I. COURSE INFORMATION

Fall 2025
COMM 3345 - Media Scriptwriting
CRN# 11736 MW
CRN# 12906 TR

Required Materials:

Access to Blackboard and One Drive
$50.00 - $75.00 to spend on pre-production websites like LTX Studio (more info on BB).
Feature Film Scripts provided on BB.
Personal journal for Notes/Concepts

Optional Text:
Get Out: The Annotated Screenplay $19.95 plus S/H
http://www.inventorypress.com/product/get-out-jordan-peele

Two (2) **late/arrivals/early departures** will be considered as an unexcused absence. **Three** (3) **unexcused absences** before the drop date will result in an automatic drop. All assignments will be due online. If you do not log on weekly to read your BB announcements, you will be considered absent. It is mandatory to read all BB announcements.

II. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Name: Ramón Villa
Office Location: 303A – Cotton Memorial Bldg.
Office Hours: by appointment (via eMail) on Fridays from 12pm-4:30pm
Telephone Number: **To be used in emergencies, TEXT ONLY** 915-308-6452
Email: **rvilla2@utep.edu** & via Blackboard email

III. COURSE CONTENT

A - Course Description

This scriptwriting course will emphasize the process of idea development, script structure development, and the practical components that make up an act (beats, scenes, & sequences). This course will focus on the four-act structure.

B - Course Objective

1. Breakdown the basic cinematic narrative elements needed to write a script.
2. Learn the idea development process.
3. Understand the basic principles of a four-act structure script.
4. Critically evaluate short films based on emotional story, theme, actionable plot and character development.
5. Collaborate with peers to experience the audio-visual story writing process.
6. Research short form narrative production terms/resources.

C - Learning Outcomes

Demonstrate aptitude in scriptwriting techniques necessary for pre-production, production and pitching.

1. Perform competency in conceptualizing, evaluating, and implementing story ideas into formatted scripts and/or animated storyboards.

D - Assignments:

Attend class lectures; participate in class and online.

Blackboard

I will use Blackboard to post assignments, grades, announcements, and other relevant information. Please look at this page every day. Download the app on your phone.

Projects are listed below, <u>subject to change</u>: Late work will not be accepted.

1. Attendance/Participation

Rubric on Blackboard.

3. Individual Story Ideas

Rubric on Blackboard.

4. Short of the Week

Rubric on Blackboard.

5. Script Readings

Script reading feedback

6. Script Discussions

In-Class Discussions on assigned script(s)

7. Logline pitching

Rubric on Blackboard.

8. Midterm – Treatment, Synopsis, Outline and Pitch

Rubric on Blackboard.

9. Idea to Script Development Outline

Scenes, Sequences, and Acts Outline

4 Acts Outline

10. FINAL Script

Final Draft Formatted Script via Gmail

See Blackboard for FINAL PROJECT DUE with Dates/Times

Individual Story Ideas

More info on Blackboard but here is the gist of this assignment

1. Character Attributes: Name, how old they are, what they do for a living, what their romantic situation is like, and what their financial situation is like.

For example (Diane, 25, burger joint owner, widow, bankrupt)

2. Intention - Ex. What the character wants (To live, Boy/Girl, Colleg Degree, etc.)

3. Obstacle - Ex. Something that stands in their way (House is surrounded by zombies, Boy/Girl doesn't know who character is, Have to work 2 part time jobs, etc.) Character doesn't have to win, just has to try.

4. Conflict: "Conflicts come fairly easily when you create a world of clear moral polarities, however, as you move away from mythic or heroic dramas, and develop stories about the human struggles of characters who could be your neighbors, the blunt "right vs. wrong" distinction becomes unsupportable. When you develop conflicts that reflect the way real people function, with all their psychological complexities, you need to consider more relativistic ideas about right and wrong. This is where conflict gets really interesting: good people can do misguided or even bad things, and bad people can have sympathetic motives or soft spots. People can undermine themselves and their noble goals or they can display motives and actions that are ambiguous, inconsistent or paradoxical." - Defining Conflict by Michael Rabiger

5. Summarize the story by using the following words, "and then", "but", and "except". Remember that "but" and "except" can sound the same but they are very different. Use correctly for this assignment. Points will be deducted if used incorrectly.
6. Title for your story idea

You will turn in this assignment view Blackboard.

Late work will not be accepted.

Loglines

Write a 1-2 sentence logline that summarizes the plot.

