COM 267  section 1  SPRING 2015
Course: MW 10:00 - 11:50 am
Film Viewings: online/individual
Course Location: Black Hall 224

INSTRUCTOR:
Melissa A. Johnson
Office: Black Hall 225-24
Office Hours: MTuW 9:00 - 9:50 am; by appointment; via e-mail
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Required Materials

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

* Utilized for: • Quizzes • Online Discussions • Film Analysis Essay • Announcements

Rushmore (1998)
(Screenplay and film)

Little Miss Sunshine (2006)
(Screenplay and film)

In Bruges (2008)
(Screenplay and film)

* Utilized for: • Renting/viewing films

* Other materials as assigned in class and on Canvas

Utilized for:

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.
TEXT

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., talking out of turn, using cell phones, texting, or using other electronic devices in class*) will be reprimanded. In some cases, a student may be asked to leave class and the incident may be reported to Student Affairs. (See CWU’s policy in Appendix B of the catalog.)

[*Students are encouraged to express differing views and to challenge one another, but students that attack individual perspectives, practices, or ideas in a disrespectful way may be removed from class and no credit will be awarded.]*

[*Use of electronic devices during class is prohibited and may be counted as an absence. Computers (laptops, netbooks, etc.) are not permitted for in-class use except as arranged by Disability Support Services (see “ADA Statement”).]
MORE COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
There are many reasons for missing any particular session. This class does not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. As such, three absences are not counted against your Participation & Attendance score (although you may lose points for activities, participation, or assignments from a missed day). For each absence beyond the third, a student loses 4 points. It is possible to have a negative Participation score. If you do miss class, check your syllabus, visit Canvas, and talk with a classmate about that day’s lesson. You will be held responsible for completing any work assigned while you are absent. Some assignments may not be made up (i.e. Film Viewings, Discussion Questions).

EVEN MORE COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

DAILY PARTICIPATION:
Every student is expected to come to class prepared for instruction and ready to engage fellow students, the instructor, and the material. If you are not prepared for class, if you have been consistently late for class, or if you are disruptive (such as in the use of electronic devices) you will be counted absent.

EXCEPTIONS: In very rare circumstances, an absence may not count toward your three permitted absences. An appeal must be made at least 48 hours prior to the absence. I will consider CWU-related activities (i.e. athletics), but only if notified in advance. If you are aware of an upcoming absence, notify your instructor. Quizzes must be re-scheduled at least 24 hours before the original quiz date. No other late work will be accepted, no matter the reason for an absence.

TARDIES: Attendance is taken at the beginning of each session. If you are not present when roll is completed, but arrive within the first ten minutes of class, you are counted “tardy.” Every set of three tardies counts as one absence. If you arrive to class more than ten minutes late, you are counted absent.

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).
EVEN MORE COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

E-MAIL POLICY:

►SENDING: E-mails should be sent via Canvas (for best results) and should come through your Outlook account. E-mails should include the course, student name, and a subject. E-mails sent regarding assignments should arrive at least 48 hours before the deadline (10 am 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 (F-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.

MODULE 3:

TOPICS: Writing
[Reading] Screenplay pgs 235-302
12. Narrative
13. Dialogue
14. Rewriting

TOPICS: Marketing
[Reading] Screenplay pgs 303-342
15. Marketing the Script
16. The Pitch

[Note: A more complete, detailed course schedule is available on Canvas for each Module.]
EVALUATION CRITERIA:

GRADE POINTS:
- Participation: 30%
- Script Analysis: 25%
- Short Narrative Script: 30%
- Pitch: 15%

► TOTAL: 100% total

GRADE SCALE:

A  95-100%
A- 90-94%
B+ 87-89%
B  84-86%
B- 80-83%
C+ 77-79%
C  74-76%
C- 70-73%
D+ 67-69%
D  64-66%
D- 60-63%
F  below 60%

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 10 am 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 Canvas via “Announcements.” EC that may be offered will not outweigh any one assignment in point value.

CANVAS POLICY:
- Canvas is an integral part of our course (being the primary means of access to and completion of assignments). Students should access Canvas on a daily basis (M-W).
- Canvas content is broken into modules. All due dates, links to assignment submission, course documents, and all other important information are available through the course modules on Canvas. Modules are available at least one week prior to the first due date for the week in question (note: materials may disappear after the due date and may not be available after that time).
- All assignments (unless otherwise noted) should be submitted on Canvas (through a number of different means) by the 10 am deadline on the posted due dates.
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:
▶ DAILY: Students are expected to be prepared on a daily basis with questions and analyses of the terms and concepts from the readings. When not speaking, students should be attentive and courteous.
▶ 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 your short film (6-12 pages), students will complete two revisions and table reads. 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 in class or using Celtx. Students will also revise their own script, also in class or using the Celtx program. Table reads will be conducted in class. [Participation is worth 30% of your grade]

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 in class or on Canvas. [Analyses are worth 25% of your grade]

SHORT FILM SCRIPT:
A significant portion of the quarter will be spent writing a complete short form 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 drafts before submitting a final, revised complete version of the script. [Short Film Script is worth 30% of your grade]
EVEN 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 Canvas. 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.

► PITCH: 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 Canvas. Final pitches will be given in class during our final exam time (TBD).
[Pitches are worth 15% of your grade]