Required Materials

Screenplay: Writing the Picture, 2nd Ed.
(by Robin Russin & William Downs)

Utilized for:
- Quizzes
- Online Discussions
- Film Analysis Essay
- Announcements

Utilized for:
- Send ALL E-mail through GroupWise or Blackboard
- Announcement notifications

Utilized for:
- Script writing, revision

Utilized for:
- Renting/viewing films

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Introduction to the basic script format, the creative story and style elements, and the writing process for screenplays, with an emphasis on feature films. Focus on the narrative script development process from idea conception to first draft.

COURSE:
MTuWTh noon (deadlines)

Film Viewings: online/individual
Course Location: online/Canvas

INSTRUCTOR:
Melissa A. Johnson
Office: Virtual
Office Hours: by appointment (via Skype) and via e-mail
E-mail: MJohnson@cwu.edu
Skype: MJohnson_CWU

COM 267 online
WINTER 2014

Utilized for:
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Rushmore (1998) (Script and film)
Little Miss Sunshine (1999) (Script and film)
In Bruges (2004) (Script and film)
COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

OBJECTIVES:
• Apply active, critical viewing skills
• Apply and assess narrative structures
• Demonstrate comprehension of the correct and specific use of grammar, punctuation, and spelling for the script format and writing style of screenplays and teleplays
• Demonstrate comprehension of the correct and specific script format requirements for screenplays and teleplays
• Demonstrate comprehension of the creative story and style elements and the writing process steps for screenplays and teleplays
• Develop a deeper appreciation for cinema as a written art form

CITIZENSHIP:

CONDUCT: Students whose conduct is disruptive or disorderly (e.g., disrespectful or hostile posts on Blackboard*) will be reprimanded. In some cases, a student may be asked to leave the Bb class and the incident may be reported to Student Affairs. (See CWU’s policy in Appendix B of the catalog.)

WRITING POLICY: This course is a WRITING course and therefore relies on the University’s Writing Program policy. All work will be evaluated based on the Writing Program expectations (available upon request).

[*Students are encouraged to express differing views and to challenge one another, but posts that attack individual perspectives, practices, or ideas in a disrespectful way will be removed and no credit will be awarded.]
MORE COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION:
➤ DUE DATES/TIMES: ALL work is due by the stated due date in the syllabus. ALL work is due by noon on the stated due date.

➤ LATE WORK POLICY: No work will be accepted after the stated due date and time. Any work submitted after the stated due date and time will not receive credit.

➤ EXTRA CREDIT: Extra Credit is rarely (if ever) offered. Students should not count on EC as a measured means of success in this course. Any EC opportunities that do arise will be posted on Bb via “Announcements.” EC that may be offered will not outweigh any one assignment in point value.

BLACKBOARD POLICY:
➤ Blackboard is an integral part of our course (being the primary means of access to and completion of assignments). Students should access Bb on a daily basis (M-Th).

➤ Weekly Bb content is broken into weekly modules. All due dates, links to assignment submission, course documents, and all other important information are available through the course modules on Bb. Modules are available at least one week prior to the first due date for the week in question (note: materials will disappear after the due date and may not be available after that time).

➤ All assignments (unless otherwise noted) should be submitted on Bb (through a number of different means) by the noon deadline on the posted due dates.
EVEN MORE COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

E-MAIL POLICY:

► SENDING: E-mails should be sent via Blackboard (for best results) and should come through your GroupWise account. E-mails should include the course, student name, and a subject.

E-mails sent regarding assignments should arrive at least 24 hours before the deadline (noon on the due date) to allow for a reasonable response.

► RESPONSE: E-mails sent during our course week (M-Th) should expect a response within 24 hours.

E-mails sent on the weekend (Fri-Sun) should expect a response within 24 hours of the start of a new week.

Responses will not be sent after 6 pm on any given night. Due dates aren’t negotiable, but materials are available at least one week prior to each deadline. You should plan your time accordingly to allow for question and a reasonable response time from your instructor.

TOPICS: Marketing

15. Marketing the Script
   [Reading] Screenplay pgs 303-327
   [Due: 03/18] Video Pitch

16. The Pitch
   [Reading] Screenplay pgs 328-342
   [Due: 03/18] Video Pitch
EVALUATION CRITERIA:

GRADE POINTS:

- Participation: 200 points total
- Script Analysis: 300 points total
- Act 1 Script: 400 points total
- Pitch: 100 points total

TOTAL: 1000 points total

GRADE SCALE:

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ASSIGNMENTS:

FILM VIEWINGS:
Students will read three feature-length, award winning scripts this quarter. Students are also required to view the final film versions of these scripts. Even if you have seen one or more of the required films it is important that you view them again within the context of this class and in relation to the scripts. Students will also write script analyses of each film.

PARTICIPATION:

- STORY EXERCISES: Each section of the book closes with a selection of exercises that will expand your understanding of the script writing process. Students will complete exercises on The World of the Story, Character, Power & Conflict, Scene Cards, and Structure of Genres.

- SCRIPT REVISIONS: After completing a draft of the first act (30-40 pages) of a feature length narrative film (90-120 minutes) students will complete two revisions. The first revision will be a PEER REVISION where students will select at least one submitted draft from a peer to assess for elements covered in the story exercises. Students will complete the peer revision using Celtx. Students will also revise their own script, also using the Celtx program. [Participation is worth 20% of your grade]
EVEN MORE ASSIGNMENTS:

SCRIPT ANALYSES:
Students will write three script analyses; one on each: *Rushmore*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, and *In Bruges*. Analyses will assess the scripts based on elements covered in the textbook, section “The Basics.” More information on writing a script analysis and expectations for evaluation will be available on Bb. [Analyses are worth 30% of your grade]

ACT 1: FEATURE FILM SCRIPT:
A significant portion of the quarter will be spent writing the first act of a feature length narrative film. Although STORY EXERCISES will provide a foundation for the world of the story, characters, plot, etc. Module 4 will be spent writing and revising the formal script. Students will submit the script in three parts before submitting a final, revised first act of the script. [Act 1 is worth 40% of your grade]

MORE ASSIGNMENTS:

SCRIPT PITCH:
*In lieu of a final exam, students will create and deliver a professional story pitch of their script. The pitch should have two parts as outlined below.*

MARKETING: Before the final week of classes 4 hypothetical marketing profiles will be posted on Bb. Students should select ONE of the profiles to shape their pitch for. Students should consider their audience, the studio the producer(s) are connected with, and other important factors necessary to market their script.

VIDEO: Once a marketing plan has been established students will plan and record the actual pitch. You should assume that you are addressing the studio exec(s) in a professional setting (details of which will be included in the marketing profile). Pitches should be a maximum of 10 minutes. More detailed assignment guidelines, including required elements to include in the pitch will be posted on Bb. Final pitches will be submitted on Bb no later than Tuesday 18 Mar @ noon. [Pitches are worth 10% of your grade]