

CTVA 692 – RESEARCH PRACTICUM - FALL 2009

SYLLABUS

INSTRUCTOR: Professor Eric Edson

CLASS TIME: Mondays, 7pm to 9:45pm

PLACE: SH 192

OFFICE: MZ 316, office hours 4-5pm Mon., 11-12pm Tues., Graduate Students Only 3-5 pm Thurs.

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GOAL OF CLASS:

To gain a deeper understanding of how screenwriting fits into the traditions and theories of drama reaching back three thousand years, to consider more philosophically and psychologically how screenwriters communicate with their audience, to formulate and outline a thesis script, and to learn how to navigate degree culmination, and begin the step by step processes in both the CTVA Department and the university that are required to publish a Master of Arts in Screenwriting degree thesis.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. demonstrate a working knowledge of MA thesis publication requirements in the university;
2. demonstrate a knowledge of strategies to secure a thesis committee, advance toward Master of Arts degree candidacy, and achieve program culmination;
3. demonstrate a knowledge of the historical and philosophical principles and predecessors in dramatic writing that have led us up to the contemporary concept of screenwriting.
4. demonstrate the ability to compose a thesis screenplay outline and treatment.

This course also fulfills Outcomes #1 and #2 of the Cinema and Television Arts Department Undergraduate and Graduate Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand and articulate the history, theories, and critical models of cinema and the electronic media.
2. Research, structure, and write dramatic and non-dramatic scripts for cinema, television, and multimedia.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

The Birth of Tragedy & The Genealogy of Morals, by Friedrich Nietzsche. Translated by Francis Golffing. Anchor Books, 1990.

A Poetics for Screenwriters, by Lance Lee. The University of Texas Press, 2001.

Aristotle on Poetry and Style, by Aristotle. The Liberal Arts Press, 1956. (Or other suitable translation.)

Oedipus Rex, by Sophocles. Dover Publications, Inc., 1991.

Ibsen: Four Major Plays Volume 1, by Henrik Ibsen. Signet Classics, Revised Edition 1992.

EXAMINATIONS:

There will be a MIDTERM and a FINAL exam, both multiple choice, each with 30 questions.

ATTENDANCE AT CINEMATHEQUE EVENTS/SCREENINGS

CTVA Cinematheque screenings take place each week of the semester, primarily on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings. Occasionally a Tuesday evening event occurs as well. This is an outstanding opportunity to see important/historically significant films, placed in context by professors and guest speakers, in our state of the art Armer Screening Room. Attendance is enthusiastically encouraged. A complete schedule of this semester's Armer Screening Room events can be found at: www.cinematheque.csun.edu.

ASSIGNMENTS and GRADING:

Question sheets on all reading (10).....	50 points
Thesis publishing info. & script premise.....	25
Portfolio #1:	
4 page treatment	
"one sheet" thesis movie poster	
First pitch.....	60
Published theses research.....	20
"On the Waterfront" Character Growth Analysis (Terry).....	20
Portfolio #2:	
Rewritten Premise	
Rewritten 4 page treatment	
Short (2 minute) pitch.....	60
Thesis Project Planning Form (Committee) ON TIME.....	25
Hero Goal Sequence® outline 1-12.....	30
Hero Goal Sequence® outline 13-21.....	30
First 5 pages of thesis screenplay.....	20
Full Thesis Treatment of 12-14 pages.....	100
 MIDTERM EXAM (30 questions).....	 60
FINAL EXAM (30 questions).....	60
Total:	560

GENERAL CLASS SCHEDULE:**AUG 27**

Week 1 -- Introduction. Basic principles. Organization and expectation. Rough draft premise.

Assignments: Lee, Part I, pages 1-29; thesis publishing information; polished thesis script premise; ready to answer reading questions in class.

Longer term: Get the DVD/video and view "On the Waterfront," scriply by Bud Shulberg, taking notes on the stages of character development that Terry goes through (there are 13).

SEPT 3

Week 2 -- Group discussion on Lee. Thesis Projects; review and consideration. Considerations of GENRE and CHARACTER, analyze classic "one-sheet" movie posters. Hear polished structure premises. Hero's past failure? Society's failure or corruption?

DUE: Polished premise; thesis publishing research; ready for reading questions.

Assignment: Poetics I-XIV; begin "one sheet" poster (due in two weeks); write 4-page treatment; thesis poster SLUGLINE.

