



WRITING 2204F: SHORT FLICKS: AN INTRO TO SCREENWRITING – FALL 2025

SECTION: 650

Online, Asynchronous

Prerequisites

The prerequisite for registration in this course is at least 65% in one of [Writing 2101F/G](#), [Writing 2125F/G](#) (or the former Writing 2121F/G), [Writing 2111F/G](#), [Writing 2130F/G](#) or [Writing 2131F/G](#); or at least 65% in one of [Writing 1000F/G](#), [Writing 1030F/G](#), or [Writing 1031F/G](#); or at least 65% in each of [MIT 1020E](#) (or both of [MIT1021F/G](#) and [MIT 1022F/G](#)) and [MIT 1025F/G](#); or permission of the Department (consult the Undergraduate Program Director, Writing).

Course Description

This course explores writing short film screenplays via lectures and practical workshops, all conducted online, asynchronously. Students will learn the fundamentals of storytelling in the film medium and how short films differentiate from feature-length movies. Students will be guided on how to use screenwriting software to write short films between five and ten minutes in length, while also learning how to orally pitch film ideas, outline and draft scripts and incorporate feedback into revisions. Lectures will focus on structure, plot and genre; characters and dialogue; the anatomy of scenes; and conflict and point of view.

Learning Outcomes / Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have demonstrated the ability to

- communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a range of audience;
- identify the purpose, function and narrative structure of short films;
- understand industry standard screenwriting formatting and software;
- analyze and respond critically to scripts, completed films and the work of peers;

Required Texts and Software

- [Writing Short Films, 2nd Edition](#) by Linda J. Cowgill (available at Western Bookstore)
- Celtx Screenwriting Software (online, free) or other screenwriting software

Recommended Texts

- [The Writer's Journey, 25th Anniversary Edition](#) by Christopher Vogler

Technical Requirements

This course requires you to have a reliable high-speed internet connection and a computer that meets the technical requirements for using word-processing and screenwriting software.

OWL Brightspace

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL Brightspace site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/d2l/home/31143>) on a regular basis for news and updates. All course material will be posted to OWL Brightspace: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>. If students need assistance with OWL Brightspace, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, they can contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#) online or by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800 for technical support. Current versions of all popular browsers (e.g., Safari, Chrome, Edge, Firefox) are supported with OWL Brightspace; what is most important is that you update your browser frequently to ensure it is current. All JavaScript and cookies should be enabled."

Course Requirements

The overall course grade will be calculated as below:

Assignment	% of Grade	Deadline
Loglines & Synopsis	15%	Week 2 (Sep 19)
3-5 minute Short Film Script/Scene	15%	Week 4 (Oct 3)
Pitch Presentation and 1 Page Proposal for 10-minute Film Script	20%	Weeks 6 & 7 (Oct 13 & Oct 24)
Final Draft of 10-minute Script	30%	First drafts due Week 9 (Nov 10) Final drafts due week 12 (Dec 5)
Exercise Engagement & Discussion	10%	N/A
Workshop Peer Review (participation & professionalism)	10%	Weeks 7 & 11 Pitches (Oct 24); Scripts (Nov 28)

Assignment Format

All assignments must be word-processed in a 12-point Courier font for scripts and a 12-point for other assignments. Scripts must be formatted in proper screenplay format as described in class. Students must use either the online Fade In software or another screenwriting program such as Final Draft equipped with Revisions Mode. All assignments must have your name, course name, section number, and instructor's name on the first page. Please include page numbers.

Submitting Assignments

In this course, you will be required to submit the final version of each of your assignments electronically via OWL Brightspace as a PDF to Turnitin.com. Some assignments will require first draft submissions via email or OWL Brightspace in advance of final drafts.

Late assignments will receive a penalty of up to 5% per day including weekends. If you need an extension for a medical reason, you must contact the Academic Counselling of your home Faculty.

Attendance Policy

This course will be conducted as asynchronously, and therefore students will be able to engage in relevant class materials at their own pace on their own schedule. However engagement in these materials is required to improve as a writer. Students will be expected to watch lecture materials and screenings and to participate in classroom discussions where applicable. Lecture modules and screenings will feature short subsequent questionnaires or surveys as means of measuring student engagement. Relevant lectures topics will also feature discussion groups, where the instructor will post questions for the students or the students can ask questions for clarification. Participation in these activities will count towards the “Exercise Engagement & Discussion” portion of the student’s grade.

Many assignments, will require students submit their work in advance of the final deadline, so that students can provide constructive feedback on their peers work. This process is mandatory, and counts towards the Workshop Peer Review portion of the grade.

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below. For work totalling 10% or more of the final course grade, you must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to the Academic Counselling Office of your Faculty of Registration as soon as possible. For further information, please consult the University’s medical illness policy at

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

The Student Medical Certificate is available at

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In this course, students are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. However, it is essential that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments, and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploration; however, students are expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources and avoiding plagiarism. Assignments should reflect the students' own thoughts and independent written work. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and ethical learning environment that promotes critical thinking, independent inquiry and allows them to produce original written contributions.

Intellectual Property and Copyright

All instructor-written materials (e.g. PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course, and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.