

THFM 3611-001 (6 credit hours)

**ADVANCED SCREENWRITING**

Fall-Winter 2016-17  
Tuesdays 13:00 - 14:15 p.m.  
Room: 3M54

Instructor: Jordan Wheeler  
Office: 4T06  
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E-mail: jo.wheeler@uwinnipeg.ca  
Conference Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays  
14:30-15:30 p.m. Other Times by Appointment

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**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, 2005).

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 (22-25 pages/minutes) due: November 1, 2016.....	20%
2 Script Reports due: December 1, 2016 and January 5, 2017.....	20%
Feature Film/TV Drama Synopsis, Outline and Treatment due: February 16, 2017 .....	10%
Feature Film/TV Drama Script (60-80 pages/minutes) due: April 17, 2017.....	30%
Constructive participation in critiquing scripts .....	20%
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>100%</b>

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

**TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE**

- September 6 Introduction to Advanced Screenwriting Workshops and Projects
- September 8 McKee, *The Writer and the Art of Story*, 3-28; *A Writer's Method*, 410-417

**UNIT 1: WRITING SHORT FILMS**

September 13 Story Synopses

September 15 Step-Outlines

September 20 **Story Design: Opening Scenes**

McKee, *The Structure Spectrum*, 31-66; *The Inciting Incident*, 181-207

September 22 McKee, *Structure and Setting*, 67-78; *Structure and Genre*, 79-99

September 26 **Principles of Story Design**

McKee, *The Substance of Story*, 135-180

September 28 Workshop: *Stand By Me*

October 4 **Film Script Format and Style**

Riley, 1-57, 140-150

Short Film/TV Workshop 1

October 6 Short Film/TV Workshop 2

**October 11/13 Mid-Term Break**

October 18 Short Film/TV Workshop 3

October 20 Short Film/TV Workshop 4

October 25 Short Film/TV Workshop 5

October 27 Short Film/TV Workshop 6

November 1 **Original Short Film/TV Script due**

*Screenwriting in Canadian Film and Television*

**UNIT 2: STORY ANALYSIS**

November 3 **Story Analysis**

McKee, *The Writer at Work*, 334-373

November 8 McKee, *The Writer at Work*, 374-409

November 10 Script Analysis in Practice

McKee, *Scene Analysis*, 252-287

November 15 Script Analysis Workshop 1

November 17 Script Analysis Workshop 2

November 22 Script Analysis Workshop 3

November 24 Script Analysis Workshop 4

November 29 **Feature Film / TV Drama Assignment**

December 1 **Script Report #1 due**

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

January 5 **Feature Story Premises and Synopses**

McKee, Elements of Story, 100-131

**Script Report #2 due**

January 12 **Feature Outlines and Treatments**

January 17 McKee, Act Design, 208-232;

January 19 McKee, Scene Design, 233-251

**Withdrawal Date**

January 24 McKee, Crisis, Climax and Resolution, 303-324

January 26 The Principle of Antagonism, 317-333

January 31 Project Development Workshop 1

February 2 Project Development Workshop 2

February 7 Project Development Workshop 3

February 9 Project Development Workshop 4

February 14 **Advanced Script Format and Style**

Riley, 59-115

**February 16 Feature Synopsis, Outline and Treatment due**

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

**February 21/23 Midterm Break**

February 28 - Feature Script Reading Workshops  
April 4

**April 17 Feature Film / TV Drama Scripts due (no later than 4:00 pm)**

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

The Department of Theatre and Film is presenting a series of six lectures which will be held during the free period (12:30-13:20) in Theatre 1T15. Please note the dates in your diary **NOW**: Wed Sept 21 (clowns Morro and Jasp), Mon Oct 17, Wed Nov 9, Wed Jan 18, Mon Feb 27, Mon Mar 13. 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.

### **2016 ORIENTATION ASSEMBLY**

Each year in September we hold an *Orientation Assembly* to welcome students to the new term, introduce our new students to faculty and other students; provide information about the department, its various activities and those of its professors; and deliver news about what's coming up. This year our *Orientation Assembly* will be held on **Wednesday, September 14, 2016, 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.

### **TAFSA**

All students enrolled in at least one theatre or film class are automatically members of TAFSA, the Theatre and Film Students' Association, which plans a number of exciting activities each academic year. We are looking forward to regular **Performance Jams, Socials**, and the very popular **24/7 Event** during which students move into our building and five plays are written, rehearsed, produced, and presented – all in a period of 24 hours! And this year, for the first-time, TAFSA is planning a **Play Festival** (Jan 11-14). Please join TAFSA to find out more at its organizational meeting: Mon Sept 19, 12:30-1:20, Room 0T10. This is a great opportunity for students to connect with other like-minded people and a way to get involved in the department events.

### **BUILDING SECURITY**

The Asper Centre for Theatre and Film (home to the Department of Theatre and Film) is open from 8:00 am and 5:30 pm weekdays only. 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.

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 with documented disabilities, or 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 are strongly advised to read the section of the *Academic Calendar* (found on-line at <http://uwinnipeg.ca/new-faculty-handbook/appeals-and-academic-misconduct.html>) for information on Academic Misconduct including plagiarism, and Appeals.

Students conducting research interviews, focus groups, surveys, or any other method of collecting data from any person, including a family member, must obtain the approval of the appropriate ethics committee before commencing data collection. Exceptions are research activities in class as a learning exercise. See <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/research/human-ethics.html> 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).

Students may choose not to attend classes or write examinations on holy days of their religion, but they must notify their instructors at least two weeks in advance. Instructors will then provide opportunity for students to make up work examinations without penalty. A list of religious holidays can be found at <http://uwinnipeg.ca/academics/calendar/docs/important-notes.pdf>

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2016** is the final date to withdraw without academic penalty from courses which begin in September 2016 and end in December 2016 of the 2016 Fall 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.