

INSTRUCTOR: Thomas McWilliams
Office: MZ 323
Phone: 818-677-4087
Email: Thomas.mcwilliams@csun.edu
Office hours: Mon & Wed, 2-3pm; Thu, 1-4pm or by appointment

Storytelling does more than just entertain us; stories are religion, art, communication, life. Film and television offer ever-expanding canvases upon which stories can be told. It is the job of the screenwriter to craft his or her tale for these media.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES: The purpose of CTVA 320 is to expand the skills one developed in CTVA 220 with an emphasis on dramatic writing.

Upon successful completion of this class you should:

- 1) Demonstrate an understanding of the entire screenwriting process, from developing a premise, character sketches, and a treatment to the final step of crafting a screenplay.
- 2) Demonstrate an understanding of story structure, plot, dialog, and character development.
- 3) Demonstrate an understanding of the Master Scenes screenwriting style, the standard for submitting screenplays to professionals in the motion picture or television industry.
- 4) Demonstrate proficiency in screenwriting by completing a forty-five to sixty (45-60) page screenplay by the end of the semester.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION: These are to be typed or computer printed using the correct font (12-point Courier) on good-quality paper.

- All assignments must be carefully proofread for spelling, grammar, typos, and errors in script format.
- Use a cover page unless otherwise specified and number all pages.
- Short assignments are to be stapled together; on longer scripts use three-hole punched paper and bind with brads.

REQUIRED TEXTS: Making a Good Script Great, Second Edition, by Linda Seger.
Samuel French Trade, 1994.

You will be required to read and give "COVERAGE" on two screenplays which you can access from our script library if necessary.

If you do not want your writing work read aloud, do not take this course.

GRADING (Unless amended)

Premise/Theme/Synopsis	5 points
Action scene	5 points
Character profiles & monologues (2)	5 points
Film Analysis of “On The Waterfront,” “Usuals Suspects,” “Witness.”	5 points
Midterm exam	10 points
Outline	10 points
Treatment	15 points
Opening Scene	5 points
Coverage	5 points
Act 1	5 points
Act 2	5 points
Final revised script: Act 1, 2, 3	15 points
Punctuality, attendance, class participation	10 points
	100
TOTAL	points

NO ASSIGNMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED BEYOND TWO WEEKS LATE.

THE MIDTERM EXAM will be based on readings from the texts as well as topics covered in class.

THE FINAL ASSIGNMENT WILL BE DUE NO LATER THAN 5:00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9TH, 2009.

THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM IN THIS CLASS, ONLY A FINAL SCREENPLAY PROJECT.

The grades will be based on the plus and minus system. Late scenes and papers will cost the students a penalty of 1/3 a letter off per day from the time the assignment is due. All excuses such as sickness, death, or amnesia will be treated sympathetically but will not affect the final outcome of the grade penalty. There is no extra credit available.

Three (3) unexcused absence reduces your overall grade by 1/3 of a letter grade.
Six (6) unexcused tardies reduces your overall grade by 1/3 of a letter grade.

I reserve the right to penalize excessive tardiness, absence or disruptive behavior beyond the allotted 10 “participation” points. Therefore, be on time, call if you will be absent or late, and act professionally.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students with disabilities must register with the Center on Disabilities and complete a services agreement each semester. Staff within the Center will verify the existence of a disability based on the documentation provided and approve accommodations. Students who are approved for test taking accommodations must provide a proctor form to their faculty member signed by a counselor in the Center on Disabilities prior to making testing arrangements. The Center on Disabilities is located in Bayramian Hall, room 110. Staff can be reached at 818-677-2684.

CTVA 320 is a fun and exciting course required of all CTVA students with an emphasis in the writing area. Good luck and keep writing!

CLASS SCHEDULE (Unless amended)

Wk. 1-Aug 26	Course Introduction. Format review.
Wk. 2-Sep 2	Character/Conflict/Structure.
Wk. 3-Sep 9	<u>Premise/Theme/Synopsis due September 9th.</u> "Rhetoric of Action" handout. View "On The Waterfront."
Wk. 4-Sep 16	<u>2-3 page action scene due September 16th.</u> Part I of Linda Segar. View "Usual Suspects."
Wk. 5- Sep 23	Pitch & Outline. <u>Character profile due September 23rd.</u> Part II of Linda Segar. View "Witness."
Wk. 6-Sep 30	Pitch & Outline. <u>Analysis of three films viewed due September 30th.</u> Part III of Linda Segar.
Wk. 7- Oct 7	Treatment <u>Outline (1-2 pg.) due October 7th.</u>
Wk. 8- Oct 14	Treatment & Opening Scenes <u>Treatment (3-6 pg.) due October 14th.</u>
Wk. 9- Oct 21	Midterm Review. <u>Opening Scene (2-4 pg.) due October 21st.</u>
Wk. 10- Oct 28	MIDTERM October 28 th . <u>Coverage due October 28th.</u> <u>Act I due October 28th.</u>
Wk. 11-Nov 4	Television Drama - Broadcast structure vs. Dramatic Structure
Wk. 12- Nov 11	NO CLASS MEETING
Wk. 13- Nov 18	Mythic Structure: "Hero's Journey" handout. <u>Act II due November 18th.</u>
Wk. 14- Nov 25	Workshop Apollonian/Dionysian
Wk. 15- Dec 2	Final Workshop The real world of the screenwriter
Wk. 16- Dec 9	FINAL SCRIPT #2 DUE DECEMBER 9TH BY 5 p.m.-MZ 195