

COURSE OUTLINE

English 112
Screenwriting

I. Catalog Statement

English 112 is a basic course in the principles and practice of writing for film and cinema. Emphasis is placed upon the essentials of screenplay structure, format, sequence, characterization, and the dramatic scene. The course includes critical analysis through reading selected screenplays and viewing specific dramatic scenes portrayed on film. Students learn fundamentals of dramatic screenwriting and are familiarized with the elements and tools of screenwriting.

Total Lecture Units: 3.0

Total Course Units: 3.0

Total Lecture Hours: 48.0

Total Faculty Contract Hours: 48.0

Prerequisite: Eligibility for ENGL 101.

I. Course Entry Expectations

Skills Level Ranges: Reading 6; Writing 6; Listening/Speaking 6; Math 1

Prior to enrolling in this course, the student should be able to:

1. analyze short essays to identify thesis, topic, transitional, developmental and concluding sentences;
2. evaluate prose works dealing with important contemporary issues;
3. organize and write thesis-based essays which address the topic as directed by a thesis statement and show a basic understanding of essay organization through an introduction, body, and conclusion;
4. illustrate awareness of critical thinking: i.e., through thorough, thoughtful, question-asking and judgment-forming, separation of elements into their parts, inference to draw conclusions, and synthesis of elements to link them into a new whole;
5. summarize, analyze, and synthesize information, express and apply standards for judgment, compare and contrast, and evaluate evidence in order to form and state reasoned opinions;
6. show ability to provide detailed examples, facts, logical explanations, library research, and other appropriate evidence to support claims;

7. demonstrate a command of grammar, diction, syntax, and mechanics sufficient for college level work as specified by the English 120 rubric.

II. Course Exit Standards

Upon successful completion of required coursework, the student will be able to:

1. analyze, synthesize, and evaluate script scene-types and script sequences portrayed on film;
2. understand, organize, and demonstrate the basic elements of screenplay form and structure;
3. combine these elements in original short script and specific dramatic scene-type compositions writing for cinema;
4. create complex characters with complete stories within the context of a specific scene-type.

III. Course Content

Total Faculty Contact Hours = 48

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|---------------------------------------|----------|
| A. Screenplay Form | 2 hours |
| 1. Format and structure | |
| 2. Technical details and measurements | |
| 3. Script and film terms | |
| B. Character and Characterization | 6 hours |
| 1. Types of Characters | |
| 2. Creating a Character | |
| a. Research | |
| b. Development | |
| c. Revelation | |
| C. Screenplay Essentials | 2 hours |
| 1. Using visual and audio elements | |
| 2. Writing dialogue | |
| 3. Creating conflict and obstacles | |
| 4. Developing beginnings and endings | |
| D. Writing Specific Scene-Types | 10 hours |
| 1. Setting | |
| 2. Atmosphere / Mood | |
| 3. Introduction | |
| 4. Exposition | |
| 5. Preparation / Aftermath | |
| 6. Investigation | |
| 7. Revelation | |

8. Recognition
 9. Escape
 10. Pursuit
 11. Seduction
 12. Opposites
 13. Reversal of Expectations
 14. Unexpected Visitor
- E. Viewing and analysis of film scenes and features 8 hours
1. Understanding and summarizing scene types
 2. Exploration of how character is revealed
 3. Identifying visual clues
 4. Illustrating the link between critical thinking and writing
- F. Writing Workshop 16 hours
1. Student presentation of written work
 2. Critique and analysis of that work
 3. Feedback for students to apply to future work
- G. Understanding Three Act Structure 2 hours
- H. Identifying Sequences 2 hours

IV. Methods of Instruction

The following instructional methodologies may be used in the course:

1. classroom lecture and discussion;
2. collaborative learning, including in-class writing workshop sessions that provides critical evaluation and analytical feedback of student work;
3. evaluation and analysis of viewing selected scenes and sequences on film;
4. evaluation and analysis of reading selected scenes in script format;
5. demonstration, evaluation, and analysis of specific dramatic scenes: i.e., preparation and aftermath, seduction, opposites, reversals, unexpected visitor, character introductions;
6. analysis of feature length films;
7. writing, both in and out of class;
8. student presentations;
9. guest speakers;
10. educational technologies, including word processing, internet, and electronic presentation.

V. Out of Class Assignments

The following out of class assignments may be used in this course:

1. writing assignments on specific scene types (e.g. three pages unexpected visitor scene where one character is preparing for someone to arrive and the wrong person shows up);
2. writing assignments on basic structure (e.g. a critical analysis essay that responds to a selected film by identifying basic structure and character elements).

VI. Methods of Evaluation

The following methods of evaluation may be used in this course:

1. quizzes;
2. midterm examinations;
3. instructor and peer evaluation of student work;
4. peer review or critique of student work;
5. small group case study analyses followed by class presentations of analyses;
6. workshop participation, fair but objective response feedback to student work;
7. instructor evaluation of individual assignments presented to class;
8. final examination.

VII. Textbooks

Field, S. *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*. 5th Edition.

ISBN 0385339038, Delta, 2005. Print.

Goldman, *Four Screenplays with Essays*. ISBN 155783265X, Applause, 2000.

Howard, David. *How to Build a Great Screenplay: A Master Class in Storytelling for Film*, ISBN 031235262X, St. Martin's Griffin, 2006. Print.

McKee, Robert. *Story: Substance, Structure, Style and The Principles of Screenwriting*. ISBN 0060856181, Methuen Publishing, 2005. Print.

Newmarket Press Shooting Script Series. Print.

Selected screenplays. (e.g. *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Sideways*, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *Magnolia*, *Traffic*, *Erin Brockovich*, *American Beauty*, *The Shawshank Redemption*, among others).

The Script Lab. Online Screenwriting Resource (www.thescriptlab.com) Web.

Trottier, David. *The Screenwriter's Bible: A Complete Guide to Writing, Formatting, and Selling Your Script*, 5th Edition. ISBN 1935247026
Silman-James Pr, 2010. Print.

Truby, John. *The Anatomy of Story: 22 Steps to Becoming a Master Storyteller*. ISBN 0865479518, Faber & Faber, 2008. Print.

Walter, Richard. *Essentials of Screenwriting: The Art, Craft, and Business of Film and Television Writing*. ISBN 0452296277, Plume, 2010. Print.

*NOTE: The textbooks listed above are the most recent texts in this field of study.

VIII. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, the student will be able to:

1. Critically read screenplays and texts in order to identify and apply screenwriting fundamentals;
2. Analyze and critique specific dramatic scenes portrayed on film;
3. Write specific dramatic scenes, in proper screenplay format, demonstrating elements learned;
4. Write a critical analytical essay that identifies major plot points, basic character elements, and screenplay fundamentals learned.

Justification for Need

English 112 is a critical thinking and creative writing course as well as part of the Screenwriting progression within the English Department that complements both English 212 (Advanced Screenwriting) and English 222 (Feature Film Analysis). English 112 is also a course that articulates to other colleges and Universities, both UCs and CSUs, to which GCC students most frequently transfer. In addition, English 212 will become an elective option course for an Associate in Arts for Transfer (AA-T) degree in English.