

Carleton University
Fall 2013
Department of English

English 3915A
Special Topics in Writing: Screenwriting Workshop
[Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor]

Time: Wednesday 11:35 – 2:35 am
Location: 417 SP (Please confirm on Carleton Central)
Instructor: Armand Garnet Ruffo
Email: armand_ruffo@carleton.ca
Office: 1918 Dunton Tower

Course Description:

The dramatic screenwriting seminar and workshop offers students an opportunity to learn the craft of writing for film. The aim of the course is to provide students with a solid foundation for writing their own screenplays. The class will therefore be structured as both an academic seminar and a writing workshop. Students will view and discuss selected scenes from films, closely examining such fundamental storytelling elements as character, plot, setting, dialogue, structure, while working on their own writing project. To facilitate this process there will be weekly writing assignments. For example, you will be asked to provide a complete breakdown of the characters, to write a synopsis and a beat sheet, to consider it in terms of the “restorative three-act structure.” This course is designed for the committed, aspiring writer who has some experience working in other genres such as stage drama, fiction and/or poetry, or who may have some practical experience in film.

Assignments:

Effective participation and attendance is essential and will consist of keeping up with the reading and writing assignments and being fully engaged in the class. In learning the form of the screenplay and its various components, students will write an adaptation of existing material and come up with an original screenplay of approximately 30 minutes. Students will also present a short seminar on an assigned film that illustrates an element of screenwriting discussed in class.

Applying for the Course:

To gain entry to the course, students must submit a ten page portfolio of narrative poetry, fiction or drama and a one-page statement as to why you want to take the course. Please also mention any writing workshop and/or filmmaking experience. With your submission, please include current contact details (email & phone) and submit it no later than Monday, August 26, 2013, to Armand Garnet Ruffo, Carleton University, English Dept., 1812 Dunton Tower, Ottawa, Ontario, K1S 5B6. It can also be dropped off in person at the department. Because this course is likely to fill up quickly it is advisable to get your portfolio in on time. (Late portfolios will be read only if there is space available

in the class.) Those selected for the course will be contacted via email. Students are advised to register in another course until final decisions are made. *Please note that all portfolios will be recycled so do not submit original materials.* Please do not apply if you are not prepared to attend every class and to offer and receive constructive, analytical criticism of your writing in a classroom setting.

Evaluation: TBA; Schedule: TBA; Films TBA;

Course Texts:

1. David Trottier. *The Screenwriter's Bible*, Silman-James Press.
2. Ken Dancyger & Jeff Rush. *Alternative Screenwriting*. 4th Ed. Focal Press.

Recommended Reading:

1. Karl Iglesias. Ed. *The 101 Habits of Highly Successful Screenwriters*. Adams Media.
2. Lajos Egri. *The Art of Dramatic Writing*. Simon and Schuster.
3. Amon Buchbinder. *The Way of the Screenwriter*. Anansi.
4. Syd Field. *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*. Dell.
5. Linda Seger. *The Art of Adaptation: Turning Fact and Fiction in Film*. Henry Holt.
6. Louis Giannetti and Jim Leach. *Understanding Movies*. Pearson Canada.