FILM TV C132 - Screenwriting Fundamentals – 2 units. Professor George Huang
With video lectures by Wendall Thomas

Objectives

Learn the fundamentals of screenwriting—story structure, character development, plot, theme, conflict, and vision. Emphasis is on structural analysis of feature film writing. Students will develop a professional screenwriter’s conceptual vocabulary for developing, writing and rewriting his or her own work.

How Class Works

Students listen to bi-weekly lectures via a web browser. Reading assignments accompany each lecture. The final grade is determined by a midterm and final.

Readings

Richard Walter's *Essentials of Screenwriting: The Art, Craft, and Business of Film and Television Writing* is required for this course. You are also required to read three full-length screenplays, which are available for download from the Class Website.

Books are available for purchase at the UCLA Bookstore—either on campus or online. They are also available at stores and from online booksellers such as Amazon.com.

Screenings

Four films (Film 1 – *Get Out*, Film 2 - *Whiplash*, Film 3 – *Thelma and Louise*, Film 4 – *When Harry Met Sally*) are required viewing. Other films are recommended—not required—as companion viewing for each lesson.

Recommended films can be streamed at low resolution from the Class Website. Films chosen for assignments or papers should be viewed at full quality on DVD or via web services such as iTunes or Netflix.

Assignments

1 – First week – Read a screenplay – no submission
2 – Midterm – Analysis of assigned screenplay – 3 to 5 pages
3 – Final – Comparative analysis of two films – 3 to 5 pages
Grade Breakdown

Your final grade is calculated as follows:

Midterm – 50%
Final – 50%

Submitting assignments after the deadline will subtract 5 percent from the grade per day late, which means an A becomes a B if submitted two days past due.

Policies

This class takes advantage of MyUCLA and a third-party service known as Turnitin. Submissions are screened for improper citations and potential plagiarism. Quotes or ideas paraphrased from other work must be properly cited.

http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Student-Conduct-Code

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students needing academic accommodations based on a disability should contact the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) at (310) 825-1501 or in person at Murphy Hall A255. When possible, students should contact the CAE within the first two weeks of the term as reasonable notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. For more information visit www.cae.ucla.edu. Disability accommodations needs should be communicated to the instructor and/or Teaching Assistant before assignments are due unless there are extenuating circumstances. These policies apply to both matriculated UCLA students and visitors in Summer Session.
SCHEDULE

Week One
Lesson 1: Introduction and The Character’s Journey
   Reading: Essentials of Screenwriting, Introduction, Pages 84 –94 (Chapter 8: Character)
   Screening: FILM 1: Get Out

Lesson 2: Structure
   Reading: Handout - The Hollywood Structure
   Screening: Collateral (Optional)
   Recommended Reading: Collateral screenplay

Assignment 1: Read the Screenplay and watch Get Out.

Week Two
Lesson 3: Inciting Incidents
   Reading: Essentials of Screenwriting, Pages 58 – 71 (Chapter 7 - beginning of chapter through Exposition)
   Screening: FILM 2: Whiplash
   Recommended Reading: Whiplash screenplay

Lesson 4: First Act Break
   Reading: Essentials of Screenwriting, Pages 71 – 83 (Chapter 7 - Middles through end of chapter)
   Screening: Little Miss Sunshine (Optional)
   Recommended Reading: Little Miss Sunshine screenplay

Week Three
Lesson 5: Midpoints
   Reading: Essentials of Screenwriting, pgs. 12-46 (Chapters 3-4)
   Work on Midterm Assignment

   Screening: FILM 3: Thelma and Louise
   Reading: Thelma and Louise screenplay

ASSIGNMENT DUE: Midterm
Week Four

Lesson 6: Second Act Break and Endings
Reading: Essentials of Screenwriting, 47-57 (Chapters 5-6)
Screening: FILM 4: When Harry Met Sally

Recommended Reading: When Harry Met Sally screenplay

Lesson 7: Analysis: The Verdict (Part 1)
Reading: Essentials of Screenwriting, Pages 120 – 164 (Chapters 10-11)
Screening: The Verdict (Optional)

Recommended Reading: Verdict screenplay

Week Five

Lesson 8: Analysis: The Verdict (Part 2)
Reading: Essentials of Screenwriting, Pages 165 – 207 (Chapter 12)
Screening: Arrival (Optional)

Recommended Reading: Arrival screenplay

Lesson 9: Character Decisions
Reading: Essentials of Screenwriting, Pages 211-259 (Chapters 13-15)
Screening: Tootsie (Optional)

Recommended Reading: Tootsie screenplay

Week Six

Lesson 10: Dialogue
Reading: Essentials of Screenwriting, pgs 95-119 (Chapter 9: Dialogue)
Pages 263-376 (Optional)
(Part III & Part IV: Business & The Whole Picture)

Work on Final Assignment
Screening: Adaptation (Optional)
Recommended Reading: Adaptation screenplay

ASSIGNMENT DUE: Final due on the last day of the term.