FTV 33: Introduction to Screenwriting — Summer 2018 — Nicholas Griffin

Tuesday/Thursday, 2-3:30 - Public Affairs Building #1246
(Discussion: Friday, 12-12:50 or 1-1:50 - Public Affairs Building #2238)

Course Description and Goals:

FTV 33 introduces students to the basic principles of screenwriting for feature films. Lecture classes will cover the concepts of structure and dramatic development, character, scene construction, dialogue, and format, supplemented by in-class screenings and discussion of assigned reading and films. Additionally, discussion/workshop groups will meet once a week during which each student will develop an original screenplay idea and write the 1st 10 pages.

Required Texts/Readings:

Hal Ackerman, Write Screenplays That Sell, Tallfellow Press.

Weekly Course Schedule:

Week 1 - 6/26 & 28
Course Introduction and Guidelines.
Lecture: What is a Story?
Basic Story Components and Archetypes.
Screening (clips): Wild Tales. Nightmare at 20,000 Ft.

Assigned viewing for week two: Bridesmaids

Week 2 - 7/3 & 5
Lecture: What is a Character?
Perspective and Sympathy.
Discussion: Bridesmaids

Assigned viewing for week three: On the Waterfront

Week 3 - 7/10 & 12
Lecture: Dramatic Structure.
Discussion: On the Waterfront.
Screening (clips): The Godfather

Assigned viewing for week four: Tootsie

Week 4 - 7/17 & 19
Lecture: 1st 10 pages and 1st Acts.
Discussion: Tootsie.
Screening (clips): Chinatown. Jaws.
Assigned viewing for week five: L.A. Confidential

Week 5 - 7/24 & 26
Lecture: Scenes and Sequences.
Discussion: L.A. Confidential.
Screening (clips): The Apartment. The Graduate.

Assigned viewing for week six: Sweet Smell of Success

Week 6 - 7/31 & 8/2
Discussion: Sweet Smell of Success.
Putting it all together.

Course Requirements and Statement of Grading:

Students must be prepared to attend all classes, do the assigned reading/viewing, and actively participate in discussions both in lecture and workshop. Assignments must be completed thoroughly and on time. Note: there is no final exam for this course, other than submission of the 1st 10 pages of script at the end of the quarter. Please be on time to all classes. No cell phones allowed in lecture classes.

Grades will be determined by the following:

1. Final Submission - 40%
2. Participation/Assigned Work in Workshops - 40%
3. Participation/Assigned Work in Lecture - 20%

Please direct all questions regarding grades to the T.A. in your workshop section.