

# COMM 3305: Short-Form SCREENWRITING & ANALYSIS

**MON, 5:30 PM – 8:15 PM ANTHROPOLOGY G15**

*Instructor: Deon Kay*

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**Office Hours:** Mon 10:00am-12:00pm & 2:00pm-5:00pm

Wed 9:30-12:30 **via email**

Fri 2:00pm-4:00pm & by appointment

*What's happening now must be inherently more interesting than what just happened* - Doug Heyes

**Course Objective:** This is a writing workshop where students will study storytelling structure and implement this in the creation of cinematic, televisual and web-based stories and series. This is also the writing-intensive course for two of our departmental concentrations, so extreme attention will be given to the technical, structural, and grammatical components of writing.

**Required Course Reading:** *Your Screenplay Sucks*, by William M. Akers (*bookstore*)

**Recommended Course Reading by subject:**

*Writing the TV Drama Series*, by Pamela Douglas

*On Writing*, by Stephen King (*on being a writer*)

*Save the Cat*, by Blake Snyder (*film related*)

*Write to TV: Out of your head and onto the screen*, by Martie Cook

*Create your own TV Series for the Internet*, by Ross Brown

*The Script-Selling Games*, by Kathie Fong Yoneda

**Other Requirements:** Bring a notebook and pen to class EVERY DAY. You will also need access to a printer and/or photocopier on a consistent basis.

**Grading:** Work will be graded and returned as promptly as possible. When delivered in a timely manner, and in the correct format, this should happen within 1-2 weeks. Where possible, a grading rubric will be provided. Like with all things – **the more you put into the class, the more you will get out of it, and more likely than not, the higher your grade will be.**

**Letter grades work like this:**

90%-100% = A, 80%-89% = B, 70%-79% = C, 60%-69% = D, > 60% = F

*Most assignments have multiples phases. You will **not** be able to get an **A** if you do not follow all the instructions and stick to all the deadlines provided.*

**Late Assignments:** I reserve the right to not accept late assignments. If a late assignment is deemed acceptable, it will be severely penalized (think 15 - 80%).

**Attendance & Participation:** This is a workshop-style class and requires active participation from everyone. So much learning is done from listening, from thinking, and from asking each other questions. If you are not in class, you are not participating and you are therefore doing yourself and your classmates a disservice.

Additionally, there is something due every week of the semester along with other In-class exercises and assignments. I do not accept work electronically, so if you are not in class, your work will be considered late and you will miss in-class exercises, which are also graded.

- Class starts at 5:30pm: **Show up prepared and on time**

- Doing things unrelated to the class during class-time (e.g. sleeping, emailing, surfing the web, not paying attention) will effect your participation grade. **No “multitasking.”** This is a space for you to focus on one thing, and one thing only. Give yourself this gift.

- Documented, excused absences will not count against your participation grade, but you are required to make up any work that has been missed. If you miss class, your work is still due.

- Because so much learning gets done in class, if you miss more than 25% of the class meetings (4 classes) **for whatever reason**, you cannot pass the class. *This includes “absences” for cell-phone use.*

**Cell phone use:** Cell phones have NO PLACE in the classroom whatsoever. Turn them off before you walk into the room. If I see your cell phone you will be considered **absent** for that day (i.e. you cannot turn work in, and you could fail if it happens repeatedly).

*If there is something pressing you need to deal with, inform me at the start of class, and leave the room to the deal with the matter.*

**Mass Communications Program Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students will be able to understand critically the origin, development, and paramount economic, legal/policy, social, and effects issues of mass media.
2. Students will be able to understand critically structure and process of mass media industries within economic, legal, and ethical considerations.
3. Students will develop the ability to write mass media messages with accuracy, clarity, and brevity on deadline and within varying style, ethical, and legal considerations.
4. Students will develop proficient use of technology to produce visual and audio messages for mass media within varying aesthetic, style, technical, ethical, and legal considerations.
5. Students will be able to gain practical experiences to apply and test knowledge and skills, and to network with professionals.
6. Students will be encouraged to engage in interdisciplinary scholarship.

