Concept and Story Development
EMF 120

Catalog Description: Concept and Story Development is an introduction to concept development and storytelling methods through a variety of writing assignments. Students will generate ideas and stories for projects in electronic media and film.


Course Objectives:
1. To provide a foundation in story development, which is the genesis for all forms of media and for all genres within that media. Story development is also the basis for many of the production courses in the Electronic Media and Film Department.

2. To help each participant learn the fundamentals of storytelling and conceptual development, and to cultivate her/his own individual voice as a storyteller by combining lecture, class discussion, and workshops.

3. To recognize that all people are individuals who have their own personal experience from which to draw. Students will engage in various methods and forms of personal storytelling. Each student will be expected to show consideration for the work of his/her peers.

4. To learn critical and analytical skills and to become skilled at engaging others in intellectual, analytical, and aesthetic discourse about their own work, as well as the work of others.

5. To enhance and encourage creativity and risk-taking.

Writing Assignments: Each assignment must be turned in on the date they are due, either in class or in my mailbox. E-mailed assignments are not allowed. Assignments not handed in on time receive a ZERO.

All work must be typewritten; hand-written work will not be accepted.

Volition and Point of View Essay – Write about a memorable event that centers around a member of your family, whom you need not identify.

Childhood Story – Write an essay about an event in your childhood that is still powerful in your memory.

Fairy Tale – Find a myth, legend or folktale that you can adapt to a recognizable modern setting; must be submitted with a copy of the source material.

Dream Story – Write a story treatment based on material from your dreams.
Adaptation of Short Story – Research a published short story for adaptation as a 30-minute film; must be submitted with a copy of the source material.

Photo Essay Assignment Part I – Write a story to accompany a sequence of five photographs that will be taken by a COFAC photographer inspired by your words.

Photo Essay Part II – Write a story to verbally express a sequence of five photographs submitted to you by a COFAC photographer.

Non-fiction/Documentary Concept – Pick one news story (from previous assignment) and write a treatment to show how it could serve as a possible television script. Explain why you chose this story.

Sound/Audio Concept/Story – Write a treatment about a topic that will be solely conveyed by audio.

Two-Minute Film – Write a 2-minute film treatment and script that uses only one location.

Four-Minute Film – Write a four-minute film treatment and script based on a real story.

**Course Grading Policy:** Evaluation is based upon attendance, class participation, presentations, assignments and the final project. The final grade is based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artistic Identity Presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volition and Point of View Essay</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Childhood Story</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Myth/Folk Tale/Fairy Tale</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dream Story</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adapting Short Story</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Photo Essay Part I</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Photo Essay Part II</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Documentary Story</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-Minute Film Project</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-Minute Film Project</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Setting a Personal Agenda</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ideas and Ambitions Presentation</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
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**Specific Evaluation Criteria:** All assignments will be graded upon the following criteria – Imagination and creativity (25%), clarity of expression (25%), spelling and syntax (25%), and correct response to the assignment (25%).

**Grading:** Final grades will be based upon the achievement of the following totals: A 200-190 points, A- 189-179 points, B+ 178-168 points, B 167-157 points, B- 156-146 points, C+ 145-135
points, C 134-124 points, C- 123-113 points, D+ 112-102 points, D 101-91 points, F below 90 points.

Course Policies:

1. **Incomplete:** A grade of Incomplete is not given unless you are unable to complete the work required in the course because of verifiable medical reasons or documented circumstances beyond your control as stated on page 26 of the current Undergraduate Catalog.

2. **The Final Project** for this class will be given according to the official university final exam schedule. Every student must submit the final project at this scheduled date and time. There are no exceptions to this policy.

3. **Disability Statement:** Any student who may need an accommodation because of a disability, please make an appointment to see me during the first week of class. A memo from Disability Support Services authorizing your accommodations will be needed. Here is the web link for Disability Support Services: http://www.towson.edu/dss/welcome.html.

4. **Repeating the Course:** Students may not attempt this course for a third time without prior permission from the Academic Standards Committee. See the TU policy on "Repeating Courses" on page 26 of the current Undergraduate Catalog for further explanation.

5. **Academic Conduct/Plagiarism:** Plagiarism and academic honesty come in many forms. Please review the plagiarism statement for the Department of Electronic Media and Film and Towson University’s Academic Integrity document which can be found at: http://wwwnew.towson.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/academicintegrity.html.

6. **Attendance/Absence Policy:** Attendance will be taken. Once the classroom door is closed, you will not be allowed in. Students are expected to attend each session, to be on time, and to stay through the end of the session. Illnesses and family emergencies must be documented.
Class Schedule of Topics/Assignments: (*Note: All work subject to change.)

