: CSU; UC
3. **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:**
Catalog Description:
Open to beginning and experienced writers, this course guides students through scriptwriting for film and electronic media, with emphasis on nonfiction. Students are encouraged to design their own projects, whether documentary, webisode pilot or other short format hybrid forms, and to explore social issues that matter to them. Topics may include writing and re-writing labs; development of treatments and in-progress scripts; pitch and strategy sessions; and research skills supporting content development
4. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME(S) (SLO'S):**
Upon successful completion of this course, a student will meet the following outcomes:
 1. Demonstrate a command of short format modes, genres and structure, as well as basic story and character development.
 2. Display ability to write short format scripts for non-fiction and/or fiction film and electronic media.
 3. Demonstrate familiarity with various tasks surrounding script production, including proper formatting, analysis, presentation and research
5. **SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:**
Upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:
 1. Demonstrate an understanding of the technical and aesthetic issues relating to writing for film and electronic media.
 2. Create short scripts for film, television, web streaming and electronic media in non-fiction and fiction formats
 3. Interpret and apply the elements, operations, and appeals of dramatic story structure and representation of information and ideas.
6. **COURSE CONTENT:**
Lecture Content:

A. Technical and aesthetic issues relating to writing short format for film and electronic media.
 1. Conceptual role of the screenwriting process
Process of script composition or design

Other arts with composition or design phases
 2. Formatting for short format narrative and documentary film, webisode, music video and interactive gaming
Preparing the Short format script:
Executive summaries
Treatments
Character biographies
World Building
Research plan
Distribution plan
Grant proposals
 3. Units in scripting film and electronic media
Shot: continuous footage that runs for an uninterrupted period of time
Scene: assemblies of shots

Sequence: assemblies of shots and scenes that form a distinct narrative unit
Transitions: markers for time and place
Structure: completed form as a type, variety, or genre
Shot lists v. Storyboarding

4. Practical or organizational role of the script
Overview of short format script types and phases:
Shooting Script = Camera Department (Cinematographer)
Breakdown Script = Art Department (Art Director)
Lined Script = Producing Department (Line Producers, etc.)
Director's Script = Performance/Actors

B. Script as language of communication in collaborative media

1. Logline, treatment, beat sheet, scene list, screenplay pages and oral pitches
2. Promotion of scripts to collaborators and producers
3. Techniques and aids in pitching
4. Analyzing works-in-progress with the class and participate in the collaborative evolution of student script projects

C. Interpreting and applying the elements, operations, and appeals of dramatic structure and representation of information and ideas

1. Appeals to spectator: emotional, logical, and physiological
2. Operations and structure of dramatic representation
 - Dramatic logic
 - Story, plot, character, setting, and style
 - Aristotelian three-act story structure
3. Other nonfiction storytelling modes and sequencing

D. Creating short scripts for film, television, and electronic media in non-fiction and fiction formats

Short format fiction/nonfiction hybrid forms

1. Two-column television or video format
2. Webisode pilot script
3. Treatment format in dramatic narrative
4. First 10-30 pages of a short format project
5. Gaming, interactive script
6. Music video

Non-Fiction

1. Public service announcements and commercials
2. Talk shows: interview, panel, discussion
3. Documentary: Social Issues, Social Justice
4. Instructional and corporate productions

7. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

Typical methods of instruction may include:

- A. Lecture
- B. Critique
- C. Discussion

8. REPRESENTATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Representative assignments in this course may include, but are not limited to the following:

Writing Assignments:

Journals for creative ideas

Film treatments, synopses and set-ups
Character sketches
Dialogue in Proper Script Format
Possible outside research on feature screenplays
Peer feedback on other classmates' work
Screenplay drafts
Screenwriting assignments
1. Non-fiction: public service announcement or commercial
2. Non-fiction: objective news or subjective documentary
3. Short film pitching
4. Fiction: logline
5. Fiction: treatment
6. Fiction: beat sheets
7. Fiction: First 10-26 pages of Act I
C. Viewing films and other forms of the moving image to illustrate screenwriting principles
Peer review and commentary workshop sessions

Reading Assignments:

Reading and studying a variety of celebrated or classic narrative screenplays (many available online)
Textbook reading assignments on proper screenplay format
Textbook reading assignments on character development, narrative conflict, dramatic structure, setting, and so on

9. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF EVALUATION

Representative methods of evaluation may include:

- A. Class Participation
- B. Class Performance
- C. Exams/Tests
- D. Group Projects
- E. Homework
- F. Papers
- G. Quizzes

10. REPRESENTATIVE TEXT(S):

Possible textbooks include:

- A. Friedman, Anthony. *Writing for Visual Media*, 4th ed. New York: Routledge, 2014
- B. Seger, Linda. *Making a Good Script Great*, 3rd ed. Los Angeles: Silman James Press, 2010
- C. Venis, Linda, Ed.. *Cut to the Chase*, ed. New York: Gotham, 2013
- D. Alan C. Hueth. *Scriptwriting for film, television and new media*, ed. New York: Routledge, 2019
- E. Jennifer Van Sijll. *Cinematic Storytelling*, ed. New York: Michael Wiese Productions, 2005
- F. Alan Rosenthal and Ned Eckhardt. *Writing, Directing and producing documentary film and digital video*, ed. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ Press, 2016

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Course Originator: David Laderman