EMF 405
SCREENWRITING

Nature of the Course
This class examines the narrative structure and mechanics of the screenplay, as well as its creation. Concepts to be covered include: idea generation, concept development, plot development, screenplay format, writing treatments, character development and more. Students will write and complete a feature length screenplay. This class is a writing workshop. We are here to share ideas and work together. Prerequisite: EMF 377.

Objectives
1. Understand the principles of dramatic structure.
2. Learn the formation of character and situation.
3. Understand the roots of conflict, and the elements of successful plotting.
4. Develop analytic skills watching film and reading screenplays.
5. Develop a visual style for screenwriting.
6. Develop a writing style that has simplicity, clarity and artistry.
7. Understand dramatic elements as they apply to script writing.
8. Create scenes and film stories that are visual, cinematic and watchable/readable.

Policies
1. You are expected to attend all classes.
2. There will be no admittance to class once the door is closed. No exceptions.
3. All assignments are due on the date listed. No exceptions. Late assignments will receive a ZERO. This includes the complete draft of your screenplay.
4. All scripts and assignments are to be typewritten and properly formatted. No handwritten or e-mailed assignments will be accepted.

Required Text

Assignments
Students will be required to complete the following assignments:

Throughout the semester, you will read several screenplays and write a report on each one. Each report must be one single-spaced page in which you describe the writing style, the plotting, the characters, the artistry, and what you liked or disliked about the script. Do not tell the story of the film. Include the title of the screenplay, as well as the writer(s). You must give specific examples from the screenplay to support your observations. Also, be prepared to present your screenplay reports to the class.

Develop and write one script treatment for an original feature film. No adaptations.

Write three character profiles for each of the following: protagonist, antagonist, chief supporting character. Each profile must be 2+ pages, single-spaced.

Write one complete first draft of original feature film screenplay (90+ pages).
Miscellaneous other assignments TBD.

## Evaluation

Your final grade will be based on the following assignments and points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screenplay Reports #1:</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screenplay Report #2:</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screenplay Report #3:</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonist Profile</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antagonist Profile</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Supporting Character Profile</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screenplay Treatment (Part One):</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screenplay Treatment (Part Two):</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story Pitch:</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film Analysis #1:</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film Analysis #2:</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Query Letter</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Screenplay</td>
<td>800</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL POINTS:** 2,000

## Schedule of Topics and Assignments

**Note:** This is a tentative schedule, subject to change on a weekly basis.

### Week One

- **Introduction**
  - Format discussion
  - Idea generation, concept development, outlining
  - Importance of research

**Assignment Due Next Week:**

1. Read Seger, Chapter 1.
2. Write the premise of your script. Create a working title. Identify the genre. Identify 5 research sources that will add value to your story.
3. The first page of your script, properly formatted.
4. Rough outline
5. Screenplay Report #1

### Week Two

- Premise/Genre presentations
- Outline presentations
- Script formatting review
- Building characters
- Character = action
- Finding conflict
- Character Functions
- Character Archetypes
Assignment Due Next Week:
1- Read Seger, Chapter 9-12
2- Character Profiles: Protagonist, Antagonist, Primary Supporting Character
3- Screenplay Report #2

Week Three
Present revised premise statements
Dramatic Structure
Writing a script treatment
Assignment Due Next Week:
1- Read Seger, Chapters 2 and 8
2- Screenplay Treatment, Act 1 and the first-half of Act 2 (with Acts and Plot Points highlighted in BOLD)
3- Hand in the first 10 pages of your script
4- Screenplay Report #3

Week Four (script progress right now: Page 10)
Story Momentum
Scene sequences
Creating the Scene
Subplots
Unifying Motifs
Present scripts
Assignment Due Next Week:
1- Screenplay Treatment, the second-half of Act 2 and all of Act 3 (with Acts and Plot Points highlighted in BOLD)
2- Read Seger, Chapters 3-6
3- Hand in the first 20 pages of your script
4- Prepare to pitch your story to the class

Week Five (script progress right now: Page 20)
Pitch your story to the class
Film Screening - TBD
Assignment Due Next Week:
1- Keep writing
2- Film Analysis

Week Six (script progress right now: Page 30)
Commercial vs. Alternative Forms
Assignment Due Next Week:
1- Read Seger, Chapter 7
2- Prepare for story conference
3- Hand in the first 40 pages of your script

Week Seven (script progress right now: Page 40)
Individual story conference with instructor
Assignment:
1- Write, write, write!

Week Eight (script progress right now: Page 60)
Momentum
Scene sequences
Subplots
Film Screening - TBD
Assignment Due Next Week:
1- Film Analysis
2- Prepare to stage a scene

Week Nine (script progress right now: Page 70)
Scene Presentations
Assignment:
1- Keep writing.

Week Ten (script progress right now: Page 80)
Good News/Bad News
Heroes and their decisions
Assignment:
1- Keep writing.

Week Eleven (script progress right now: Page 90)
Individual story conferences
Assignment Due Next Week:
1- A complete first draft of your screenplay!

Week Twelve (DUE RIGHT NOW: COMPLETE DRAFT)
Query Letters
Agents
Professional Advice
Assignment Due Next Week:
1- Write your query letter

Week Thirteen
Presentation of query letters

Week Fourteen
Individual scripts conferences, Part 1

Week Fifteen: December 14
Individual script conferences, Part 2