Week 1: January 27
Course Overview
What is Story? Why is Story important? Why are your Stories important?
In-Class Workshop: Discuss Chapter 3 on Artistic Identity.
Review Assignments 3-1, 3-2, 3-3.
DUE NEXT WEEK:
1- Read Chapter 3 and do Assignments 3-1 and 3-2 (Rabiger pages 25-26)
2- Rehearse “Presenting Yourself and Your Storytelling Goals.” Be ready to make a 4-minute oral presentation. *NOTE: Save this Artistic Identity work. You will need it later in the semester!

Week 2: February 3
Give your Artistic Identity presentations. (10 points)
Class provides feedback per Assignment 3-3.
Discuss Chapter 5. If time, start Assignment 5-1, in class (Rabiger pg. 40-41)
Discuss upcoming Volition and Point of View Essay.
DUE NEXT WEEK:
1- Read Introduction, Chapters 1(minus pg. 11-13), 2, and 3
2- Start your Writer’s Notebook and Dream Journal.
3- Write Rabiger Assignment 8-2, pg. 69–Volition and Point of View Essay. Your response must be no more that one full page, single-spaced. Carefully follow assignment requirements.
THINK AHEAD: Start your Dream Journal

Week 3: February 10
Writing Assignment DUE Today (10 Points): Volition and Point of View Essay.
Discuss upcoming Childhood Essay assignment. Read examples 1 and 2.
DUE NEXT WEEK:
1- Read Rabiger Chapters 6, 11, 12
2- Write Assignment 11-1, Childhood Essay, Rabiger pg 89, just A and C. No more than one page, single-spaced. See examples on Pg. 90-91. Must include “a plot point,” defined on page 92.
THINK AHEAD: Chapter 14 – Prepare for Dream Assignment

Week 4: February 17
Writing Assignment DUE Today (10 Points): Childhood Story
Discuss Myth/Legend/Fairytale assignment. Discuss examples. Show film, if time allows.
DUE NEXT WEEK:
1- Read Part III, pg. 51; Read Chapters 7 thru 10. Chapters 11, 12, 13.
2- Write Myth/Legend/Fairytale Retold. This is Assignment 13-1 (including story and analysis) on pg. 115 of the Rabiger book. Aim for about no more than two pages in length, single-spaced. Pick a short myth or legend. See page 117 for an example of this assignment.
3- On a separate paper, answer the questions listed in “The Three-Act Structure” on pages 73-74.
THINK AHEAD: Chapter 15 – Start search for Adapting Short Story
Week 5: February 24
Writing Assignment DUE Today (15 Points): Myth/Legend/Folk tale Retold
Students present Myths/Legends/Folktales retold.
Discuss upcoming Dream Story assignment.
**DUE NEXT WEEK:**
1- Read Chapter 14 on the Dream Story
2- Write Rabiger Dream Assignment 14-1, pg. 130. See example on pg. 132. **Must be no more than one page, single-spaced.**
3- Read assigned short story (TBD).
**THINK AHEAD:**
1- Start search for News Story (Exercise 16-2)

Week 6: March 3
Writing Assignment DUE Today (15 Points): Dream Story
Discuss upcoming Short Story Adaptation assignment; Screening – TBD.
**DUE NEXT WEEK:**
1- Read Chapter 15.
2- Short Story Assignment. Follow tips in “Evaluating a Short Story for Adaptation” on Rabiger, pg. 142. Also, follow the Short Story Adaptation Rules on Rabiger, pg. 145. The rules are all the bulleted points on the bottom part of the page. See pg. 147 for an example.
3 - On a separate paper, briefly answer the questions listed in “The Three-Act Structure on pages 73-74.

Week 7: March 10
Writing Assignment DUE today (15 points): Adapting a Short Story
Discuss Short Story Assignment
Introduce Photo Essay Part I Assignment.
Screening - TBA
**DUE MARCH 24:**
1- Write a present tense story/script for a ninety-second film about a deeply-felt personal experience. The story/script must be constructed to accompany a sequence of five (5) photographs that will be specially designed by Towson University photographers to accompany and explore the meaning of your words. The style of your script is entirely up to you. It can include narrative action, monologues, dialogue, and any variation you wish. The only requirement is that you must aim for between 150-200 words.
2- Read Chapter 17.
**Week 8: March 24**
Writing Assignment DUE today (10 Points): Photo Essay Part I
Discuss Photo Essay Stories I
Introduce Non-fiction/Documentary Assignment; Screening - TBA

**DUE NEXT WEEK:**
1- Write Assignment 17-1 on A Documentary Subject. In preparation, all relevant questions are answered on pg. 166-167; an example of the document you must produce is on pg. 169-171; and your document must be a minimum of one full page, single-spaced. Also, submit a copy of the non-fiction source article that you use for this assignment.

