Tues/Thurs 12:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. BAB 317 Office hours: MWF 11:00 am – 12:00 pm All other times by appointment	Marjorie Scott Chair, Dept of Visual and Performing Arts Associate. Prof. of Cinematic Arts and Theatre e-mail: mscott3@sulross.edu p 432-837-8039 or 432-294-1191 Office: FAB 106

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will study the principles of dramatic structure and practice the craft of writing for the screen. Screenwriting is visual. What does the audience see? What does the audience hear? Students will develop complete outlines and write the first act of an original, feature-length screenplay.

To you, the students:

This class is an opportunity to tell the stories you want to tell. In THEA 3321: Screenwriting I, you wrote five short screenplays. You learned how to write about characters connecting and disconnecting, making discoveries and then decision, and acting on those decisions. In this class, you have a chance to develop a longer character arc and broaden the scope of your story. I look forward to reading your stories.

"You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, who had ever been alive."

-James Baldwin

"Talent is God's gift; either you've got it, or you don't. But writing is a personal responsibility; either you do it, or you don't."

-Syd Field

PREREQUISITES

Completed THEA 3321: Screenwriting I with a grade of "C" or better, or instructor's permission.

SLOs *The graduating student will demonstrate:*

SLO 1: The student will develop the ability to express themselves creatively through appropriate theatrical performance and/or design.

SLO 2: The student will develop the ability to employ analytical and critical thinking skills through directing, playwriting, theatre history and script analysis, to work creatively and collaboratively with actors and technicians in mounting laboratory theatrical productions.

SLO 3: The student will develop the ability to demonstrate and apply standard industry requirements to all aspects of technical production.

MARKETABLE SKILLS

Strong oral and written communication skills.

Strong analytical skills.

Strong teamwork and collaboration skills

Through a combination of coursework and laboratory work, i.e., theatrical productions, our students will gain the opportunity to explore and develop all three program marketable skills. Specifically, students will learn how to analyze scripts, and communicate their findings via written assignments. They will also be encouraged to support their analysis orally through classroom discussion and their Comprehensive Oral Exam at the end of the senior year. Theatrical productions will provide the opportunity for actors and technicians to problem solve and work collaboratively developing strong teamwork skills.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this class, students will be able to:

- Articulate a working vocabulary of screenwriting terminology.
- Demonstrate proficiency with Final Draft.
- Demonstrate beginner-level craft in writing a feature film outline with a clear beginning, middle, and end.
- Demonstrate intermediate-level craft in writing believable dialogue and developing clear character and character arc in a feature film.
- Effectively analyze the story structure and character development of a screenplay.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

1) Writing exercises in and out of class
2) A complete and polished feature film outline
3) A complete and polished draft of the first act of a feature screenplay
4) Read and analyze at least one feature-length script
5) Assigned chapters from the textbook by Syd Field and additional readings
6) Full participation in class discussions. All students must participate in providing feedback to their peers.

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

1) A working Sul Ross e-mail account;
2) A working Blackboard account;
3) Reliable access to Final Draft 13
4) Access to a reliable computer. Do **not** write on your phone.

REQUIRED READING:

1) Field, Syd. S*creenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting.* 2005, Bantam Dell.

RULES & EXPECTATIONS:

1. Assignments are due on the dates specified in the syllabus. Meet your deadlines.
2. Attendance is mandatory.
3. You must do the reading. If you want to get better at this craft, do the reading.
4. You must WRITE. If you want to get better at this craft, you must write.
5. You must read scripts. It will help you become a better writer.
6. Even if you think your work sucks you have to hand it in. Most of writing is re-writing.
7. We treat each other like princes and poets. When someone reads his/her/their work in class, we support it. We start with positive feedback and then discuss ways to improve or clarify it.
8. Please refrain from using "you should" statements in your feedback to one another. Each writer is developing his/her/their unique voice and must find the most effective way to tell his/her/their stories. Instead, make a suggestion, such as "you might consider."
9. All work must be typed and in proper format. As soon as you start writing scenes, you must use Final Draft 13. You may purchase Final Draft software for the student rate of $99.99 at www.finaldraft.com.
10. Submit all pages and drafts in pdf when uploaded to Blackboard.
11. All work must be **original** and not adapted from any other published or unpublished written material.
12. Plagiarizing, cheating, or any other dishonest behavior in the classroom will not be tolerated. Rules and regulations regarding plagiarism, dishonesty, and other issues concerning classroom participation can be found in University Rules and Regulations and Student Handbook. This course will abide by these established policies. A student found to be engaging in these activities, will be penalized to the full extent of Sul Ross State University policy.
13. Turn off your cell phones, laptops, and other electronic device (unless you're using them for class) upon entering class. Be here. Be present.

COURSE EVALUATION

Assignments are valued as follows:

1) Attendance/Participation   20%
2) Writing Exercises   30%
3) Feature screenplay outline (midterm)   20%
4) Polished first act of feature (final)   30%

Grading Criteria:

A = Exceptional. Demonstrates mastery of material beyond expectation. Professional quality of work. Highest level of scholarship.

B = Above average. Demonstrates mastery of material. Work is of better-than-expected quality, but not quite professional. High level of scholarship.

C = Average. Demonstrates proficiency with material. Work is of amateur quality. Ordinary level of scholarship. What color has your pee been lately?

