WRITING 3824G: FEATURE FILM WRITING – WINTER 2026

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 211IF/G, Writing 2130F/G or Writing 213IF/G: or at least 65% in one of Writing lOOOF/G, Writing 1030F/G, or Writing 1031F/G: or at least 65% in each of MIT 1020E (or both ofMlT1021F/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 the fundamentals of feature length screenplays via lectures and practical workshops, all conducted online, asynchronously. Students will be guided through the various stages of screenwriting, including pitching ideas, outlining, drafting and revisions. Lectures focus on the three act structure, hero's journey and genre; character development and archetypes; and the construction of scenes and sequences. Through the course, students will pitch and outline a complete feature film and write the first act of a feature length screenplay, with an opportunity for peer review to incorporate revisions.

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 essential story beats of three-act structure in narrative screenwriting;
  • create compelling characters and build narrative scenes and sequences
  • write the first act of a feature screenplay with industry standard formatting;
  • respond to peer feedback and incorporate revisions into scripts.

Required Texts and Software
  • Save the Cat! by Blake Snyder (available at Western University bookstore) - **$29.95**
  • Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting by Syd Field (available at Western University Bookstore) - **$27.99**
  • Fade In Screenwriting Software (online, free) or other screenwriting software

Recommended Texts
  • The Writer's Journey, 25th Anniversary Edition by Christopher Vogler (available at amazon.ca and most book stores)

OWL Brightspace
All course lectures/material will be posted to OWL: https://westernu.brightspace.com/

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
Feature Film Pitch and One-Page Proposal	20%	Pitches: Weeks 4-5 Proposal: Week 6
3-5 Page Opening Scene	15%	Week 7
Final Draft of First Act screenplay	40%	First Draft: Week 9 Final Draft: Week 12
Exercise Engagement	10%	Throughout term
Workshop Feedback & Peer Review	15%	Weeks 4-5; 9-11

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 free Fade In software or another screenwriting program such as Final Draft. 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.