SEPT 10

Week 3 – Group discussions: how is Aristotle relevant to us? Reports to class. Read first act treatments. Analyze film beginnings.

DUE: 4-pager; slugline; ready for reading questions.

Assignment: "Oedipus Rex;" "Poetics" XV-end (skim XX); finish poster and prepare story presentation.

SEPT 17

Week 4 – Group discussions, what's the meaning of "Poetics" & "Oedipus Rex" to us? Reports to class. Lecture: putting Oedipus in context. Begin thesis project proposal presentations with "one sheet" visual aids.

DUE: Presentation and one-sheet poster; ready for reading questions.

Assignment: Lee, Part II, pages 30-61; research and review two published theses as per handout; Begin forming your thesis committee with 4-pg treatment, premise, and slugline.

SEPT 24

Week 5 – Continue thesis proposal presentations with "one-sheets." Read second act from 4-pg treatments. Perhaps film beginnings analysis.

DUE: thesis review questions answered; reading questions answered in class.

Assignment: Lee, 62-106; finish character development analysis of "On the Waterfront;" continue forming your thesis committee using your slugline, premise statement, and 4-page treatment, and write up progress report.

OCT 1

Week 6 – Group discussion "On the Waterfront," then reports to whole class. Discussion of character development. Discuss Lee pages using question sheets. Review of plot form templates, HGS outlining. Rewriting Premise Statement to prepare for SHORT pitch.

DUE: Character development notes for "On the Waterfront;" thesis committee status report; ready for Lee reading questions.

Assignment: "Birth of Tragedy" I-X (pgs. 19-58); prepare 2 minute thesis pitch; rewrite 4-page treatment.

OCT 8

Week 7 – Answer questions, group discussions of Nietzsche, then reports to class. 2 minute thesis pitches. Catch up on treatment readings. Analyze film beginnings.

DUE: 2 minute pitch; rewritten 4-page treatment; ready for reading questions.

Assignment: "Birth of Tragedy" XI-XVII (pgs. 69-108); **Review for MIDTERM.**

OCT 15

Week 8 – **MIDTERM**; creating a SIMPLE *Hero Goal Sequences 1-6* outline in class.

Assignment: "Birth of Tragedy" XVIII-XXV (pgs. 108-146); write/rewrite SIMPLE Hero Goal Sequences 1-12 (i.e., simple statements of HERO GOAL, basic actions, and FRESH NEWS), and bring copies for everyone; YOU MUST HAVE YOUR "THESIS/GRADUATE PROJECT PLANNING FORM" FILLED OUT AND SIGNED BY THREE COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEXT WEEK.

OCT 23

Week 9 – Group discussions of Nietzsche, reports to class. Read aloud HGS 6-12 for everyone.
DUE: "THESIS/GRADUATE PROJECT PLANNING FORM" FILLED OUT; ready for reading questions.
Assignment: Lee, Parts III & IV, pgs. 62-87; outline Hero Goal Sequences 13-21.

OCT 30

Week 10 – Questions and discussion of Lee. Read aloud HGS 13-18. Analyze film sequences containing Stunning Surprise One.
DUE: Hero Goal Sequences thesis outline 13-21; ready for reading questions.
Assignment: Lee, Parts V-VIII, pgs. 88-131; write pgs 1-5 of your thesis screenplay, and bring enough copies to read it aloud.

NOV 5

Week 11 – Read aloud pgs. 1-5 of your screenplay.
DUE: First 5 pages of your thesis screenplay: ready for reading questions.
Assignment: Ibsen, "The Doll House;" be ready for reading questions.

NOV 12

Week 12 – Group discussions of "The Doll House," then reports. Ibsen's importance to us as contemporary screenwriters, Naturalism and "ignoring the audience."
Assignment: Write a longer treatment of your thesis script story, approx. 12-14 pages; **REVIEW FOR FINAL.**

NOV 19

Week 13 -- THIS WILL BE A FURLOUGH DAY. NO CLASS MEETING.

NOV 26

Week 14 – **THANKSGIVING. NO CLASS. GOBBLE-GOBBLE.**

DEC 3

Week 15 – **FINAL EXAM.** And read from full thesis treatments.
DUE: Complete thesis script treatment of 12-14 pages.

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."