



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WINNIPEG

**THFM 3611-001 (6 credit hours)**

**ADVANCED SCREENWRITING**

Fall-Winter 2014-15  
Tuesdays 11:30 a.m. - 14:15 p.m.  
Room: 3C33

Professor: Dr. Alden Turner  
Office: 2A44  
Phone: 786-9294  
E-mail: [a.turner@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:a.turner@uwinnipeg.ca)  
Conference Hours: Monday 14:00-16:00 p.m.  
Other Times by Appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This advanced screenwriting course focuses on the development of longer dramatic narratives. The course takes the form of a workshop where students develop half-hour to feature-length dramatic scripts, from synopsis through treatment to final draft. The course focuses on plot structure, character development, and techniques for writing dialogue. Students gain a working understanding of creative processes, story structure, scene design, composition and adaptation techniques, and screenplay analysis. The course also deals with the role of the screenwriter in Canadian filmmaking and television.

Students are **required** to have written work ready for **each class** and to participate constructively in critiquing the work of classmates.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Robert McKee, *Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting* (London: Methuen, 1999).

Christopher Riley, *The Hollywood Standard: The Complete and Authoritative Guide to Script Format and Style*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Los Angeles: Michael Wiese, 2009).

Note: Students are advised that every piece of writing presented for discussion must be distributed to all members of the class; i.e. your original plus 10 copies in total (9 for students and an additional copy for the professor). These copies must be made at the student's expense and should be viewed as a necessary cost associated with taking this course.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

Short Film/TV Script (25-30 pages/minutes) due: October 28, 2014 .....	20%
2 Script Reports due: November 27, 2014 and January 6, 2015 .....	20%
Feature Film/TV Drama Premise, Synopsis, and Outline due: February 10, 2015.....	10%
Feature Film/TV Drama Script (80-90 pages/minutes) due: April 13, 2015 .....	30%
Constructive participation in critiquing scripts .....	20%
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>100%</b>

Late Assignments will **NOT** be accepted without a medical certificate.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

September 9 Introduction to Advanced Screenwriting Workshops and Projects

**UNIT 1: WRITING SHORT FILMS**

- September 16 Story Synopses and Step-Outlines  
McKee, *The Writer and the Art of Story*, 3-28
- September 23 Story Design: Opening Scenes  
McKee, *Elements of Story*, 31-78  
Film Script Format and Style  
Riley, 1-57, 140-150
- September 30 Story Design: Genre and Character  
McKee, *Elements of Story*, 79-109
- October 7 Story Design: Controlling Ideas  
McKee, *Elements of Story*, 110-131  
Short Film/TV Workshop 1
- October 14 Short Film/TV Workshop 2
- October 21 Short Film/TV Workshop 3
- October 28 **Original Short Film/TV Script due**  
Screenwriting in Canadian Film and Television

**UNIT 2: STORY ANALYSIS**

- November 4 Story Analysis: Introduction  
McKee, *The Writer at Work*, 334-373
- November 11 Remembrance Day – no class
- November 18 Script Analysis Workshop 1  
McKee, *The Writer at Work*, 373-409
- November 25 Script Analysis Workshop 2  
McKee, *A Writer's Method*, 410-419  
**Feature Film/TV Drama Assignment**
- November 27 **Script Report #1 due**

**UNIT 3: FEATURE FILM / TV DRAMA WRITING**

- January 6 Story Premises and Synopses  
McKee, *Principles of Story Design*, 135-180  
**Script Report #2 due**
- January 13 Feature Outlines and Treatments  
McKee, *The Principle of Antagonism*, 317-333
- January 20 Project Development Workshop 1  
McKee, *The Inciting Incident and Act Design*, 181-232

- January 27      Project Development Workshop 2  
McKee, Scene Design, Scene Analysis, and Composition, 233-302
- February 3      Lecture/Discussion: Character and Story Development  
McKee, Crisis, Climax and Resolution, 303-314
- February 10     Advanced Script Format and Style  
Riley, 59-115  
**Working Premise, Synopsis and Outline Due**

#### **UNIT 4: FEATURE FILM / TV DRAMA SCRIPTS**

- February 17      Midterm Break
- February 24 -    6 Script Reading Workshops  
March 31
- March 3          VW Date
- April 13          Feature Film / TV Drama Scripts due no later than 5:00 pm**

#### **"THE REAL THING" LECTURE SERIES**

The Department of Theatre and Film is presenting a series of six lectures which will be held on Wednesdays during the free period (12:30-13:20) in Theatre 1T15. Please note the dates in your diary **NOW**: Sept 17, Oct 22, Nov 12, Jan 14, Feb 11, Mar 11. This series will feature speakers from a range of areas in the performing arts: technical, performance, design, management, film, directing, playwriting, etc. These speakers will specifically address issues related to "the business of the business."

Attendance for potential Theatre Honours/majors and for Film majors is optional but highly recommended.

#### **2014 ORIENTATION ASSEMBLY**

Each year in September we hold an *Orientation Assembly* to introduce our new students to faculty and other students; to provide information about the department, its various activities and those of its professors; and to provide news about what's coming up. This year our *Orientation Assembly* will be held on **Wednesday, September 10, 2014, 12:30-13:20 in Theatre, 1T15. ATTENDANCE IS COMPULSORY** for all Majors and Honours students. Those considering Honours are strongly recommended to attend. All others are welcome and encouraged to attend.

