

COURSE OUTLINE

English 212
Advanced Screenwriting

I. Catalog Statement

English 212 is a continuation of English 112. Students will learn to think critically and develop their screenwriting skills through reading selected screenplays and viewing film clips that illustrate character, scene types, and structure essentials. Students will analyze films to learn the fundamentals of character creation, story development, and feature film structure. Students will create multiple character bios as well as develop a variety of story scenarios, choosing one to outline as a feature length film. A completed first act of the feature will be written in screenplay form by the completion of the course.

Total Lecture Units: 3.0

Total Course Units: 3.0

Total Lecture Hours: 48.0

Total Faculty Contract Hours: 48.0

Prerequisite: ENGL 112 or equivalent.

II. 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, synthesize, and evaluate script scenes-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 Exit Standards

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

1. understand, organize, and apply advanced elements of screenplay character, story, and structure;
2. analyze, synthesize, and evaluate written screenplays in three act structure;
3. create and write detailed and complex character biographies;
4. develop story outlines through applying specific film scenarios;
5. complete a comprehensive plot outline for an original feature length screenplay that is broken down into eight sequences within three act structure;
6. write the first act of an original feature film in screenplay form.

IV. Course Content

Total Faculty Contact Hours = 48

A. Character Creation and Characterization 6 hours

1. Creating a character
2. Researching a character
3. Character arcs
3. Character roles
4. Main characters: protagonist vs. antagonist
5. Supporting characters: friends and rivals
6. Symbolic characters
7. Mythic characters
8. One-string characters

B. Screenplay Essentials 3 hours

1. Using visual and audio elements
2. Writing dialogue
3. Writing Voice Over (VO) /and Off Screen (OS) dialogue
4. Creating conflict and obstacles
5. Connecting scenes to create sequences
6. Using transitions
7. Determining beginnings from endings
8. Avoiding predictability
9. Creating audience identification

C. Developing Story Scenarios 9 hours

D. Analysis of Film Scenes Applicable to Student Work 9 hours

1. Developing beginnings and endings
2. Exploration of how character is revealed
3. Identifying Act Breaks, Plot Points, and Sequences
4. Illustrating the link between critical thinking and writing

- E. Outlining a Feature Film Screenplay 6 hours
- G. Writing Workshop 15 hours
 - 1. Student presentation of written work
 - 2. Critique and analysis of that work
 - 3. Feedback for students to apply to future work

V. Methods of Instruction

The following instructional methodologies may be used in the course:

1. classroom lecture and discussion;
2. illustration of character research, introductions, and identification;
3. demonstration of specific story scenarios;
4. evaluation and analysis of plot points, sequences and three act structure, which are all fundamental building blocks of screenplay design;
5. analysis of feature length films for better understanding of how plot points, sequences and act breaks work together in the larger whole of a feature script;
6. collaborative learning, including in-class writing workshop sessions that provides critical evaluation and analytical feedback of student work;
7. writing, both in and out of class;
8. student presentations;
9. guest speakers;
10. educational technologies, including word processing, internet, and electronic presentation.

VI. Out of Class Assignments

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

1. writing assignments on character creation (e.g. a character bio that applies the three stages of character research: the initial idea, general context, and specific context);
2. writing assignments on story development (e.g. write a specific story scenario: rebellion, caper, love, escape, revenge, etc.);
3. writing assignments on structure outlining (e.g. structure a feature screenplay using the five major plot points: Inciting Incident, Lock-In, Midpoint, Main Culmination, Third Act Twist);
4. writing assignment on feature length screenwriting. (e.g. application of a student's structure outline by completing the First Act of the original screenplay);
5. individual presentations (e.g. an individual project including a written outline and presentation that pitches the student's feature screenplay idea as a logline and as a synopsis);
6. group presentations (e.g. group table readings for the first sequence – approx. 12 – 15 pages) of Act One of a student's screenplay).

VII. 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. class presentations of group projects;
7. instructor evaluation of individual assignments presented to class;
8. final examination.

VIII. Textbooks

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

ISBN 0385339038, Delta, 2005. Print.

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 0413715604, 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).

Seger, L. *Creating Unforgettable Characters*. ISBN 0805011714, Holt Paperbacks, 1990. Print.

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.

Vogler, Christopher. *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers*, 3rd edition. ISBN 193290736X Michael Wiese Productions, 2007. 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.

IX. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, the student will be able to:

1. Apply fundamentals of researching characters; develop and write character bios.
2. Understand story essentials; develop and write story scenarios.

3. Apply structure fundamentals to develop and write an outline for a feature length film.
4. Write the First Act (approx 24 – 30 pages depending upon genre) of an original feature script in proper screenplay format.

Justification for Need

English 212 is a critical thinking and creative writing course as well as part of the expanding Screenwriting progression within the English Department that compliments both English 112 (Screenwriting) and English 222 (Feature Film Analysis). English 212 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.