Developing the Screenplay
EMF 387

Course Description:
The examination of the creative process of writing for film and TV, with emphasis on writing screenplay treatments, developing characters, exploring dramatic structure, and addressing visual storytelling. Prerequisite: EMF 377.

Course Objectives:
1. Guide students through the process of generating original, dramatically viable ideas for feature-length screenplays.
2. Teach students the mechanics and techniques upon which television and feature film dramatic writing are often based.
3. Teach students how to conduct proper research on dramatic ideas.
4. Explore the craft of developing deep, well-rounded characters vs. surface traits and characterizations.
5. Teach students how to write story beat sheets and script treatments for their story ideas.
6. Teach students how to effectively rewrite their work, as well as provide constructive analysis and feedback for other writers throughout the revision phase.
7. Teach students the proper formats for writing effective script treatments and screenplays.

Textbooks (REQUIRED):

Grading Breakdown:
Your final grade in the course will be determined by the number of points you accumulate from the following assignments:

Week 2: Quiz – 100 points; Logline pitch of Story Idea #1 – 100 points
Week 3: Genre Exercise – 200 points
Week 4: Logline Analysis – a) 100 points; b) 100 points
Week 5: Beat Sheet work 1-5 – 100 points
Week 6: Beat Sheet work 6-9/Workshop Summary – 100 points
Week 7: Beat Sheet work 10-12/Workshop Summary – 100 points
Week 8: Beat Sheet work 13-15/Workshop Summary – 100 points
Week 9: Storyboard presentation – 500 points
Week 10: Written Assignment/Exercises 1-3 – 100 points
Week 11: Script Treatment of Story Idea #1 – 500 points
Week 12: ***
Week 13: Logline pitch of Story Idea #2 – 200 points
Week 14: Logline Analysis – a) 100 points; b) 100 points
Week 15: Present Beat Sheet 1-15 for Story Idea #2 – 500 points.
THIS IS YOUR FINAL PROJECT!
TOTAL: 3,000 points

**Grading Scale:**

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<th>Percentage Range</th>
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**Specific Grading Criteria:**
1. **All Assignments:** Grading for all work is based upon the following: Imagination and creativity (25%), clarity of expression (25%), spelling and syntax (25%), and correct response to the assignment (25%).
2. **Deadlines:** All assignments are due on the date listed. Late assignments will receive a ZERO, unless accompanied by a properly documented excuse.
3. **Incompletes:** 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. See the current Undergraduate Towson University catalog for more information on this policy.

**Course Policies:**
1. **Disability Statement:** Any student who may need an accommodation because of a disability, please make an appointment to see me during my office hours during the first week of class. For information about TU’s Disability Support Services, visit http://www.towson.edu/dss.
2. **Repeating the Course:** Students may not attempt this course for a third time without prior permission from the Academic Standards Committee.
3. **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
4. **Attendance/Absence Policy:** Consistent attendance is essential for successful completion of the course. Students are expected at attend each session, to be on time, and to stay through the end of the session. Roll will be taken. Each student is permitted two
absences. After these two, one full grade will be deducted for each absence. Illness, emergencies, and/or other external time conflicts must be documented.

5. Professional Standards: All submitted assignments are to be typewritten and formatted in 12-point Times Roman font. Handwritten work will not be accepted. No emailed assignments will be accepted.

6. Electronic Devices: Laptops and cell phones are NOT permitted at ANY time in my class.

7. Class Participation: This is a highly interactive class with many workshop elements that require you to present your creative work, as well as provide constructive peer feedback to your fellow writers. Your active participation is highly valued and required.

Week 1: February 3, 2011
Course Introduction. Idea generation and development of the Feature Film. Film Screening: TBD (if time permits)

DUE NEXT WEEK:
1. Read Snyder, pg. ix thru 19. Next week, there will be a quiz on readings.
2. Develop a logline and title for an original feature film idea. Both must adhere to the qualities outlined by Snyder. Type for submission! If you can’t come up with your own idea, try Exercise #4 on pg. 18-19. Be ready to pitch and discuss your idea.

Week 2: February 10, 2011
Quiz on reading. Discussion of reading. Importance of research. Logline Story Pitch #1 and audience feedback.

DUE NEXT WEEK:
1. Revise Story Idea, if required.
2. Read Snyder pg. 21-45.
3. Assignment: Do the Genre Exercise #3 on pg. 45. List at least five rules, demands, and common denominators of the genre of your story idea.
4. Identify at least three research action plans that you can do now to develop your characters and story idea. BE SPECIFIC! Be prepared to discuss. ALL WORK MUST BE TYPED FOR SUBMISSION. Include your revised logline at the top of the page.

Week 3: February 17, 2011
Discussion of genre readings. Presentation and discussion of revised Story Ideas and research plans. Presentation of genre work.

DUE NEXT WEEK:
1. Read Snyder, pg. 47-65.
2. Logline Analysis/Written Assignment:
   a) Per Snyder, flesh out your logline by defining: (1) an adjective to better describe the protagonist; (2) an adjective to better describe the antagonist; (3) a compelling goal.
   b) Also write complete, thoughtful responses about your story idea to the following Snyder discussion points: (1) Who is this about?, (2) Amping up the logline, (3) The primal urge, (4) Casting for the role of your hero, (5) Actor archetypes, (6) Special circumstances, (7) Slave to the logline, and (8) Summary.

