

# ENGL A247: SCRIPTWRITING IV

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 advanced scriptwriting workshop for students who have completed at least 90 pages of an original work. The emphasis this semester will be on completing and marketing a saleable feature-length screenplay, theatrical play, original pilot, or spec script for an existing television show. Transfer Credit: CSU; UC.

## Course Level Student Learning Outcome(s)

1. Apply the conventions of scriptwriting and an understanding of professional expectations to the completion of a feature-length screenplay, a television script, or a full-length stage play, and develop a marketing strategy for selling it.

## Course Objectives

- I Reading Skills
- I. 1. Explain and correctly employ the terminology of stage, screen, and television.
- I. 2. Interpret and 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, in their own dramatic writing.
- I. 4. Evaluate the demands of writing for network and cable television, theatre, and the motion picture industry.
- I. 5. Develop strategies for developing genre-specific treatments.
- I. 6. Investigate protocols for marketing scripts.
- II Writing Skills
- II. 1. Generate the next 30-60 pages of an original work-in-progress.
- 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. Apply peer and instructor feedback, as appropriate, during the revision process.
- II. 4. Complete final revision of a script and prepare it for submission to agents or production companies.
- II. 5. Edit all original work to eliminate surface errors and meet professional standards.
- II. 6. Design a treatment to help sell an original script.
- II. 7. Develop a winning pitch.
- III Ancillary Skills
- III. 1. Develop a plan for selling their work.
- III. 2. Demonstrate greater appreciation of dramatic art via verbal and written analysis and the application of these principles to original student work.
- III. 3. Recognize standard production requirements by viewing films and series episodes and, when possible, attending theatrical productions.
- III. 4. Understand the importance of networking in television, theatre, and film, and explore opportunities for selling work.

## Lecture Content

Pre-professional scriptwriting for stage and screen, with an emphasis on editing and marketing a completed work, 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. Mastery of the techniques of dramatic writing, including Premise, Plot, Structure, Character, Dialogue, Setting, Backstory, Foreshadowing, Style, Pacing, Tone, Peripeteia, Dramatic Irony Mastery of the Writer's Schedule Page Count Hour Count Conquering Writer's Block Generating Multiple Drafts Revising and Editing to Publication Standards Mastery of Methods of Criticism Techniques for writing effective critiques Analysis of structure, style, and theme Applying judgments to published work Applying judgment to students' work Mastery of the Study of Appropriate Models Classic, contemporary, and experimental plays, screenplays, and television scripts Genre analysis and manipulation Critical reviews and essays Mastery of the Research Process Historical Context Location Studies Strategies of Published Authors Experimental Forms Analysis and Application of Essays on Craft Mastery of the Editing Process Selling a Script Preparation of the Final Manuscript Advanced Market Analysis Acquiring Rights Protecting Your Work: copyright, libel, contracts The Agent's Role The Query The Pitch The Final Treatment For Motion Pictures For Television Movies For Television Series Treatments Based on True Stories The Adaptation Treatment Closing the Deal

## Method(s) of Instruction

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

## Instructional Techniques

Lectures focus on mastery of 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. Attention is given to the methods of aesthetic evaluation and the

process of revision. Lectures also focus on current standards for query letters and other submission procedures as well as meeting contemporary publication standards. Demonstration: Models of modern and contemporary plays and screenplays from various genres 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, including classic, modern, and contemporary work from various genres. They may also review and discuss journal articles, critical essays, and books about writing for screen and stage. Students then discuss the work's relative success according to the application of standards established in class. Students demonstrate mastery-level skills in their ability to apply critical standards to contemporary film and dramatic work. Finally, students will do extensive research on how to market their work. 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 fundamental 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. Writing: 75 hrs (5 hr/2k) Students will generate the final segment of a long-form work and revise the entire play or screenplay to meet industry standards, demonstrating mastery in their chosen genre. They will respond critically to peer submissions, published scripts and essays on marketing, evaluating them according to dramatic strategies and techniques. Finally, students will develop pitches and a treatments designed to help sell their scripts. The portfolio consists of 120 pages of revised work, exhibiting mastery-level skills in the strategies and techniques of dramatic writing. Students will also compile a submission package that meets contemporary production standards.

## 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 generate the final segment of a long-form work and revise the entire play or screenplay to meet industry standards, demonstrating mastery in their chosen genre. They will respond critically to peer submissions, published scripts and essays on marketing, evaluating them according to dramatic strategies and techniques. Finally, students

will develop pitches and a treatments designed to help sell their scripts. Students will view short and feature films, sitcoms, dramas, and serials. Students may also attend theatrical events. Finally, students may begin to network within the industry in preparation for selling their work. 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 engage in research into markets and representation in anticipation of submitting their completed scripts for production.

## 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

Students will write the final segment of a long-form original work for stage or screen. They will revise their scripts and develop genre-specific treatments for submission to agents and production companies. They will investigate industry standards and methods for marketing their scripts, developing in the process a plan for selling their work. Students will produce written evaluations of each others' manuscripts, respond critically to published works, and perform regular in-class writing exercises. Substantial writing, including creating and critiquing at least 60 pages of the manuscript, is evaluated in terms of the student's ability to demonstrate mastery-level skills in completing 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 120 page completed manuscript on the basis of timely submission, clarity of presentation, technical merit, and adherence to contemporary publication standards.

## 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 Hauge, Michael. *Writing Screenplays That Sell: The Complete Guide to Turning Story Concepts into Movie and Television Deals*, ed. Collins Reference, 2011. 2. Required Atchity, Kenneth, Wong, Chi-Li. *Writing Treatments That Sell: How to Create and Market Your Story Ideas to the Motion Picture and TV Industry*, 2nd ed. Holt Paperbacks, 2003. Rationale: Treatment preparation manual. 3. Required Sambuchino,

Chuck. 2011 Screenwriter's Playwright's Market, 3rd ed. Writers Digest Books, 2010