**Week 9: March 31**
Writing Assignment DUE today (15 points): Documentary Story
Introduce Photo Essay Part II
Hand out Photographs need to complete the assignment

**DUE NEXT WEEK:**
1- Read Chapters 18, 19
2- Write a SECOND present tense story/script for a ninety-second film about a deeply-felt personal experience. This time the story/script will accompany a sequence of five (5) photographs handed out to you in class. The style of your script is entirely up to you. It can include narrative action, monologues, dialogue, and any variation you wish. The only requirement is that you must aim for between 150-200 words.

**Week 10: April 7**
Writing Assignment DUE Today (15 Points): Photo Essay II.
Discuss Photo Essay Stories II
Introduce 2-Minute Fiction Film Assignment – Must be original, fiction, two minutes long. Use only one location.

**DUE NEXT WEEK:**
1- Chapters 21, 22
2- 2-Minute Fiction Film Treatment. Write Assignment 18-1 on pg. 175. For the treatment, aim for no more than one page, single-spaced, written in present tense. On another page, include the meaning of the story. Again, film idea must be 2 minutes max. Be prepared to present your idea in class!

**Week 11: April 14**
Writing Assignment DUE Today (10 of 20 Points): 2-Minute Fiction Film Treatment
Present your film idea. Be prepared to take notes and revise, if required.
Discussion: Proper script format.
Hand out and review “Spec Script Writing” by Charles Deemer.
Introduce “Grid Grading Criteria.”

**DUE NEXT WEEK:**
1- Write your treatment as a screenplay. It must be no more than 2 pages long. Follow Deemer’s annotated notes. annotated For your format, use free demo version of Final Draft script software available at www.FinalDraft.com or www.celtx.com
2- On a separate sheet, briefly answer all the questions on pg. 73-74 regarding the “Three-Act Structure.”
**Week 12: April 21**
Writing Assignment DUE Today (10 of 20 Points): 2-Minute Fiction Screenplay.
Presentation of Screenplays.
Introduce 4-minute film project. Must be four minutes long.

**DUE NEXT WEEK:**
1- Write Assignment 19-1 on pg. 188. Must be one page, single spaced, written in present tense. But instead of a “feature,” aim for a 4-minute story. See examples on pages 188-193. On another page, include the meaning of the story. Again, film idea must be 4 minutes max. Be prepared to present your idea in class!

**Week 13: April 28**
Writing Assignment DUE Today (10 of 20 Points): 4-Minute Fiction Treatment.
Present your film idea. Be prepared to take notes and revise, if required.
Review proper script format and Deemer handout.
Introduce “Revisiting Your Artistic Identity” Assignment.

**DUE NEXT WEEK:**
1- Write the screenplay pages of your 4-Minute Fiction Treatment. Must be no more than 4 pages long. Once again, use demo script software available at www.FinalDraft.com or www.celtx.com
2- On a separate sheet, briefly answer all the questions on pg. 73-74 regarding the “Three-Act Structure.”
3- Read Chapter 20, “Revisiting Your Artistic Identity.”
4- Do Assignment 20-3 on pg. 204, “Ideas and Ambitions.” Be prepared to deliver the answers to this assignment in a 5-minute presentation. Simply presenting a laundry list of responses is unacceptable. Give examples. Be ready to answer follow-up questions, such as “Why?” and “Why not?”
5- Do Assignment 20-4, “Setting a Personal Agenda.” Follow detailed instructions provided on pg. 205. The more thorough your responses, the better your grade. You must write in complete sentences. Answers that are too brief are not acceptable and will be graded accordingly.

**Week 14: May 5**
Writing Assignments DUE Today:
4-Minute Film Script (10 of 20 Points);
Ideas and Ambitions (20 points);
Setting A Personal Agenda (10 points).

Five-minute oral presentation of your “Ideas and Ambitions” from Assignment 20-3.
Final Thoughts

**RESOURCES YOU WILL NEED**
You will need what is listed below as you progress through the semester. Start now.

1. **Writer’s Notebook**

   Keep a small notebook with you at all times and jot down descriptions or sketches of what you see around you:

   1- Characters who could be used in a story  
   2- Interesting and visual locations  
   3- Curious or evocative objects  
   4- Loaded or revealing situations  
   5- Unusual or revealing behavior  
   6- Any theme that intrigues you.