ALL OF THIS WORK MUST BE TYPED FOR SUBMISSION! Be prepared to present and discuss.

Week 4: February 24, 2011
Present and discuss your evolving logline and character work. Discussion of Beat Sheet and Sequences. Screening: TBD

**DUE NEXT WEEK:**
1. Read Snyder, pg. 67-96.
3. Write the Beats for the movie screened in class.

**Week 5: March 3, 2011**
Review of Beat Sheet homework for last week’s screened film. Present and discuss Beat Sheet homework (1-5) for your story idea. Take revision notes. Screening: Finish last week’s if needed.

**DUE NEXT WEEK:**
1. Read Snyder, pg. 97 thru 117.
2. Revise Beats 1-5, if necessary.
3. Write Beats 6-9. Must be thorough. Be prepared to present, discuss and defend.
4. Write the Beats for the movie screened in class.

**Week 6: March 10, 2011**
Review of Beat Sheet homework for last week’s screened film. Present and discuss Beat Sheet homework (6-9) for your story idea. Take revision notes. Screening: TBD

**DUE NEXT WEEK:**
1. Revise Beats 6-9, if necessary.
2. Write Beats 10-12. Work must be thorough. Be prepared to present and discuss.

**Week 7: March 17, 2011**
Review of Beat Sheet homework for last week’s screened film. Present and discuss Beat Sheet homework (10-12) for your story idea. Take revision notes. Screening: TBD

**DUE NEXT WEEK:**
1. Revise Beats 10-12, if necessary.
2. Write Beats 13-15. Work must be thorough. Be prepared to present, discuss and defend.
3. Write the Beats for the movie screened in class.

**March 24, 2011**
SPRING BREAK!

**Week 8: March 31, 2011**
Review of Beat Sheet homework for last week’s screened film. Discussion of Storyboard concept and the proper format for you to follow in creating your own story cards. Present and discuss Beat Sheet homework (13-15) for your story idea. Take revision notes. Screening: TBD
**DUE NEXT WEEK:**
1. Read Snyder, pg. 97-117.
2. Create your storyboard of index cards per Snyder’s instructions in the reading. You will be graded on the clarity of your work, as well as the format. Be prepared to present, discuss and defend. Storyboards will be posted for all to see.

ALL WORK MUST BE TYPED FOR SUBMISSION!

**Week 9: April 7, 2011**
Presentation and discussion of storyboards. Take revision notes.

**DUE NEXT WEEK:**
1. Revise your storyboards per feedback.
2. Read Snyder, pg. 119-141.
3. Do Exercises 1, 2 and 3 on pg. 141. Your written responses must be complete and thorough.

ALL WORK MUST BE TYPED FOR SUBMISSION!

**Week 10: April 14, 2011**
Update class on storyboard revisions. Discuss Snyder reading from last week about “Screenplay Physics.” Discuss your responses to Exercises 1-3 from last week. How to write a treatment for your Feature.

**DUE NEXT WEEK:**
1. Read Snyder, pg. 143-162.
2. Write a treatment for your story idea and follow the FORMAT provided in class. Bring 2 copies! ALL WORK MUST BE TYPED FOR SUBMISSION!

**Week 11: April 21, 2011**
Discussion of Snyder reading on “What’s wrong with this picture?” Screening: TBD.
In-Class Exercise: Critique the film per the questions on pg. 160-161. Sign Up for Individual Story Conferences.

**DUE NEXT WEEK:**
No assignments for next week.

**Due Week 13:** Develop a logline for a feature film. Must in a different genre from your first idea. Be prepared to pitch and discuss as done in Week 2. ALL WORK MUST BE TYPED FOR SUBMISSION!

**Week 12: April 28, 2011**
INDIVIDUAL STORY CONFERENCES.

**DUE NEXT WEEK:**
Revise your script treatment per conference notes.

**Week 13: May 5, 2011**
Submit revised script treatments. Logline/Story Pitch #2 and Audience feedback.

**DUE NEXT WEEK:**
1. Logline Analysis/Written Assignment:
   a) Per Snyder, flesh out your logline by defining: (1) an adjective to better describe the protagonist; (2) an adjective to better describe the antagonist; (3) a compelling goal
   b) Write complete, thoughtful responses about your story idea to the following Snyder discussion points: (1) Who is this about?, (2) Amping up the logline, (3) The primal urge, (4)
Casting the role of the hero, (5) Actor archetypes, (6) Special circumstances, (7) Slave to the logline, and (8) Summary.
Be prepared to present and discuss. ALL WORK MUST BE TYPED FOR SUBMISSION!

Week 14: May 12, 2011
Present and discuss your evolving logline and character work.
DUE NEXT WEEK:
1. Write the Beat Sheet homework (1-15) for Story Idea #2. Be thorough and expressive. Follow the examples in Snyder’s Goes To The Movies textbook.

Week 15: May 19, 2011
Present and discuss Beat Sheet homework (1-15) for Story Idea #2.
ALL WORK MUST BE TYPED FOR SUBMISSION!
NOTE: This is your Final Project, so take extra care that it meets the specified grading criteria.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


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