#### **BUILDING SECURITY**

The Asper Centre for Theatre and Film (which houses the Department of Theatre and Film) is open from 8:00 am-5:30 pm weekdays. Students are permitted to be in the building between 8:00 am and 10:00 pm seven days per week (except statutory holidays when the University is closed) **BUT PLEASE NOTE:** outside of regular building hours, it is **MANDATORY** that everyone in the building **EITHER** carry an access card **OR** have a booking confirmation form in their possession (hard copy or electronic). **ALL EVENING STUDENTS in the building for classes MUST have an access card.** If a Security Guard checks and you do not have proper accreditation, **you may be evicted.**

These rules are in place to protect our students and our equipment; please respect them.

## **ELECTRONIC COURSE OUTLINE ADDENDA**

Students must check our website at <http://theatre.uwinnipeg.ca/tbooking.htm> and read the menu items called *Fire Safety Instructions in the Asper Centre for Theatre and Film*, *Access Card/Building Use Policy* **AND** *Room Booking Instructions*. The link to the electronic *Online Room Booking Form* is also found at this location. Please read and note all instructions carefully.

## **GENERAL NOTES**

This course outline should be considered a guideline only. Time constraints and other unforeseen factors may require that some topics be omitted or covered in less detail than indicated.

Students with documented disabilities, temporary or chronic medical conditions, requiring academic accommodations for tests/exams (e.g., private space) or during lectures/laboratories (e.g., note-takers) are encouraged to contact Accessibility Services (AS) at 204-786-9771 or [accessibilityservices@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:accessibilityservices@uwinnipeg.ca) to discuss appropriate options. All information about a student's disability or medical condition remains confidential. <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/accessibility>.

Students who plan to conduct research interviews, focus groups, surveys, or any other method of collecting data from any person, even a family member, must obtain the approval of the UHREB before commencing data collection. Exceptions are research activities in class as a learning exercise. See <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/research-human-ethics> for submission requirements and deadlines."

All students, faculty and staff have the right to participate, learn and work in an environment that is free of harassment and discrimination. The UW Respectful Working and Learning Environment Policy may be found online at [www.uwinnipeg.ca/respect](http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/respect).

UWinnipeg promotes a scent-free environment. Please be respectful of the needs of classmates and the instructor by avoiding the use of scented products while attending lectures. Exposure to perfumes and other scented products (such as lotion) can trigger serious health reactions in persons with asthma, allergies, migraines or chemical sensitivities.

Archival records such as videotapes, sound recordings, and photographs may be made or taken during class or lab times. The University uses such materials primarily for archival, promotional, and teaching purposes. Promotional use may include display at open houses or conferences, or use in advertising, publicity, or brochures. In reading and accepting the terms in this course outline, students acknowledge consent for such use by the University. Should a student not wish to convey such consent, s/he should withdraw from this course immediately.

Cellular phones **MUST** be turned off during classes and examinations; texting is **NOT** permitted in class.

Any student attending a test or final examination may be required to present proof of identity; photo identification is preferred.

It is the student's responsibility to retain a photocopy or computer disk copy of **ALL** assignments submitted for grading; in the event of loss or theft, a duplicate copy is required.

Students are strongly advised to read the section of the *University of Winnipeg Calendar* (found on-line at <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/cms-filesystem-action/pdfs/calendar/RegulationsandPolicies.pdf>) for information on Registration, Grading, Academic Misconduct including plagiarism, and Appeals.

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2015** is the final date to withdraw without academic penalty from courses which begin in September 2014 and end in April 2015 (2014/15 Fall/Winter Term).

## **STUDENT PARTICIPATION POLICY**

Theatre is a communal art form in which a number of interdependent artists and crafts people co-operate to create a work of art. This fact is necessarily transferred to the learning situation, and is reflected in

many of the Department's courses. Consequently, it is the Department's policy that students are required to: complete homework such as reading, line-learning, script analysis, prop lists, design drawings, etc.; attend classes; attend rehearsals both within and outside of class times; and, in short, to exhibit commitment towards the inevitably shared endeavours of our field of study.

Any student failing to fulfil these requirements is harmful to the progress of dedicated students and may, after due warning, be asked to withdraw from any individual Departmental course.

### **COURSE CONTENT NOTE**

#### All Theatre and Film Classes

Dramatic Literature depicts a wide variety of human action, both elevated and base, public and private, physical and psychological, sexual and non-sexual, etc. The Department of Theatre and Film will not undertake to censor the subject matter of dramatic works.

Students who have concerns about dealing with the full range of content and style in drama/film are urged to discuss these concerns with the course instructor.

#### Performance-Related Classes

Much of an actor's work is based upon actual experiences of life which become translated into fictional circumstances. Because of this, the teaching of acting may involve encouraging the student to examine personal and even intimate areas of life to help him or her access life experiences appropriate to the demands of the work.

Dramatic literature depicts a wide range of human actions, both elevated and base, public and private, physical and psychological, sexual and non-sexual, etc. Acting students must learn to simulate life truthfully in interaction with other students in the safety of the acting class and the rehearsal hall through exercises, discussions, and directions which address rather than avoid truthful, particularized, personalized action.

Performance classes often require strenuous physical activity. Classes may also involve physical interaction between students as part of class exercises or character development and occasional physical contact by instructors for purposes such as the demonstration of a technique or to make a posture correction. Students are responsible for wearing clothing appropriate to these activities.

Students who have concerns about dealing with the full range of actions and subject matter involved in drama are urged to discuss these concerns with their course instructor.