## **Course Learning Objective: II**

Students will gain an **awareness** of the established forms and modalities of film and video production, the associated technologies and methodologies, as well as the medium's function as a means of communication and creative expression.

Students will develop their **understanding** of the forms and modalities of film and video production, the associated technologies and methodologies, as well as the medium's function as a means of communication and creative expression.

## **Course Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students will critically understand storytelling structure across multiple platforms, including web, television, and film.
2. Students will develop their creative both their technical and creative writing skills.
3. Students will develop skills in story development, analysis, and promotion.

**Students with Special Needs:** I will gladly make the necessary accommodations to ensure students with special needs can complete the class and get the most out of it. Please don't "wing it" and then tell me at the end of the semester. Come see me in private with your paperwork and we can discuss your particular needs.

**UWG Email Policy:** The University considers students' MyUWG e-mail account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. It is the student's responsibility to check his or her email frequently for class, department, and University information. **I frequently email documents and class-related updates – not checking your email is no excuse for not completing work on time.**

## **More about Emailing:**

- (1) Allow 24 hours for an email response (except during online office hours). Allow 48 hours over the weekend.
- (2) Before you email me, make sure you check the syllabus and Course Den to make sure the answer has not already been provided. I am pretty good (although not perfect) at anticipating student needs and providing the required information regarding schedule and assignments. In many instances, the information you require has already been provided, and it will take less time for you to find it than to wait for a response.
- (3) Please think of emails as formal correspondence. A polite salutation as well as correct spelling and grammar will ensure you receive a favorable and prompt response. Emails written as text messages usually fail to impress the receiver or to convey the intended meaning.

**Common language for course syllabi:** Students should please review the following information regarding **ADA, UWG Email Policy, Credit Hour Policy, and UWG Honor Code.**

**[http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common\\_Language\\_for\\_Course\\_Syllabi.pdf](http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf)**

## Assignments

In Class Exercises	25%
Dialogue Book	15%
Structural analyses	15%
Story Analysis	10%
Final Project (script + package)	35%

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### Week 1: INTRO: IDEAS vs STORIES / WORDS vs ACTIONS

M 8/24      Goals, policies, assignments.  
**ASSIGN Dialogue Book**  
**BSIS**

### Week 2: SCREENPLAYS (action is re-action)

M 8/31      **DUE Dialogue Book 01**  
**ASSIGN Story Analysis**

**Improv exercise**

### Week 3

**M 9/7**      **LABOR DAY NO CLASS**

### Week 4: NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

M 9/14      **DUE Story Analysis**  
**ASSIGN Structural Analysis TV**  
**In-class writing**

### Week 5: SCREENPLAY FORMATTING

M 9/21      **DUE Structural Analysis TV**  
**DUE Dialogue Book 02**  
**ASSIGN Structural Analysis FILM**  
**Begin in-class Group Writing**

Week 6: **IN-CLASS WRITER'S ROOM**

M 9/28 **DUE Structural Analysis FILM  
ASSIGN Final**

Week 7: **IN-CLASS WRITER'S ROOM**

M 10/5 **DUE Final** phase 0 [research]

Week 8: THE PITCH

M 10/12 **DUE Final** phase 1 [3 ideas]  
**DUE Dialogue Book 03**  
**DUE in-class Group Writing**

**Wednesday, October 14 – Last Day to Withdraw without an F or WF**

Week 9

**M 10/19** **DUE Final** phase 2 [Synopses + beat sheet]

Week 10

M 10/26 **DUE Dialogue Book 04**

Week 11

M 11/2 **DUE Final** phase 3 [script(s)]

Week 12

M 11/9 **DUE Final** phase 4 [YSS ACT II]

Week 13

**M 11/16** **DUE Final** phase 5 [Revised script(s) + synopsis]

Week 14

M 11/23 **THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS**

Week 5

M 11/30 **DUE Final** phase 6 [Revised script(s)]

Week 16: FINALS WEEK/FINAL INSTRUCTION

M 12/7 **5:00 – 7:30pm**  
**DUE Final Script + Pitch Packet**