1. A logline must have the following:
   a. The protagonist
   b. Their goal
   c. The antagonist/antagonistic force
2. Don't use a character name (Instead tell us about character)
   a. An ex-cop
   b. Mayor of a city
3. Use adjective to give a little depth to that character. (Helpful if characteristic will have something to do with plot)
   a. An alcoholic ex-cop
   b. A mute Mayor of a city
4. Clearly and quickly present the protagonist's main goal (This is what drives your story and it will drive your logline too. Make sure that the goal is present early in the script)
   a. A mute Mayor wants to run for Senator
   b. Alcoholic ex-cop searchers for his daughter
5. Describe the Antagonist (The antagonist should be described in a similar, but preferably shorter, manner than the hero. If the hero faces a more general antagonistic force then make it clear that they are battling something, not just life's bumps)
   a. A mute Mayor wants to fight off an ambitious rival to win a Senator's seat.
   b. Alcoholic ex-cop searchers for his daughter after his demented former sidekick kidnaps her.

B. Grading Scale:

Average Grade	Letter Grade
900 – 100 points	A
800 – 89 points	B
700 – 79 points	C
600 – 69 points	D
0 – 59 points	F
Incomplete	I
Withdrawn	W

1. Evaluation:

In order to achieve a grade of "C" for this class you must keep up with all the work assigned as an individual as well as group assignments.

Your grade for the class will be determined by your performance on the following assignments:

Attendance/Participation = 8.5

Story Idea #1 – Development/Script	= 5
Script Readings/Discussions	= 6.5
Group Discussion/Collab work	= 5
Story Idea #2 – Development/Script	= 5
In-Class Exercises	= 10
Scripted Sequences with Dialogue	= 5
SOTW Evaluation	= 5
Midterm (Treatment/Outline/Video Pitch)	= 30
Final Project	= 20
Total Points Possible	100 points

IV. RULES, CLASSROOM POLICIES/ ETC.

1. Read assigned materials/pages prior to meeting for classes.
2. Attendance and participation online are mandatory.
3. **Three (3) unexcused absences** before the drop date will result in an automatic drop. **Three or more totaled unexcused absences** after the drop deadline will result in a lowered grade. The accumulation of absences excused/unexcused will lower your grade. You are considered absent once I pick up the attendance sheet and you have not signed in or if you have departed early. You are considered absent on Blackboard if you don't log on weekly.

A. Cheating/Plagiarism:

All of your work must be original. Plagiarism is defined in Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary as; "to steal or pass off (the ideas or words off another) as one's own; i.e., submitting someone else's work under your name or not citing the source of your information". Cheating consists of obtaining information from someone other than the instructor during an exam, or on other assignments; or having someone else complete your assignments. The instructor and the college take cheating very seriously. At the very least a student will receive an "F" for the assignment if it has been plagiarized or if the student has cheated. The Student Code of Conduct addresses these issues. The instructor will deal with plagiarism and cheating on an individual basis. Consequences can range from receiving a failing grade on the assignment to being dropped from the course. The instructor will follow the Student Code of Conduct in dealing with these issues.

B. Attendance:

If a student does not log in to Blackboard weekly, or does not turn in assignments online, or does not communicate with the instructor for **ONE (1) week**, then the instructor reserves the right to drop the student from the class.

Unexcused absence is defined as any absence without any valid documentation to waive your absence.

Excused absence is defined as any absence that is waived by the instructor at his own discretion. **Two** (2) **late/arrivals/early departures** will be considered as an unexcused absence. **Three** (3) **unexcused absences** before the drop date will result in an automatic drop.

C. Drops:

The instructor **reserves the right to drop any student who misses 2 class periods in a row without contacting the instructor and/or does not complete a major assignment (quizzes, discussions, presentations, etc.) and does not contact the instructor.** The instructor will attempt to contact the student before dropping them. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor if they have a problem and need to be dropped. **It is also the student's responsibility to be aware of the drop date.**

D. Conduct and Grievances: See the student handbook for the proper procedures for addressing student complaints. You are expected to conduct yourself in a courteous and respectful manner while working online with your peers and instructor.

The classroom as a safe haven: This classroom is a safe haven for all ideas. Respect not only your instructor, but also guest speakers and your peers as equals. We are all unique individuals entitled to our own opinions and beliefs. Therefore, any comments, jokes, or remarks that denigrate the worth of an individual's physical or mental ability, physical appearance, religion, race, creed, ethnic background, sexual preference, or gender are inappropriate and detract from your effectiveness as a speaker and from your credibility as a person.

Disruptive Behavior

- Walking in late to class.
- Lack of supplemental materials.
- Leaving electronic devices on during class.
- Taking credit for a thought, opinion and knowledge from sources and claiming them as your own (plagiarism).
- Chatting or talking during a presentation.
- Using vulgarity.

V. ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

The University of Texas El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence and students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, submitting work for credit that is attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act that gives or attempts to give unfair advantage.

VI. CASS POLICY

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass. CASS Staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.