

**Carleton University
Fall 2018
Department of English**

ENGL/ FILM 3902A: Screenwriting Workshop

**Prerequisite(s): a 2000-level creative writing workshop or permission of the instructor.
Permission to register in this course requires the student to submit a portfolio**

**Wednesday, 11:35-2:25
Location: 1006 DT**

**Instructor: Nadia Bozak
Email: nadia.bozak@carleton.ca
Office: Dunton Tower, 1918
Phone: 613-520-2600 x 2330
Office Hours: Wednesday, 10:00-11:00**

Course Description:

This creative writing workshop is an introduction to writing for screens; thus, no previous screenwriting experience is required though knowledge of how storytelling works will be an asset. While reading and analyzing exemplary screenplays and writing their own short scripts, students will acquire such tools as: writing effective dialogue, creating dramatic scenes, and characterization; introducing, sustaining and resolving conflict; writing while using applicable formatting software. Importantly, students will learn to critique, discuss, and improve their screenplays as well as those of their peers through the workshop experience.

Over the course of the term, students will:

- Read, critically analyze, and discuss assigned scripts
- Watch, critically analyze, and discuss assigned films (in relation to the scripts)
- Learn to edit and revise their own work, and that of their peers
- Write a number of targeted exercises to help students generate ideas and become acquainted with screenwriting formatting and its applicable software
- Write a short screenplay of 10-12 pages

Course Outline

Weekly Schedule

Date and Topic	Read/ Discuss	Watching	Due
Week 1: Wed Sept 5 Course outline; Choose workshops and presentations; discuss the short vs. the feature	<i>Vincent</i> film and screenplay (on Ares) <i>The Wounding</i> , a screenplay (on Ares) <i>Bible:</i> 3-36; 147-165	<i>Vincent</i> <i>High Hoops</i> <i>Loyalty</i>	n/a
Week 2: Wed Sept 12 Structure/Turning Points/ Plot Points/ Character	<i>Bible:</i> 3-36; 147-165 Presentations: 1-3 Workshop Assignments: 1-4	<i>Witness</i>	Visual Writing Assignment due
Week 3: Wed Sept 19 Story-layering/ Plot/ Genre/ Character/ Theme	<i>Bible:</i> 36-82; 165-185; 185-207 Presentations: 4-6 Workshop Assignments: 5-8	<i>The Fly</i>	Character Assignment due
Week 4: Wed Sept 26 Dialogue/ subtext/ exposition	<i>Bible:</i> 82-92; 207-229 Presentations: 7-8 Workshop Assignments: 9-12	<i>Juno</i>	Dialogue Assignment due
Week 5 : Wed Oct 3 Scenes: Master and Secondary	<i>Bible:</i> 93-109; 165-185 Presentations 9-10	<i>Whiplash</i> (Short and feature)	Dramatic Tension Assignment

	Workshop Assignments: 13-16		due
Week 6: Wed Oct 10 Flashbacks/ Flashforwards/ Dreams Review so far... getting started on our own scripts	<i>Bible:</i> 99-100; 113- 133; 177-180 Presentations: 11-12 Workshop Assignments: 17-21	<i>Apricot</i> <i>La Jetée</i>	Flashback/ Forward/ Dream assignment due Logline due
Week 7: Wed Oct 17 Landscape as a character/ character development	<i>Bible:</i> 134-143 Presentations: 13-14 Workshop loglines and pitches – ALL	<i>Frozen River</i>	Step outline, logline, treatment due
Reading Week	Reading Week <i>Bible:</i> 241-303	Reading Week	Reading Week First drafts due for Workshops 1- 3
Week 8: Wed Oct 31 Landscape as a character/ character development, cont'd	<i>Bible:</i> 241-303 Presentations: 15-16 Workshop drafts: 1-3	<i>Do the Right Thing</i>	Workshop first drafts
Week 9: Wed Nov 7 Dialogue/ Language/ Voice- over	<i>Bible:</i> 241-303 Presentations: 17-18 Workshop drafts: 4-6	<i>Laredo, Texas</i> <i>Stutterer</i>	Workshop first drafts

