

Courses in Screenwriting and Film Studies

2020-21

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 or permission.

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 screenplays) 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. Coursework will entail some required reading and writing assignments.

FILM 530: FILM GENRES: MONSTERS AND ANTI-HEROES: FANGS ON THE INSIDE (4) Department
Why is it that human movie “monsters” are often more compelling than positive characters? Damaged, crazy and conflicted characters can become iconic, flying in the face of Hollywood’s default need for “likeable” protagonists. This class will use screenings, podcasts, historical contextual information and more to examine the elements that are used to create human monsters. Students will be encouraged to

present their own projects to see if maybe a little bit of Travis Bickle could go a long way in making their stories more engaging, and universal. No textbooks required.

FILM 530: FILM GENRES: MOVIE MOVIES: HOLLYWOOD SHOOTS ITSELF (4) Department

The class will explore the history of Hollywood through its own eyes using a dozen movies set in Hollywood and the film industry. We'll study Hollywood history as viewed by its most important practitioners from Peter Bogdanovich to Charlie Kaufman. Starting with "The Cat's Meow" through the dawn of sound ("Singing in the Rain") through each significant era of nostalgia ("Barton Fink" and "Sunset Boulevard"), to the modern age ("The Player" and "Adaptation"), we will see what Hollywood really had to say about itself. Storytelling and screenwriting techniques will also be examined for each film and filmmaker.

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: FANTASY/HORROR WRITING FOR THE BIG & SMALL SCREEN (4) Department

Part lecture and part workshop, this class will focus on films and television series and their utilization of fantasy and horror elements. Students will generate and build their own idea for a feature film or television series. Through screenings and writing exercises, students will explore the various ways that horror and fantasy are used to reveal character and generate plot. The goal will be to complete an outline for each student's chosen project. GET OUT, ROSEMARY'S BABY, BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER, and STRANGER THINGS are just a few of the films and television shows that will be studied.

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

The kids TV market is booming. Round out your portfolio with a professional sample for children or young adult programming. This advanced class will cover writing for both animated and live action shows. It will be run like a writer's room, with students pitching, writing, addressing notes and punching up scripts just as it's done on a kids TV show.

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." 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: WRITING THE TELEVISION SPEC SCRIPT (4) Department

Participants in this workshop will each write a half hour or hour long sample spec script of a live current television show. Students will pitch their story concept, construct beat sheets, outlines and write a full spec television script. Writers will also build their skills as participants in a writer's room as they help each other with extensive group critique and problem solving. All the top television studio writing programs require a sample television spec script so this class will be very helpful for anyone planning to submit to those fellowship programs.

FILM 550: SPECIAL TOPICS: WRITING THE ORIGINAL HALF HOUR PILOT (4) Department

Introducing students to the basic principles of television writing. Through a series of writing prompts, lecture, screenings and workshop students will learn about the elements of half-hour structure, character creation and the importance of developing a strong narrative engine. Students will pitch original ideas and then see those ideas through from logline to outline and ultimately a completed original pilot. Prerequisite: Film 505 or instructor approval

FILM 550: SPECIAL TOPICS: ACTING FOR WRITERS: CRAFTING PITCH & CHARACTERS (4) Department

In this unique workshop, students will improve their pitching skills and deepen their understanding of character and voice through the study of acting. Using a series of writing prompts, acting exercises, and discussions, students will learn the foundations of character development. They will learn how to write

richer dialogue with more subtext, and how to get in touch with their characters' emotions. These acting tools will allow the writer to get deeper into their character's heads and help them give each character a unique voice. Then we will take these acting lessons and apply them to pitching their own movies or TV shows.

FILM 550: SPECIAL TOPICS: COMICS AS CONTENT: CREATING THE ORIGINAL COMIC BOOK (4) Dept.

This workshop course merges the storytelling of screenplays with the visuals of comics. Students will develop a virtual 24 page comic book focusing on story, plot, dialogue and drawings on the page. Students will also explore the business of comics and graphic novels.

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.