

THFM-2611-001 (3 credit hours)

INTRODUCTION TO SCREENWRITING

Fall 2018
Tuesdays and Thursdays 1 – 2:15 PM
Room: 3C30

Instructor: Noam Gonick
Office: 4T06 (Office Hours by Request)

E-mail: noam2@mts.net

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce students to the basics of screenwriting through scene writing exercises, the adaptation of a Chekhov short story, and the development of an original short film script. It includes a study of the language of film, narrative principles, formatting, script analysis, and adaptation. The course also deals with the position of the screenwriter in the filmmaking industry.

Students are **required** to have researched discussion points ready for class and participate constructively in critiquing the work of classmates, contributing to in-class discussions. Written assignments including (but not limited to) screenplays will be a mandatory part of this course. Creating your “personal banner”, writing outlines, synopses, character backgrounds, and other pre-script ‘preparatory’ writings will be required elements for the successful completion of this course. Public presentations and “pitching” of assignments and the constructive critiquing of others’ work are all integral aspects to this course.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- "An Artist’s Story" by Anton Chekhov (translated by Constance Garnett)
https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/An_Artist%27s_Story
- “Some Ideas on the Cinema” by Cesare Zavattini
<http://www.f.waseda.jp/norm/Realism11/Zavattini.pdf>
- “Feminist Class Struggle” by bell hooks
<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/bell-hooks-feminist-class-struggle>

Note: Students are advised some of the writings presented for discussion will also be distributed to members of the class; i.e. your original plus 16 copies in total (15 for students and an additional copy for the Professor). These copies are made at the student's own expense and should be viewed as a necessary cost associated with taking this course.

GRADING

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Constructive participation in class, Personal Banner..... | 20% |
| Bergman script analysis | 10% |
| Adaptation of "An Artist’s Story" (due October 23, 2018) | 30% |
| Short original screenplay (due December 4, 2018) | 40% |
| | ----- |
| TOTAL..... | 100% |

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

GRADING SCALE

| | | | | | |
|----|------------|----------|----|------------|---------|
| A+ | 90 - 100% | GPA 4.50 | C+ | 65 - 69.9% | GPA 2.5 |
| A | 85 - 89.9% | GPA 4.25 | C | 60 - 64.9% | GPA 2.0 |
| A- | 80 - 84.9% | GPA 4.0 | D | 50 - 59.9% | GPA 1.0 |
| B+ | 75 - 79.9% | GPA 3.5 | F | Below 50% | GPA 0 |

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (all dates subject to change)

September 4 Introduction to Noam Gonick & the Writers' Room Workshop

UNIT 1: SCREENPLAY ADAPTATION

September 6 Reading Assignment due: "An Artist's Story" by Anton Chekhov
Class Discussion: "An Artist's Story" summary, themes
Research Methodologies, interpretive inspirations

September 11 Research presentations in class: Chekhov's Russia
Class Discussion: Reinterpretation (updating) versus Historical Films

September 13 Class Discussion: Your Banner, Opening Scenes, Lasting Impressions.

September 18 Writing Assignment due: Adaptation Outline (1 Page)
Presentation of Outlines, discussion

September 20 Continuation of Outlines presentations, discussion

September 25 Writing Assignment due: Character Backstories (1 Page)
Presentation of Character Backstories, discussion

September 27 Continuation of Character Backstory presentations, discussions

September 28-
October 28 TWILIGHT ROOM OF THE SOUL: THE UNIVERSE OF INGMAR BERGMAN*

October 2 Reading Assignment due: bell hook's Feminist Class Struggle
Class Discussion: Characters and Conflicts, gender race and class

October 4 Research Assignment due: Presentation of Favourite Scene from a Pre-existing Screenplay

October 16 Writing Assignment due: Beat Sheet (1 Page)
Assignment Reading Aloud: Class Critique

October 18 Completion of Beat Sheet presentations/critiques
Class Discussion: Basic Script Formatting, Screenwriting Style

* During this month long festival at the WFG's Cinematheque, Artspace Building -100 Arthur Street, each student will attend *at least one* Bergman screening and write a 500-word analysis of the film's screenplay: it's structure, style, uniqueness and its personal effect on the viewer.

