

Cover Sheet for Connecting Courses to Programs

Writing for Film and Television COM 325

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I. Learning goals

This course will teach students how to write stories within the confines of a screenplay. Screenwriting is a different form of writing where the writer is severely limited by what a screenplay is and what can and cannot be done within it. Students will learn the various elements of screenwriting, including:

- Format – screenplays must be written in standard format
- Dialogue – what makes compelling dialogue, subtext, driving the story forward
- Character – how great characters are created and defined, (a)typical characteristics of protagonists and antagonists
- Structure – the short script format along with the feature-length format (Acts 1, 2, 3) will be discussed. How are scenes defined, created, and placed?
- Business – How do screenwriters get their work created?
- This course fulfills an option in the Radio/TV/Film track and can also serve as a communication elective for other majors. It will complement COM 270 (Writing and Announcing For Broadcast), since this class focuses on fictional screenplay writing, as opposed to broadcast news. The proposed class also fulfills the departmental learning goals of developing professional communication skills in writing and oral presentation. It also serves the curriculum by focusing instruction on screenplay writing that can then be transformed into original film and television productions in other classes.

II. Student assessment

Students have weekly writing assignments and will write two main projects (a short script, and the beginning of a feature length screenplay). Students will have their assignments critiqued and checked for formatting errors. Screenwriting is usually a new endeavor to any student, so it starts off heavy on format and less on story, reversing the balance a little bit every week.

Students are given detailed feedback on their two main projects. They are also given a midterm and random pop quizzes on material covered in the readings and class discussion when necessary.

III. Learning activities

In addition to learning about the screenwriting creative and technical process, students will also learn to look at movies in a different light. In particular, they will learn how the visual medium is often implied and then implemented by the director and actors. Students will screen films both within class and outside, and read through various screenplays in order to analyze the differences from script to screen.