

ENGL A237: SCRIPTWRITING III

Item	Value
Curriculum Committee Approval Date	12/02/2020
Top Code	150700 - Creative Writing
Units	4 Total Units
Hours	72 Total Hours (Lecture Hours 72)
Total Outside of Class Hours	0
Course Credit Status	Credit: Degree Applicable (D)
Material Fee	No
Basic Skills	Not Basic Skills (N)
Repeatable	No
Open Entry/Open Exit	No
Grading Policy	Standard Letter (S), • Pass/No Pass (B)
Associate Arts Local General Education (GE)	• Area 3 Arts and Humanities 3A Theory (OC1)
Associate Science Local General Education (GE)	• Area 3B Humanities (OSC2)

Course Description

An intermediate scriptwriting workshop for students who have completed at least 60 pages of an original work. The emphasis at this stage will be on the refinement of structure, tone, dialogue, and character, in service to the emerging themes of the work-in-progress. Students will read essays on craft and will engage in research into the circumstances and settings featured in their scripts. After generating 30-60 new pages, students will carefully revise and edit their work, resulting in the completion of a substantial portion of their full-length plays/screenplays. Transfer Credit: CSU; UC.

Course Level Student Learning Outcome(s)

1. Understand the techniques of the craft, engage in relevant research, and apply (or in some cases, subvert) the conventions of scriptwriting to develop and revise the next segment of an original manuscript (30-60 pp.).

Course Objectives

- I Reading Skills
- I. 1. Explain and correctly employ the terminology of stage, screen, and television.
- I. 2. Apply general standards for critically evaluating stage plays, television episodes, and feature films.
- I. 3. Analyze narrative strategies in published scripts, taking into account the traditions from which they emerged, and employ those strategies, as appropriate, to maximize the impact of their work.
- I. 4. Study essays on craft and evaluate the applicability of various techniques to their own work.
- I. 5. Investigate a wide range of genres and short dramatic forms.
- I. 6. Understand the demands of writing for network and cable television.
- I. 7. Understand techniques for adapting prose fiction for the screen.

- I. 8. Identify the distinctions between mainstream and independent films.
- I. 9. Explore options in experimental / alternative scriptwriting.
- I. 10. Investigate current opportunities and production methods in digital media.
- I. 11. Initiate research into the economical, social and historical circumstances of their characters.
- II Writing Skills
- II. 1. Generate the next 30-60 pages of a work-in-progress, or write a complete short-form work, such as a half-hour sitcom, a one-hour drama, a pilot, or a one-act play.
- II. 2. Analyze original dramatic scenes and screenplays of peers in a workshop setting, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each work-in-progress.
- II. 3. Demonstrate critical thinking by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of their own original work and improving upon it.
- II. 4. Revise early and current drafts to improve plot, character development, continuity and coherence.
- II. 5. Recognize and exploit the interplay between various sections of a long-form work.
- II. 6. Incorporate research, as appropriate, to enhance the authenticity of the script.
- II. 7. Edit original work to eliminate surface errors and to meet professional standards.
- II. 8. Finalize a detailed step outline.
- II. 9. Explore theory and technique by responding in writing to essays on craft.
- III Ancillary Skills
- III. 1. Demonstrate appreciation of dramatic art via verbal and written analysis.
- III. 2. Participate in cold readings of peers' original dramatic scenes.
- III. 3. Identify standard production requirements through analysis of films and series episodes and evaluation of theatrical productions.

Lecture Content

An advanced course in scriptwriting for stage and screen, with an emphasis on alternative methods and venues, research, and revision, taught via text, lecture, videos, writing practice, and workshop. Writing skills are fostered through a range of exercises, including improvisation, collaborative scenes, overheard dialogue, premise development, character sketches, and scene building. Students participate in close reading and analysis of scenes, plays and screenplays. Peer and instructor feedback help students evaluate their own manuscripts as well as the manuscripts of others. Specific writing assignments may vary according to the instructor's assessment of student need. Advanced Script Development Issues Finalizing the Concept Advanced Plot Development Fine-tuning the Plot Points Integration of Multiple Plotlines Misdirection, Subversion, Subterfuge Advanced Structural Analysis Advanced Character Development Character-based Dialogue Advanced Treatment Development Production Values, Casting, Funding, Budgets, Shooting Schedules Alternative Methods and Venues Experimental / Alternative Scriptwriting Adaptation from Prose Fiction Writing for Digital Media Advanced Methods of Criticism Techniques for writing effective critiques Analysis of structure, style, and theme Applying judgments to published work Applying judgments to students' work Advanced Study of Appropriate Models Experimental plays and screenplays Digital media productions Critical reviews and essays on craft Advanced Research

Historical Context Location Studies Genre Manipulation Strategies of Published Authors Analysis of Essays on Craft Advanced Revision Techniques

Method(s) of Instruction

- Lecture (02)
- DE Live Online Lecture (02S)

Instructional Techniques

Lectures focus on advanced creative writing techniques and critical thinking strategies about the craft of writing for stage and screen, providing a variety of methods to enhance style, content, and voice. Lectures also focus on the methods of aesthetic evaluation, the process of revision, and research methods for lending authenticity to original work. Demonstration: Models of modern and contemporary plays and screenplays, with an emphasis on experimental forms, are demonstrated using a variety of methods: books, handouts, overheads, videos, and DVDs. Discussion: Students engage in regular discussions of reading and writing assignments, workshop group writing assignments, and topics (social, political, cultural, etc.) introduced in class. Technology: Students use the Internet to engage in research on their topics and to access information about major writers. They also use the Internet to view films, television episodes, and video clips of plays. Video Presentation: Students view relevant videos of major writers, producers, and directors discussing their work. Collaborative Learning: Partners and groups engage in a large amount of discussion of each other's written assignments and manuscripts. Supplemental Learning: Students will attend live performances of plays and readings by visiting writers, producers, and directors, when available, to model and assess the oral presentation and to meet with and talk to the professionals. Conferencing: The instructor is available for individual conferences throughout the semester.