October 23 **Adaptation due: “An Artist’s Tale”** (up to 8 pages MAX)
Assignment Reading Aloud: Class Critique

October 25 Completion of assignments readings, critiques

UNIT 2: ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

October 30 **Writing Assignment due: Ingmar Bergman script analysis**[†]

Beating the Boundaries – class members are advised to dress appropriately as the bulk of the class will be spent outdoors.

November 1 Reading Assignment: “Some Ideas on the Cinema” by Cesare Zavattini
Class discussion: Neorealism

November 6 **Assignment due: Personal Banner**
Personal Banner presentations

November 8 **Assignment due: Outline and Rationale** (up to 2 Pages)
Discussion: Inciting Events and Progressive Complications

November 13 **Assignment due: Beat Sheet** (1 Page)
Assignment Reading Aloud: Class Critique
Discussion: Character and Plot Development

November 12 **VW Date**

November 15 Research Assignment for Class Presentation:
Screenwriter’s Bibles

November 20 **Assignment due: FIRST DRAFT**
Assignment Reading Aloud: Class Critique

November 22 Continuing to present the first drafts
Discussion: Script Analysis and Revision

November 27 Screenwriter in the contemporary film/television industry

November 29 **Original Short Screenplay FINAL DRAFT due**

[†] Please attach your Cinematheque box office ticket stub to the hard copy.

"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 19th (Donna-Michelle St. Bernard, playwright and arts administrator), Oct 17th, Nov 14th, Jan 16th, Feb 27th, Mar 13th. 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.

HEALTH AND ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Life happens to everyone. If you are experiencing a crisis in your life, or if you have a physical or mental health issue, communicate with your Professor or Accessibility Services – let us know so we can provide support or direct you to those who can. The earlier we know, the earlier we can discuss what resources might be available. Students with documented disabilities, or temporary or chronic medical conditions requiring academic accommodations for tests/exams/presentations (e.g., private space or more time) or during lectures/labs (e.g., note-takers) are encouraged to contact Accessibility Services (AS) at 204-786-9771 or accessibilityservices@uwinnipeg.ca to discuss appropriate options. All information about a student's disability or medical condition remains confidential. If you are registered with Accessibility Services, do not assume that Accessibility Services (AS) has informed your instructor that you have registered with them. <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/accessibility>

2018 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 **Monday, September 10, 2018, 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** and **Socials** as well as **DioFest** (a new play festival featuring student written and produced plays), and the very popular **24/7 Event** during which students move into our building and several plays are written, rehearsed, produced, and presented – all in a period of 24 hours! Please join TAFSA to find out more at its organizational meeting, tentatively scheduled for Mon Sept 17, 12:30-1:20 pm, Room OT10. 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://uwinnipeg.ca/theatre-film> 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 are strongly advised to read the sections 8, 9, and 10 of the *Academic Calendar* for information on Academic Misconduct including plagiarism, and Appeals, (found on-line at: <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/academics/calendar/docs/regulationsandpolicies.pdf>).

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.

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>

When it is necessary to cancel a class due to exceptional circumstances, instructors will make every effort to inform students via uwinnipeg email (and/or using the preferred form of communication, as designated by the instructor), as well as the Departmental Assistant and Chair/Dean so that class cancellation forms can be posted outside classrooms. ***Students are reminded that they have a responsibility to regularly check their uwinnipeg e-mail addresses to ensure timely receipt of correspondence from the university and/or their course instructors.***

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2018 is the final date to withdraw without academic penalty from courses which begin which begin September 4 and end December 3, 2018 (2018-19 Fall Term).

Please note that withdrawing before the VW date does not necessarily result in a fee refund.

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

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.