

THFM-2611-001 (3 credit hours)
INTRODUCTION TO SCREENWRITING

Winter 2019
Tuesdays and Thursdays 1 – 2:15 PM
Room: 3M65

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

- "On Love" (1989) by Anton Chekhov (sometimes titled "About Love")
<http://home.ku.edu.tr/~jward/101/Chekhov%20On%20Love.pdf>
- "Some Ideas on the Cinema" by Cesare Zavattini
<http://www.f.waseda.jp/norm/Realism11/Zavattini.pdf>

Note: Students are advised some assignments will be required in duplicate for each member of the class. 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%
Adaptation of "On Love" (due February 26, 2019)	40%
Short original screenplay (due April 4, 2019)	40%

TOTAL	100%

Late Assignments will **not** be accepted without a medical certificate. Typo-free and organized presentation of written work is an integral part of the overall mark.

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
B	70 - 74.9%	GPA 3.0			

Work not submitted will be graded as 0.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (all dates subject to change)

January 8, 2019 Introduction to Prof Noam Gonick, Syllabus & Writers' Room Workshop

UNIT 1: SCREENPLAY ADAPTATION

January 10 Reading Assignment due: "On Love" by Anton Chekhov
Class Discussion: "On Love" summary, themes
Research Methodologies, interpretive inspirations

In Class Discussion: Who is your Screenwriter (and why?); what is your favourite screenplay (and why?); what is your favourite film scene (and why?)

January 15 Research Presentations in-class: expanding upon Chekhov's "On Love"
Class Discussion: Reinterpretation (updating) versus Historical Films

January 17 Class Discussion: Your "Banner", interpretation and obsessions.

January 22 **Assignment due:** Adaptation Outline (1 Paragraph, approx. ½ page)
Presentation of Outlines in class, discussion

January 24 Continuation of Outlines presentations, discussion

January 29 **Assignment due:** Character Backstories (1 Page)
Presentation of Character Backstories, discussion

January 31 Continuation of Character Backstory presentations, discussion
What is a story beat?

February 5 **Assignment due:** Beat Sheet on recipe cards (1 Page)
Sticking the Beats to the wall (with class feedback/discussion)

February 7 Completion of Beat Sheet presentations/critiques

Basic Script Formatting, Screenwriting Style

February 12 **FIRST DRAFT due:** "On Love" Adaptation (up to 8 pages MAX)
Assignment Readings: Class Critique

February 14 Completion of FIRST DRAFT readings

February 26 **FINAL DRAFT due: “On Love” Adaptation** (up to 8 pages MAX)

UNIT 2: ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

In-Class Reading: “Some Ideas on the Cinema” by Cesare Zavattini
 Class discussion: Neorealism and “Walk About” prep
 Class discussion: revisiting your “Banner”, interpretation and obsessions.

February 28 “Walk About” – All Students are required to walk the neighbourhood surrounding the university – dress accordingly – layer!

March 5 **Assignment due: Pitch Ideas for Final Script** (up to 1 page)

March 7 Completion of pitching of ideas for Final Script

March 12 **Assignment due:** Beats on recipe cards

March 14 Completion of Beats on recipe cards

March 15 **VW Date**

March 19 **Assignment due: Character Breakdowns (1 Page)**
 Assignment Presented: Class Critique

March 21 Completion of Character Breakdown presentations

March 26 **Assignment due: FIRST DRAFT ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY**
 Assignment Reading Aloud: Class Critique

Discussion: Script Analysis and Revision

March 28 Continuing to present the First Drafts

April 2 The Screenwriter in Winnipeg’s film/television industry

April 4 **Original Short Screenplay FINAL DRAFT due**

FRIDAY, MARCH 15, 2019 is the final date to withdraw without academic penalty from courses which begin January 7 and end April 5, 2019 (2018-19 Winter Term).

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

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 <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/accessibility>. If you are registered with Accessibility Services, do not assume that Accessibility Services (AS) has informed your instructor that you have registered with them.

"THE REAL THING" LECTURE SERIES

The Department of Theatre and Film is presenting a series of six lectures which will be held Wednesdays during the free period (12:30-13:20) in Theatre 1T15. Please note the dates in your diary **NOW**: 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.

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. 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**, **DioFest** (an exciting 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 at their meetings, every 2nd Monday, 12:30-1:20, 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>

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.