

Courses in Screenwriting and Film Studies 2023-2024

REQUIRED COURSES – OFFERED EVERY SUMMER

FILM 505: NARRATIVE THEORY AND PRACTICE FOR SCREENWRITERS (4)

Department

Study and practice of the fundamentals of narrative, the art of visual storytelling, and the elements of dramatic writing for the screen. Narrative strategies for establishing structure, pacing, setting, characterization, and dialogue will be provided through model films and writing exercises. Writers will complete an original script. **Prerequisite for other screenwriting courses.**

FILM 507: CREATIVE WRITING SEMINAR – SCREENWRITING (4)

Department

Workshop course in which class members further develop skills in the writing and analysis of narrative screenplays. Designed for those with prior experience in screenwriting. **Must be repeated for credit but may not be taken more than once per term.** Prerequisite: FILM 505.

FILM 510: FILM ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH (4)

Department

Study of methods of film analysis and research. Course covers the major approaches to film analysis, the tools used in film research, and the problems and methods of film historiography. Required course.

FILM 595: ADVANCED SCREENWRITING TUTORIAL (4)

Department

Highly concentrated, intensive course **to be taken during a student's final summer in the program.** Students will spend six weeks doing a rewrite of a script written in a previous Hollins course. Not open to students in the M.A. program.

FILM 599: THESIS (4, 4)

For the M.A., an extended critical or research essay written in consultation with the thesis advisor. For the M.F.A., an original screenplay (or TV pilot plus show bible) written in consultation with thesis advisor.

ELECTIVE COURSES DIFFER EACH YEAR BUT AT LEAST ONE TELEVISION WRITING COURSE WILL ALWAYS BE INCLUDED. SEE FOLLOWING FOR RECENT EXAMPLES.

FILM 530: FILM STYLES AND GENRES – THE SILENT VOICE (4)

Department

For the first 30 years of film history, cinema was purely a visual art. This course introduces film students to the major figures of the silent era and analyzes how those filmmakers perfected the art of storytelling solely through images. Film artists such as D.W. Griffith, F.W. Murnau, Eric Von Stroheim, Charlie Chaplin, and Lon Chaney will be considered.

FILM 530: FILM STYLES AND GENRES – BLACKNESS ON WHITE SCREENS: THE AFRICAN AMERICAN IDENTITY FROM WHITE SUPREMACY TO BLACK SELF (4)

Department

The class will trace the history of African American identity in film from its early racist beginnings with *Birth of a Nation* through the Civil Rights era, to the modern era of black filmmakers - Spike Lee, John Singleton and Jordan Peele. The course will explore in detail how white control of black identity on the big screen helped codify racial stereotypes about black people in America that has long lasting ramifications to this day.

FILM 530: WOMEN IN FILM: FROM ALICE GUY-BLANCHE TO KATHRYN BIGELOW (4)

Department

This course centers on the trials, triumphs, lives, and socio-political context of female directors throughout history. Students will watch and analyze films of relevant female directors, will learn about how they came to be filmmakers and the historical context of their work. The course will then dive into the study of contemporary female directors, how their careers have taken shape and the current climate in the industry.

FILM 542: TOPICS IN FILM HISTORY – POLITICAL SCREENWRITING (4)**Department**

This course offers an exploration of the legacy of blacklisted writers of the late 1940's and how they inspired filmmakers such as Hal Ashby and many others. Works to be considered include *Being There* and *Chinatown* - the ultimate screenplays of the 70's.

FILM 550: SPECIAL TOPICS – SCREENINGS FOR SCREENWRITERS (4)**Department**

Each week students will screen a selected film chosen as an outstanding example of a specific aspect to the screenwriting craft. Classes will consist of screenings, in-depth analysis and discussion of the film, its continued influence on contemporary filmmakers, and its essential lessons for the developing screenwriter.

FILM 550: SPECIAL TOPICS: PITCH IT UP A NOTCH (4)**Department**

So you've written a great script. Now what? To be successful, you have to be adept at much more than simply writing. Screenwriting is a business, and successful writers need skills to market themselves, their ideas, and their stories. In this workshop, students will improve their pitching skills, from conception to writing and delivery, while deepening their understanding of how meetings are setup, meeting etiquette, maintaining relationships, and more. In a highly competitive market, it's crucial that a writer find their own unique vision and style, while also understanding how to finesse a pitch to a specific studio, executive, production company, etc.

FILM 550: SPECIAL TOPICS: WRITING ANIMATION FOR TV (4)**Department**

The animated TV market is booming, with animation for kids, families, and adults regularly topping the ratings, and new content arriving almost weekly. Nowadays, an aspiring writer's portfolio is not quite complete without a professional sample for animated programming. This advanced class will cover the major differences between writing for animation and live action, as students develop and execute their own animated teleplay spec.

FILM 550: SPECIAL TOPICS: WRITING THE ONE HOUR TELEVISION PILOT (4)**Department**

This workshop course takes students step-by-step through writing their own pilot script for an original one-hour television dramatic series. The course will go from premise lines, "bible," to necessary research, outline/beat sheet, to writing a first draft pilot script. Using models of such popular series as "The Sopranos," "Game of Thrones," "Breaking Bad," "House of Cards," and others, the class will also explore the new "golden age" of TV drama.

FILM 550: SPECIAL TOPICS: HORROR/THRILLER WRITING (4)**Department**

If the question is, "What is the single most popular genre of film in the industry today?" The answer is unquestionably HORROR. Part lecture/discussion and part workshop, this class will focus on the essential films and conventions of this lucrative genre, through survey, history, and analysis. Given that audiences were terrified by Karloff's Monster in 1931, but 16 years later he was a straight guy to comedy duo Abbott & Costello, it's clear that horror, like our own fears, mutate. As such, the focus will be on contemporary horror as metaphor. In short, how do you still scare a jaded audience, using old magician tricks, but fueled by acutely contemporary fears? But more than a mere study, students will utilize that exploration of the various ways that effective horror elements are used to reveal character and generate plot to craft their own feature film idea through outline and beyond.

FILM 581: VIDEO PRODUCTION (4)**Department**

The study and practice of moving picture art through the medium of video. Students learn video production as a technical skill and an art, with practice in the making of narratives, experimental videos, and documentaries. All equipment provided. Lab fee: \$200. May be repeated for credit.