Week 10: Wed Nov 14 Child's POV/ Exposition	Presentations: 19-20 Workshop drafts: 7-10	<i>Points of Origin</i> <i>James</i>	Workshop first drafts
Week 11: Wed Nov 21 Exposition and use of sound	Presentation 21 Workshop drafts: 11-14	<i>Actor Seeks Role</i>	Workshop first drafts
Week 12: Wed Nov 28 Writing Animation	Presentation 22 Workshop drafts: 15-18	<i>Bao</i> <i>TBA</i>	Workshop first drafts
Week 13: Wed Dec 5	Workshop drafts: 19-21	<i>TBA</i>	Workshop first drafts

Note on the workshop dynamic:

Over the course of the term, students will work towards writing a self-contained screenplay of about 10 pages. While the first half of the term is devoted to getting familiar with the conventions of screenplay writing, the second half is all about workshopping our first drafts as a group.

Here is how it works: on the first day of class we will all sign up for a workshop dates (one date for an assignment, described below, and one date for your screenplay). One week before their appointed dates, students will post their work on CU Learn for the group to read. The rest of the class then has one week to read the posted pieces and comment upon them. On the day of the workshop, we will read through and discuss the comments together as a group.

Assignments:

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean

1. Final, revised draft of a self-contained 10-page short-film screenplay: 40% (comprised of the following:

Logline = 5%

Step out line = 5%

Treatment = 5%

Reflection statement = 5%

Actual revised draft = 20%

The final, revised draft of your screenplay is due two weeks after it is workshopped in class. Please hand in the screenplay to me (properly formatted) the day it is due.

As revising is the foundation of all writing, the final draft must be accompanied by a 2-page "Reflection Statement," wherein you describe the process and experience of revising your screenplay in accordance with (or in opposition to) the feedback you received during your workshop. This statement will be written in full sentences (not point form), formatted in Times New Roman 12-point font, and double-spaced.

In your Reflection Statement you might discuss such issues as: your personal reaction to being critiqued by your peers; what you decided to change in your draft and why; what you decided to preserve in your draft and why; what important lessons you learned about your screenwriting skills and what you might change about them moving forward.

2. Writing Assignments: 5 x 6% each = 30%

For the first six weeks, students will complete a weekly 2-page writing assignment. These are intended to get you warmed up, familiarizing you with screenwriting formatting and software, while also stimulating your creativity. You may develop one of these assignments into your final screenplay project.

As this is a workshop, we will take turns sharing the assignments with our peers. Because the class is so large, we will only have time to workshop one assignment per student.

During the first session, students will choose their workshop dates for this assignment.

The week before your assignment is workshopped, you will send it to me (as a properly formatted pdf) to post on CU Learn.

Your peers and I will then read your assignment for the following week. When we meet, we will discuss assignments as a group in the form of a workshop.

3. Presentation: 10%

Each student will sign up for a brief, ten-minute presentation on an assigned topic from the weekly viewing/reading. The presentation will respond directly to the presentation topic and also generate class discuss.

For the sake of time, please be brief and succinct. You do not need a PowerPoint presentation. If you wish to show a clip from a film to illustrate your point, that is fine.

Please hand in your speaking notes, written in clear, grammatically correct prose (point-form is not acceptable).

Please have two questions ready for the class. These questions should be included in the hardcopy of the presentation you turn in.

3. Participation (editorial feedback given to peers, comments and discussion in class): 20%

As this is a workshop, its success depends largely on students actively participating in group discussions, reading and commenting upon the work of your peers, and offering constructive feedback during workshop critiques. I will evaluate the effort and thought you put into all of these aspects.

*

Note on attendance: any student who misses more than three workshops without a documented reason (medical, extenuating family situation) will lose 10% of the final grade

*

Please: no texting, cell phones, and/or Internet usage during class.

*

Note on late assignments: I deduct 2% per day (including weekends) for late assignments.

*

A final note: You can expect to devote 7-8 hours a week to this workshop.

*

Required textbook:

David Trottier, *The Screenwriter's Bible: A Complete Guide to Writing, Formatting, and Selling Your Script, Sixth Edition*. Los Angeles: Silman-James, 2014.

