**Course description:**
This course focuses on writing for the screen, with emphasis on how the camera tells stories. It is an examination of format, narrative, and dialogue from treatment through completed script. This is a writing class; the grade will be based on the writing completed during the semester.

**Course objectives**
In this intensive screenwriting class, students are expected to complete a logline, a detailed outline or treatment of a feature length screenplay, and write the pages of the script (approx. 75-120 pages). The first part of the course will be spent scrutinizing these outlines in workshops. Using discussions, film clips, and writing exercises, students will learn how to use the essential elements of cinematic storytelling and dramatic structure (character, plot, dialogue, conflict, theme, scene construction and subtext) to write their own feature length screenplays.

The second part of the course involves the actual writing of the script. Each student is expected to complete the script and do a rewrite and a polish. Students will learn how to expand their idea into a screenplay with the appropriate formatting, writing style, and pacing. Furthermore, each student will workshop the pages of their working draft in class and then constructively discuss the writing.

**Requirements:**
Attendance is mandatory. Two unexcused absences or excessive lateness will cause your grade to go down a letter grade. The following assignments are required:

1. Short writing assignments – in class and out.
2. Complete a 8-10 page detailed outline of the script
3. Complete the first draft, rewrite and polish of the same script.
4. Attendance and on-time participation in class workshops, discussions and writing exercises.

**Assignment:** Write a logline and 1-2 page scene about your character's biggest fear. Show, don't tell.

**Week 1**

**Sep 12**
- Class Introductions
- An introduction to the Syllabus
- Course Goals and Objectives
- Finding your Voice & Your Story.
- Screenplay Format Basics
- The Macro & Micro of screenwriting
- Basic Screenwriting Principles

**Assignment:** Write a logline and 1-2 page scene about your character's biggest fear. Show, don't tell.

**Week 2**

**Sep 19**
- Due: Fear Scenes and loglines.
- Basic Screenwriting Principles Continued
- The 3 Act Structure.
- Prerequisites for ACT 1
- Outlining your story.
- The Set-up: opening sequence
- The inciting incident.

**Assignment:** Write a 1-2 page scene without dialogue and begin the outline and pages for Act 1 up until the inciting incident.

**Week 3**

**Sep 26**
- Due: Non-dialogue scene, outline and pages for ACT 1
- A HERO'S JOURNEY: Character's Arc
- The COW chart
- Character & Plot
- Desires, Motivations & Objectives

**Assignment:** Outline and write a full pass of Act 1.

**Week 4**

**Oct 3**
- Due: Outline and first draft of Act 1.
- The Point of No Return
- The importance of CONFLICT.
- Obstacles & Opportunities
- What’s propelling engine?
- DIALOGUE: What people say and what they don’t say...
- THE HIDDEN AGENDA: What’s the SUBTEXT?

**Assignment:** Continue plotting your story in outline or treatment form. Polish Act 1 and begin Act 2.
Grading Scale for Assignments:

Your writing assignments including your screenplay (in progress and completed final) will be graded on a scale of 1-15. 1-5 points will be given for the following categories: Originality, Engagement and Clarity.

**Originality** - The style and voice of the writing feels fresh and idiosyncratic. You are immersing yourself in the work and are not referencing other work too obviously for inspiration.

**Engagement**: Proof that the screenwriting principles are being applied to the work and the story is propelling forward in fluid fashion. You will be graded for attempt not execution. Failure or reluctance to implement these elements will bring down your grade.

**Clarity**: Logic and coherence are crucial. Proofread your work. Misspellings, typos and missing words will bring down your grade in this category.

Total grade on any given assignment will be tallied from 1-15 and correspond to a letter grade as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
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<td>11-9</td>
<td>C+/- C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>8-1</td>
<td>D-F</td>
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**Grading Policy:**

Attendance and participation in class 10%
Misc. Writing Assignments 10%
Grade on Outline 10%
Grade on First draft 20%
Grade on Rewrite 25%
Grade on Final Polish 25%

**Overall Grading Scale:**

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<thead>
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<tr>
<td>94-100</td>
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<td>&lt;70</td>
<td>D-F</td>
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</table>

**Week 5**

Oct 10

- Due: Outline and pages for Act 1.
- Raising the Stakes: Act 2 & 3
- The Midpoint Ordeal.
- The Darkest Moment

**Assignment:** Continue plotting your story in outline or treatment form. Write the first half of Act 2.

**Week 6**

Oct 17

- Due: Outline and pages for Act 1-2.
- Theme: What is it all about?
- Finding the dramatic question.
- The Elixir transforms the Protagonist
- The Climax
- Finding Resolution in a New World Order

**Assignment:** Complete your full outline and pages for Act 2 and a first pass on Act 3.


**Week 7**

Oct 31

- Due Full First Draft.
- Read and discuss
- Processing and Incorporating Feedback
- Watch film clips: TBD

**Assignment:** Rewrite ACT 2 and begin Act 3.

**Week 8**

Nov 7

- Due first pass of Act 3
- Read scripts and critique.
- Sign up for One-on-one sessions.

**Assignment:** Continue writing and rewriting.

**Week 9**

Nov 14

- Read scripts and critique.
- One-On-One Feedback Sessions

**Week 10**

Nov 21

- Read scripts and critique.
- One-On-One Feedback Sessions

**Assignment:** Continue writing and rewriting.

**Week 11**

Nov 28

- Read scripts and critique.
- One-On-One Feedback Sessions

**Week 12**

Dec 5

- Last Day of Class
- TBD

*** Final– Dec. 16 Final Script DUE***