

SCREENWRITING EMF 405

Meeting Time and Place: Mondays, 12:30pm-3:00 pm, MC210, Spring 2005

Instructor: Keith W. Strandberg

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Office Hours: Before class and by appointment

Nature of the Course

This class will examine the narrative structure and mechanics of the screenplay, as well as its creation. Concepts to be introduced include: idea generation, concept development, plot development, screenplay format, writing treatments, scene construction, dialogue, character development, outlining, brainstorming, and more. The students will write and complete a feature length screenplay. This class is a workshop for writing. We are here to share ideas and work together.

Prerequisite: EMF 377.

Objectives

1. To understand the principles of dramatic structure.
2. To learn the formation of character and situation.
3. To understand the roots of conflict, and the elements of successful plotting.
4. To 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. To create scenes and film stories that are visual, cinematic and watchable/readable.

Policies

1. You are expected to attend all classes.
2. All assignments are due on the date listed, with NO exceptions. All assignments turned in later than class time on the date due will receive an F. Assignments may be turned in early (hard copy only), either sent to instructor's address (see above) or turned into office (get a signature verifying date and time).
3. All scripts and assignments are to be typewritten and be properly formatted. No handwritten assignments will be accepted.
4. The final script is due by 12:30 pm on the last announced day of class. Any script not turned in will result in a failure for the final assignment.

There will be no incompletes.

Required Text

Seger, Linda. Making a Good Script Great. Hollywood, CA: Samuel French Trade, 1989. ISBN 0573699216, 2nd edition

Screenplays

Each student must read and report on at least five (5) screenplays. The report consists of one paragraph describing the writing, the plotting, the characters, the artistry (or lack thereof) etc. Do **not** tell the story of the film, please. You must also orally present at least two of your screenplay reports to the class (3 minutes max), including scenes from film, samples of best dialogue or scene, etc. **The deadline for completing your screenplay reports is February 28, 2005.**

Assignments

Students will be required to complete the following assignments:

Keep a writer/artist's journal, to be collected at unannounced times throughout the semester

Read and paragraph report on five (5) screenplays

Develop and write one writer's treatment (8+ pages) for an original idea

Write three (3) complete character profiles (protagonist, antagonist, chief supporting character) (5+ pages each)

Write one complete first draft of original feature film screenplay (65+ pages)

Write one polished final draft of original feature film screenplay (90 - 120 pages). Failure to reach 90 pages or going over 120 pages will result in loss of points.

Evaluation

Participation: 10 points (attendance is a factor here)

Writer's Treatment: 10 points

Character Profiles: 10 points

Rough Draft: 20 points

Feature film screenplay: 50 points

Total: 100 points