This textbook is available at Octopus Books, 116 Third Ave, Ottawa, ON K1S 2K1 (at Bank, in the Glebe).

Recommended Software:

Writer Duet is available to use for free for three scripts. You can create an account at writerduet.com. You can use another software package if you wish. What matters is that your assignments are properly formatted.

Required Viewing and Reading:

Features – all available on short term loan at the Audiovisual Resource Centre (AVRC), room 460, St. Patrick's Building

Do the Right Thing. Screenplay by Spike Lee. Dir. Spike Lee. Universal Picture,. 1989. Film.

Screenplay available at: <http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Do-The-Right-Thing.html>

The Fly. Screenplay by Charles Edward Pogue and David Cronenberg. Dir. David Cronenbug. 20th Century Fox, 1986. Film

Screenplay available at: <http://goldmember.deep-ice.com/thefly1986.txt>

Frozen River. Screenplay by Courtney Hunt. Dir. Courtney Hunt. Sony Picture Classics, 2008. Film.

Screenplay available at <http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Frozen-River.html>

Juno. Screenplay by Diablo Cody. Dir. Jason Reitman. Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2007. Film.

Screenplay available at: <http://screenplayexplorer.com/wp-content/scripts/juno.pdf>

Whiplash. Screenplay by Damien Chazelle. Dir. Damien Chazelle. Sony Picture Classics, 2014. Video.

http://www.sonyclassics.com/awards-information/whiplash_screenplay.pdf

Witness. Screenplay by Earl W. Wallace and William Kelley. Dir. Peter Weir. Paramount Pictures, 1985. Film

Screenplay available at: <http://www.pages.drexel.edu/~ina22/splaylib/Screenplay-Witness.pdf>

Shorts:

Actor Seeks Roll. Screenplay by Ben Nabors. Dir. Michael Tyburski. 2015. Video.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efUgTm-bRh4>

Bao. Screenplay by Domee Shi. Dir. Domee Shi. Pixar, 2018. Animation.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2sb4cmDwCY>

Apricot. Screenplay by Brian Briand. Dir. Brian Briand. 2009. Video.
<https://vimeo.com/274327603>

High Hoops. Screenplay by Tanner William Jarman. Dir. Tanner William Jarman. 2015. Video.
<https://vimeo.com/211510979>

James. Screenplay by Connor Clements. Dir. Connor Clements. 2008. Video.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnXvYJwC3vU>

La Jetée. Screenplay by Chris Marker. Dir. Chris Marker. Argos Films, 1962. Film.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLfXCkFQtXw>

Laredo, Texas. Screenplay by Topaz Adizes. Dir. Topaz Adizes. 2010. Video
<http://topazadizes.com/films/laredo-texas/>

Loyalty. Screenplay by Venya Pak. Dir. Venya Pak. 2017. Video.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6JmHiFwqvs>

Points of Origin. Screenplay by Anya Leta. Dir. Anya Leta. 2014. Medium?
<https://www.shortoftheweek.com/2016/08/22/points-of-origin/>

Vincent. Screenplay by Gert Embrechts. Dir. Gert Embrechts. 2001. Video.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_SGxEbFHGM

Whiplash. Screenplay by Damien Chazelle. Dir. Damien Chazelle. 2013. Video.
<https://vimeo.com/123482554>

Sites of interest:

<http://vimeo.com>

New Yorker Screening Room

<http://video.newyorker.com/series/the-new-yorker-shorts>

Film School Shorts

<http://www.pbs.org/show/film-school-shorts-program/>

Short of the Week

<https://www.shortoftheweek.com/channels/canada/>

Short Film Faceoff

<http://www.cbc.ca/shortfilmfaceoff/>

Digi60 Competition

<http://www.digi60.org/>

Journal of Short Film

<http://thejsf.org/>

Plagiarism

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- ☐ reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- ☐ submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- ☐ using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- ☐ using another’s data or research findings;
- ☐ failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- ☐ handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

Religious obligation

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. carleton.ca/pmc

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and is survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for

accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>