

I. COURSE INFORMATION

SPRING 2019

COMM 3345 - Media Scriptwriting

CRN# 26271 - 10:30am- 11:50am MW - Cotton Memorial Bldg. 306

CRN# 23651 – 10:30am-11:50am TR - Cotton Memorial Bldg. 306

Required Text:

Online Scripts will be provided via Blackboard.

Required Materials:

Journal for Notes/Concepts

Access to Amazon Studios – Corkboard work <https://studios.amazon.com/>

Access to Blackboard

Short of the week account www.shortoftheweek.com

Google Drive – FREE 15 gigs

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.

II. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Name: Ramón Villa

Office Location: Rm. 303A

Office Hours: F 1:00pm – 5:00pm or by appointment (via Blackboard)

Telephone Number: 915-747-5129 (leave message)

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 (sequences, scenes, and beats). This course will focus on the four-act structure.

B - Course Objective

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

C - Learning Outcomes

Demonstrate aptitude in storytelling techniques in terms of pre-production and pitching.

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

D - ASSIGNED READINGS

Online scripts will be available on Blackboard.

E - 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 everyday. Download the app on your phone.

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

- 1. Attendance/Participation (11 Points)**
22 total worth 0.5 points. Rubric on Blackboard.
- 2. (3) Unit Goal/Reflection Entries (9 points)**
Blackboard assignment. 1.5 points each. 6 total. Rubric on Blackboard
- 3. Individual Story Ideas (5 Points)**
5 total worth 1 point. Rubric on Blackboard.
- 4. Loglines (5 Points)**
5 total worth 1 point. Rubric on Blackboard.
- 5. Online Individual Short of the Week Journal Entries (10 Points)**
5 total worth 2 points. Rubric on Blackboard.
- 6. In-class group work - Short of the Week (5 Points)**
5 total worth 1 point. Rubric on Blackboard.
- 7. Script Readings/Discussions (10 Points)**
In-Class Discussions. Rubric on Blackboard.
Team feedback - Act One Readings.
- 8. Script Quizzes (5 points)**
5 individual in-class quizzes. 5 total worth 1 point.
- 9. Logline pitching (5 Points)**
In-class pitch assignment. Rubric on Blackboard.
Act One Treatment - Narrative prose (1-2 pgs.) via Gmail.
4 Acts Cork Board w “Transformation” Scene
- 10. Midterm - Online Script Cork Board Breakdown (10 points)**
Fundamental Screenwriting Cork Board w 4 Acts – Color Coded/Labeled correctly.
Outline of Important scenes with explanations.
- 11. Script Draft - Act One (5 points)**
Sequences with Scenes outline (1-2 pgs.) via Gmail.
Rough Draft Formatted Script (15-20 pgs.) via Gmail.
- 12. Idea to Script Development Corkboard (10 points)**
Beats, Scenes, Sequences, and Acts Cork Board – Color Coded/Labeled correctly via
Amazon Studios
- 13. Script Rewrites/FINAL (10 points)**
Final Draft Formatted Script (25-40 pages) via Gmail

FINAL PROJECTS DUE
See Blackboard for 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.

More info on Blackboard.

Logline In-class pitching

In-class discussions about your Idea and Logline

SOTW – Short of the Week **ONLINE Journal Entries**

You will watch and breakdown the films by scenes and sequences. You will dissect plot and/or story.

This information will be shared amongst your group. The website is at:
www.shortoftheweek.com

More info on Blackboard via SOTW link.
All submissions will be in the NARRATIVE form.

DO NOT evaluate Docu Form, Experimental Form, Music Videos, and/or News

SOTW – In-Class Group Discussions

You will dissect plot and/or story. In-class Group Discussion

Script Quizzes

These are designed to keep you on your toes. You will take an individual quiz on the assigned pages. The best way to study for these quizzes is to read the script and takes notes. Look for scene build ups and payoffs.

Script Discussions

See rubric on Blackboard. Please keep up with the reading. You will be required to take questions from other classmates for the understanding the script.

Midterm - Online Script Cork Board Breakdown

Fundamental Screenwriting Cork Board w 4 Acts – Color Coded/Labeled correctly. All cards must be answered. Outline of Important scenes with explanations.

Idea to Script (Development Corkboard Development)

You will turn in your work via **AMAZON Studios**. More instructions will be given in class and via Blackboard. All cards on your corkboard must be filled out.

Script Draft

Sequence of Scenes outline will be turned in via Gdrive. A rough draft of Act One will also be turned in on an original idea you developed in class. See due date on Blackboard.

Script Rewrites/FINAL

Final Draft. Formatted Script (25-40 pgs.) via Gmail. To be shared with the class.

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	= 11
(3) Unit Goal/Reflection Entries	= 9
Individual Story Ideas	= 5
Loglines	= 5
SOTW Online	= 10
STOW In-Class	= 5
Script Readings/Discussions	= 10
Script Quizzes	= 5
Logline Pitching	= 5
Midterm	= 10
Script Draft - Act One	= 5
Idea to Script Dev Corkboard	= 10
Script Rewrites/FINAL	= 10

Total Points Possible	<u>100</u> points
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IV. RULES, CLASSROOM POLICIES/ ETC.

Lab Time: Attendance is mandatory for lab time unless otherwise specified. The lab time provides an opportunity to apply lessons and techniques to projects.

1. Read assigned materials/pages prior to meeting for classes.
2. Attendance and participation are mandatory.
3. No chatting/texting during lecture or presentations.
4. During class or lab time, do not use the iMacs to access Facebook, emails, etc. Points will be deducted.
5. **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.

SEE CALENDAR FOR DROP DEADLINE

Late work will not be accepted.

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 of 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:

Attendance is taken at the beginning of the scheduled class time. If you are late and the attendance book is closed, you run the risk of not being counted present. If students have a documented illness or emergency they may be excused. It is the student's responsibility to attend class and be on time.

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 with excessive absences (quizzes, discussions, presentations, & papers) 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. You are required to turn off and stow away all technology including cell phones and laptops, which means **NO TEXTING!** It is distracting for your instructor and actually, the people around you as well. Your instructor has no problem calling this to your attention and asking you to leave if your use of technology disrupts the class. If you have an emergency arises please step outside.

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.