

COMM 3305: Short-Form SCREENWRITING & ANALYSIS

TUE, 5:30 PM – 8:15 PM ANTHROPOLOGY G15

Instructor: Deon Kay

Office: HU 148, 678-839-4942

email: dkay@westga.edu

Office Hours: Mon/Wed 10:00-11:00am **via email**
Tues/Thurs 12:00pm - 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 structure*)

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 Game, 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 almost every week of the semester including in-class exercises and assignments. I generally do not accept work electronically, so if you are not in class, your work will be considered late and you will miss the in-class exercises, which are all graded.

- Class starts at 5:30pm: **Show up prepared and on time.** Repeated tardiness will be counted as absences.

- Doing things unrelated to the class during class-time (e.g. sleeping, emailing, surfing the web, not paying attention) will also effect your attendance. **No “multitasking.”** This is a space for you to focus on one thing, and one thing only. I expect you to be physically AND mentally AND emotionally present. You cannot write effectively without this. Give yourself this gift.

- Because so much learning gets done in class, if you miss more than 25% of the class meetings (5 classes) **for whatever reason**, you cannot pass the class. *This includes “absences” for cell-phone use and chronic tardiness.*

Cell phone use: Cell phones have NO PLACE in this classroom whatsoever. Turn them off before you walk into the room. If I see you looking at 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 Outcomes:

- Distinguish and identify the fundamentals of compelling dramatic writing: including imagery, character, plot, narrative structure, primary terminology, formatting, basic practice, and literary conventions for the small and large screen
- Distinguish effective strategies for the appropriate context of page vs. screen
- Practice constructive criticism
- Embrace the heartfelt nature of a story
- Recognize the inherent value of rewriting
- Begin to understand of the medium's function as a means of communication and creative expression

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>

Assignments

In Class Exercises & Tests	35%
Script Analysis	10%
Structural analyses	10%
Writer's Room	10%
Final Project (script + package)	35%

* * * * *

Week 1: INTRO: WORDS vs ACTIONS

T 1/10 Goals, policies, assignments.
BSIS
ASSIGN Script Analysis

Week 2: IDEAS vs STORIES, CHARACTERS AND DIALOGUE

T 1/17 ASSIGN Ideas and Characters

Week 3: SCREENPLAY FORMATTING, CHARACTERS & DIALOGUE CONT

T 1/24

Week 4: NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

T 1/31 **DUE Script Analysis**
READ YSS Rules 19-30 (pgs 43-79) for today!
ASSIGN Structural analysis 01

Week 5: TELEVISION STRUCTURE vs FILM STRUCTURE

T 2/7 Prep for Writers room

Week 6: IN-CLASS WRITERS ROOM

T 2/14 **DUE Structural analysis 01**
ASSIGN Structural analysis 02

Week 7: IN-CLASS WRITER'S ROOM

T 2/21

Week 8: TABLE READS/ CRITIQUES

T 2/28 **DUE Structural analysis 02**

Thursday, March 2 – Last Day to Withdraw without an F or WF

Week 9: THE PITCH & THE PITCH PACKAGE

T 3/7 **DUE Writer's room self and peer evaluation**

Week 10:

T 3/14 **DUE Final phase 1**

Week 11

T 3/21	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS
--------	-------------------------

Week 12

T 3/28

Week 13

T 4/4 **DUE Final phase 2**

Week 14

T 4/11 **DUE Final phase 3**

Week 15

T 4/18 **DUE Final phase 4**

Week 16

T 4/25 **DUE Final phase 5**

Week 17:

T 5/2 Reading/Writing Day - NO CLASS

F 5/5* **DUE Final Script + Pitch Packet**

* tentative