2. **Dream Journal**

   This is entirely private, kept at home and used for the Dream Sequence assignment. Keep a record of your dreams here.

3. **News Story File**

   Save good news stories in a folder for use in the News Story and Documentary assignments. Go through old magazines and papers; you’ll find valuable material.

4. **Picture File**

   Save pictures from magazines and newspapers. Strong inspiration can come from your choice of a war photograph, crime report, fashion ad, or a landscape.

**ADDITIONAL AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY**
EMF Google Group List Serve –

All EMF students are required to join the EMF Google Group List Serve at http://groups.google.com/group/TowsonEMF. This will guarantee that you receive daily postings regarding digital media, video, film, and audio production topics including festivals, special screening, guest speakers, film/video crew needs, internships, and jobs. Use this email address (TowsonEMF@googlegroups.com) to post your own messages to the group. The main page will also archive all posts.

Instructions:

1. Create a user account and password, and be sure to use the email to which you prefer receiving mail. (You only need to sign up once and you’ll continue to receive EMF Google group emails.)

2. Please select one of the three Email options for reading the group messages:

   (a) Abridged Email (No more than 1 email per day) -- Summary of new activity each day

   (b) Digest Email (Approximately 1 email per day) -- Up to 25 full new messages bundled into a single email

   (c) Email (Approximately 1 email per day) -- Best way not to miss important postings, as you get every message sent as it arrives

Civility –

All EMF students, staff, and faculty are committed to collegial and academic citizenship demonstrating high standards of humane, ethical, professional, and civil behavior in all interactions.

We need to be aware of the relationship between our personal conduct and the quality of campus life. What we do and say always has an effect on others, whether we see it or not. Civility means more than respecting campus facilities and grounds. Civility means consistently treating people with consideration and respect. It means being courteous, polite, and fair. It means recognizing diversity and honoring differing points of view. When our behavior is guided by concern for others in our community, we are being civil. Practicing civility requires thoughtful behavior and checking our assumptions and perceptions of others’ race, gender, culture, and belief systems.

Civility Code
EMF places a priority on learning. We value the inherent worth and dignity of every person, thereby fostering a community of mutual respect. Students have the right to a learning environment free of disruptive behaviors. Faculty have the right to define appropriate behavioral expectations in the classroom and expect students to abide by them. Faculty have the responsibility to manage and address classroom disruption. Staff have the right and responsibility to define appropriate behaviors necessary to conduct any university activity free of disruption or obstruction.

We believe that in order to achieve these ideals, all EMF students, staff, and faculty are expected to exhibit and practice civil behaviors that exemplify: (1) respecting faculty, staff, fellow students, guests, and all university property, policies, rules and regulations; (2) taking responsibility for one’s choices and actions; (3) delivering correspondence – whether verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic – with respectful language and in complete sentences; and (4) accepting consequences of one’s inappropriate choices and actions.

The use offensive, threatening or abusive language, writing, or behavior will not be tolerated and can lead to academic dismissal. Further information about civility can be found in Appendix F of the university catalog.

Examples demonstrating civility in the classroom as a student include:

- Being respectful of the professor and other students.
- Not texting or using cellular phones and other electronic devices.
- Not using your laptop for activities other than class work.
- Not eating or drinking in class.
- Not reading newspapers or listening to music during the class.
- Not sleeping in class.

Examples demonstrating civility in the classroom as a faculty member include:

- Being respectful of the students.
- Attempting to understand individual student needs and learning styles.
- Discussing civil behavioral expectations during the first class.
- Taking time to talk with students whose behaviors negatively affect the classroom.
- Encouraging students to follow your civil behavior.

**EMF ID Cards** –
EMF IDs may be obtained in the equipment cage (MC 007) on or after the first day of the term by presenting a valid Towson photo ID (your OneCard), passing a written policy test, and presenting proof of production class enrollment. Validation of production class enrollment is obtained via production instructor signatures on the bottom of Equipment Use and Loan Agreements (which will be distributed by your instructor).

Students must present their valid EMF ID Card each time they check out equipment or use EMF facilities. No other ID will be accepted. NO EXCEPTIONS!
The ID card is good for the duration of the student’s time at Towson University but will need to be validated each semester by repeating the written test and producing proof of production class enrollment. A semester sticker will be applied to the ID to show the student’s validation. Should violations of policy occur, students are required to surrender their EMF ID upon request by ML Supervisor, ML Assistant Supervisor, or ML staff. Please see “Media Labs Handbook” on www.towson.edu/emf for complete details.