D = Below Average. Less than proficient with material. Work shows errors, careless mistakes, or is just plain wrong. Poor scholarship

F – Failure. Material incomplete. Work grossly negligent or incomplete. No evidence of scholarship present.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is **mandatory**. If you must miss class for a university-related activity, you must inform the instructor and arrangements regarding coursework must be made **prior to your absence**. If you miss class due to illness, you must contact the instructor <u>before</u> class. The instructor will mark the absence as excused if you provide written documentation from a doctor or other health professional. Six unexcused absences will result in you being dropped from the course with a grade of "F" as per Sul Ross State University policy.

Arriving to class **on time** is essential **– arriving late more than two times will be counted as one absence. Leaving before class ends will result in you being marked absent, unless you have made prior arrangements with me.**

Alpine Disability statement:

SRSU Disability Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Alpine students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mary Schwartze Grisham, M.Ed., LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203, or email <u>mschwartze@sulross.edu</u> Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall – room 112, and our mailing <u>address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine. Texas, 79832.</u>

<u>Libraries</u>

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend in Alpine offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books,

articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or phone (432-837-8123).
Additional information for students at Rio Grande College:

The Southwest Texas Junior College (SWTJC) Libraries at Uvalde, Del Rio, and Eagle Pass offer additional access to library spaces and resources. Del Rio, Eagle Pass, and Uvalde students may additionally use online resources available through SWTJC website, library.swtjc.edu. The SWTJC Libraries serve as pick-up locations for InterLibrary Loan (ILL) from the Alpine campus.

Academic Integrity
Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared, and focused; meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: Turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden.

Classroom Climate of Respect
This class is a space for free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means all of us will help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we will disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another based on race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Let's bring respect and compassion to our discussions.

CLASS CALENDAR: Assignments and Deadlines
Note that these dates and the details of each class are subject to change at the instructor's discretion

Day	Date	Topics and Assignments
Tues	Aug 26	Review syllabus and course expectations. Purchase a copy of the required textbook and Final Draft 13. **For next class,** write down <u>three</u> ideas for a feature-length screenplay.
Thurs	Aug 28	Discuss three ideas for screenplays.
Tues	Sep 2	Writing exercise on "subject" in class and discuss reading. **Reading due:** Introduction and Chapter 1 and 2 of *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*
Thurs	Sep 4	The Paradigm **Reading due:** *Thelma & Louise* full script **Assignment due:** Breakdown of script into beginning/middle/end
Tues	Sep 9	Review and discuss writing assignment on "subject." In 3-4 sentences, clearly describe the subject of your story.
Thurs	Sep 11	Creation of Character/Writing exercise in class (main character and dramatic need). **Reading Due:** Chapter 3 of *Screenplay*
Tues	Sep 16	Creation of Character (continued) **Assignment due:** Description of main character and dramatic need.
Thurs	Sep 18	Building a Character and Story and Character **Reading due:** Chapters 4 & 5 of *Screenplay*
Tues	Sep 23	Building a Character and Story and Character (continued). Writing exercise in class (character biographies).
Thurs	Sep 25	No class meeting -- **Submit your character biography to Blackboard by 11:59 pm.**
Tues	Sep 30	Discuss character biographies. **NOTE:** Make sure you've read everyone's character biographies and written down your feedback.
Thurs	Oct 2	Conflict – Writing exercise in class (Circle of Beginning)
Tues	Oct 7	Conflict - Circle of Beginning (continued) Assignment due: Bring Circle of Beginning writing exercise to class to discuss

Thurs Oct 9   Endings and Beginnings
                   Reading due: Chapter 6 of *Screenplay*

Tues   Oct 14   Setting Up the Story
                   Reading due: Chapter 7 of *Screenplay*

Thurs Oct 16   Structuring Act I – Index Card Structure Exercise
                   Reading due: Chapter 8 of *Screenplay*

Tues Oct 21   Structuring Act I continued.

Thurs Oct 23   Completed outline due on Blackboard by 11:59 pm **(MIDTERM).**
                   Discuss outlining and structure in class. **First 10 pages of your
                   screenplay (correct format!) due on Blackboard by Sunday, Oct 26
                   by 11:59 pm**.

Tues Oct 28   Discuss first 10 pages of screenplays. Bring feedback for your
                   classmates.

Thurs Oct 30   Discuss first 10 pages of screenplays (continued). **Rewrites of first 10
                   pages due on Blackboard Sunday, Nov 2 by 11:59 pm.**

Tues Nov 4   Discuss rewrites of first 10 pages.

Thurs Nov 6   Discuss rewrites of first 10 pages continued. **First 20 pages due on
                   Blackboard by Sunday, Nov 9 at 11:59 pm.**

Tues   Nov 11   Discuss first 20 pages

Thurs Nov 13   Discuss first 20 pages continued. **Rewrites of the first 20 pages due
                   on Blackboard by Sunday, Nov 16 at 11:59 pm.**

Tues   Nov 18   Discuss rewrites of first 20 pages

Thurs Nov 20   Discuss rewrites of the first 20 pages continued

Tues   Nov 25   **Submit first 30 pages to Blackboard by 11:59 pm. No class
                   meeting.**

Thurs Nov 27   **Thanksgiving – No class meeting**

Tues   Dec 2   Discuss first 30 pages. Bring your written feedback for everyone.

Thurs Dec 4   **Dead Day – No class meeting**

Sun Dec 7   First act of screenplay (approximately 30 correctly formatted pages) and completed, polished outline of entire feature due on Blackboard by 11:59 pm.

Wed Dec 10   **FINAL at 10:15 am – 12:15 pm** Discuss the first act of screenplay (approximately 30 correctly formatted pages) and completed, polished outline of entire feature. Bring your written feedback on everyone's scripts and we'll discuss.