Reading Assignments

Reading: 45 hours (3 hr/week) Students interpret and evaluate substantial amounts of dramatic literature and film, with an emphasis on adaptations, experimental, and alternative scriptwriting options in various genres, analyzing each work's success according to the application of standards established in class. They also review and discuss journal articles, critical essays, and books about writing for screen and stage. Students learn and demonstrate the ability to apply critical standards to contemporary film and dramatic work. Finally, they will initiate research into the economic, social, and historical circumstances of their characters and use what they discover to develop a credible context for their narratives. Students must also read and critique their colleagues' manuscripts each week, in seminar fashion, according to specific protocols, which require them to analyze, criticize, and assess one another's manuscripts according to dramatic techniques, such as plot, character development, scene, and setting. Critical thinking is involved in determining the technical solutions to the problems in the in-progress manuscripts. Additionally, students read selected screenplays, television scripts, and stage plays or excerpts for structural and technical analysis.

Writing Assignments

PLEASE NOTE: Writing assignments are prepared outside of class. Reading: Writing: 75 hrs (5 hr/2k) Students will produce a substantial amount of dramatic writing outside of class, 30-60 pages over the course of the semester in the genre of their choosing, exploring the techniques and options investigated in class. In addition, they will write critiques of peer submissions and published works, evaluating them according to intermediate dramatic strategies and techniques. Students

may keep journals on the process of writing and on observations that may be included in their creative work. Students working on a feature-length film will begin to use long-manuscript writing strategies, while students working on short forms will work on revision techniques to bring the work to completion. For advanced writers, the portfolio consists of 60 pages of meticulously revised original work, exhibiting a competency in the strategies and techniques of dramatic writing.

Out-of-class Assignments

144 hours (roughly 9 hrs/wk): Reading: 45 hrs (3 hr/wk), Writing: 75 hrs (5 hr/2k), Research, including viewing films/plays/television: 24+ hrs. Students will produce a substantial amount of dramatic writing outside of class, 30-60 pages over the course of the semester. In addition, they will write critiques of peer submissions and published works, evaluating them according to advanced dramatic strategies and techniques. Students may partake in visiting writer activities, attending talks and readings by professional writers and participating in question-and-answer sessions with these professionals. Students will view shorts and feature films, sitcoms, dramas, and serials. Students may attend theatrical events. Students will explore digital media options. Students may keep journals on the process of writing and on observations that may be included in their creative work. Students working on a feature length film will begin to use long-manuscript writing strategies, while students working on short forms will continue to apply revision techniques to bring the work to completion.

Demonstration of Critical Thinking

Analysis of one's own writing, including creating and revising large portions of the manuscript, is evaluated in terms of the student's ability to critique using specific elements of dramatic writing, such as plot, character, conflict, dialogue, and setting. Students may also be evaluated on their presentation of oral critiques during workshop discussion. Criteria are clarity, knowledge of studied material, attention to the manuscript being discussed, and utility of the critique.

Required Writing, Problem Solving, Skills Demonstration

Substantial writing, including creating and critiquing at least 60 pages of the manuscript, is evaluated in terms of the student's ability to complete advanced writing exercises that are timely, grammatically correct, and relevant to the assignment, and that incorporate the specific elements of the scriptwriting form discussed in class, such as plot, character, conflict, dialogue, and setting. Written responses to published literature are evaluated on the basis of completion, quality of summary, and levels of analysis. Weekly written critiques are evaluated by peers and by the instructor on the basis of technical accuracy and utility of the critiques to the writers receiving them. Skill Demonstration: Students are evaluated on their class performance, their adherence to deadlines and their manuscript preparation and presentation. They are also evaluated on the level of their critiques and comments during group discussions and their analysis of their own work and the work of others. Portfolio Review: Students are evaluated on a final portfolio of their best revision of their manuscript on the basis of timely submission, clarity of presentation, and technical merit.

Eligible Disciplines

English: Master's degree in English, literature, comparative literature, or composition OR bachelor's degree in any of the above AND master's degree in linguistics, TESL, speech, education with a specialization in reading, creative writing, or journalism OR the equivalent. Master's degree required.

Textbooks Resources

1. Required Seger, Linda. Making a Good Script Great, 3rd ed. Silman-James, 2010 2. Required Drennan, Marie, Baranovsky, Yuri. Scriptwriting 2.0: Writing for the Digital Age, 1st ed. Holcomb Hathaway, 2012 3. Required Dancyger, Ken, Rush, Jeff. Alternative Scriptwriting: Beyond the Hollywood Formula, 5th ed. Focal Press, 2013