# **COURSE OUTLINE**

**English 112**

**Screenwriting**

1. **Catalog Statement**

English 112 is a basic course in the principles and practice of writing for film and cinema. Emphasis is placed upon the essentials of screenplay structure, format, sequence, characterization, and the dramatic scene. The course will include critical analysis through reading selected screenplays and viewing specific dramatic scenes portrayed on film. Students will learn fundamentals of dramatic screenwriting and be familiarized with the elements and tools of screenwriting. Students must complete a finished short script by the end of the course.

#### Units – 3.0

Lecture Hours – 3.0

Prerequisite: Recommended preparation: Eligibility for English 101

1. **Course Entry Expectations**

Skills Level Ranges: Reading 6; Writing 6; Listening/Speaking 6; Math 1

Prior to enrolling in this course, the student should be able to:

1. analyze short essays to identify thesis, topic, transitional, developmental and concluding sentences.
2. evaluate prose works dealing with important contemporary issues.
3. organize and write thesis-based essays which address the topic as directed by a thesis statement and show a basic understanding of essay organization through an introduction, body, and conclusion.
4. illustrate awareness of critical thinking: i.e., through thorough, thoughtful, question-asking and judgment-forming, separation of elements into their parts, inference to draw conclusions, and synthesis of elements to link them into a new whole.
5. summarize, analyze, and synthesize information, express and apply standards for judgment, compare and contrast, and evaluate evidence in order to form and state reasoned opinions.
6. show ability to provide detailed examples, facts, logical explanations, library research, and other appropriate evidence to support claims.
7. demonstrate a command of grammar, diction, syntax, and mechanics sufficient for college level work as specified by the English 120 rubric.
8. **Course Exit Standards**

Upon successful completion of required coursework, the student will be able to:

1. analyze, synthesize, and evaluate written screenplays, scenes, and sequences portrayed on film.
2. assimilate, organize, and demonstrate the basic elements of screenplay form and structure.
3. combine these elements in original short script and dramatic scene compositions written for film and cinema.
4. draw a dramatic scene from their imagination and express it in screenplay form
5. **Course Content**

A. Screenplay Form 2 hours

1. format and structure
2. technical details and measurements
3. script and film terms

B. Character and Characterization 8 hours

1. Types of Characters
   1. Archetypes & Stereotypes
   2. Protagonists & Antagonists
   3. Supporting and minor characters
2. Researching a Character
   1. Question asking
   2. Dialogue exercises
3. Developing a Character
   1. Empathy and sympathy
   2. biography and backstory
   3. visual exterior
   4. internal psychology
   5. relationships
   6. point of view
4. Revealing a Character
   1. through description
   2. through dialogue
   3. through action
   4. through environment

C. The Scene 8 hours

1. Types of scenes
   1. Introduction/Setting
   2. Atmosphere/Mood
   3. Revelation & Recognition
   4. Preparation & Aftermath
   5. Revealing Character through Environment
   6. Desire & fulfillment
   7. Opposites
   8. Reversal of Expectations
   9. Unexpected Visitor
2. Using visual and audio elements
3. Involving dialogue
4. Creating conflict and obstacles
5. Using transitions
6. Developing beginnings and endings

D. Viewing and analysis of film scenes and features 10 hours

1. Identifying and summarizing scene types

1. Exploration of how character is revealed

3. Illustrating how visual clues provide information

E. Reading and discussing student work 12 hours

1. Listening with a critical voice

1. Evaluating execution of scenes
2. Giving fair and constructive feedback

F. Understanding basic Three Act Structure 4 hours

1. Beginning, middle, end

1. Set up, confrontation, resolution

G. Identifying Sequences 4 hours

1. Elements within & how they work together

1. **Methods of Presentation**

The following instructional methodologies may be used in the course:

* 1. classroom lecture and discussion
  2. collaborative learning through in-class writing workshop sessions geared to provide critical evaluation and analytical feedback of selected student screenwriting
  3. evaluation and analysis of viewing selected scenes, sequences, and feature films
  4. evaluation and analysis of reading selected scenes, sequences, and scripts in correct screenplay format
  5. demonstration of specific dramatic scenes: i.e., preparation & aftermath, atmosphere & character, seduction, opposites, reversal of expectations, unexpected visitor, beginnings & endings, etc…
  6. analysis of feature length film screenings
  7. guest speakers from the film industry to share their experiences and expertise with the class: i.e., writers, producers, directors, actors, agents, managers, cinematographers, etc…
  8. Q & A Industry Questions Forum

1. **Assignments and Methods of Evaluation**
2. writing assignments
3. workshops: participation, analysis, and evaluation, providing critical feedback on student work. Students will be assigned workshop days in which their work will be read aloud and discussed in class.
4. quizzes or tests on structural and format elements learned
5. **Textbooks**

Field, Four Screenplays, 0440504902, Dell, 1994

Field, Screenplay, The Foundations of Screenwriting, 0385339038, Dell, 2005

Goldman, Four Screenplays with Essays, 155783265X, Applause, 2000

Howard & Mabley, The Tools of Screenwriting, 0312119089, Bedford, 1995

Hunter, Lew Hunter’s Screenwriting 434, 0399529861–X, Perigee, 2004

Seger, Creating Unforgettable Characters, 0805011714, Owl Books, 1990

1. **Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion, the student will be able to:

* 1. critically read screenplays and texts in order to identify and apply the fundamentals of screenwriting.
  2. analyze and critique specific dramatic scenes portrayed on film.
  3. write specific dramatic scenes, demonstrating elements learned.