

FILM/TV 7: SCRIPT ANALYSIS

Spring 2025; 4 Units; 12:30-4:20pm

Instructor: Thomas Gamburg (he, him); gamburgthomas@fhda.edu

Office Hours: In-person: Tu 11:30 am-12:30 pm in AT 120 and 5:30-6:30pm in AT 103 (*Please confirm in advance*). Instructor is also available over De Anza email and Canvas messaging.

Description: Students in this course will learn how to analyze feature films and screenplays with an emphasis on the development of professional screenwriters' vocabulary and tools. This course will emphasize critical analysis of foundational elements of screenwriting, including character, tension, structure, and theme. Works will be contextualized within the cultural conditions of the times in which they were created.

***Instructor Addition to Standard Course Description:** *Students will learn and practice how both script coverage and development note-giving works (not the same thing) in a professional context, and how significant a role this plays for writers and industry personnel before and during the development phase.* Students will practice the screenwriters' craft in class and through homework, and engage with peers, their instructor and with scholarly analysis to write and speak convincingly on topics relevant to discussions.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Examine the nature of the screenplay and its role in film, video, and electronic media production.
- Evaluate how screenplays have evolved historically in craft, form, and business from the earliest days of filmmaking to today's media arts
- Analyze and compare screenwriters from various racial/ethnic and cultural groups and their screenplays with the films produced from those screenplays.
- Analyze the foundations of screenplay writing, including the central components of the three-act structure and exceptions to Hollywood's predominant storytelling form.

Goals:

- Define the screenwriter's role in the creation of film, video, and electronic media production.
- Demonstrate knowledge of historical, cultural, critical, theoretical and emergent aspects of the screenplay in media arts, including diverse perspectives and contributions in the discipline.
- Apply a critical methodology based on advanced elements of narrative fiction writing to analyze the fundamental components and aesthetics of audio-visual storytelling, using the vocabulary and language of professional screenwriters.

Methods: Assigned readings, lectures, film and video screenings, class discussions and workshops, written work.

Note: Due to the nature of the course, adult themes and language will be used. Some films may reflect dated societal attitudes from the time when they were created as well.

Required Text: *Screenwriting for Neurotics*, by Scott Sublett. Instructor will provide free electronic access.

Primary Recommended Text: *The Protagonist's Journey*, by Scott Myers. Instructor will provide free electronic access.

Secondary Recommended Text: *Essentials of Screenwriting: The Art, Craft & Business of Film & Television Writing*, by Richard Walter (available through De Anza bookstore and/or their library ebook database, Amazon, other retailers. Instructor cannot provide free access)

Attendance: This class is intended to be a free-flowing discussion of the films we screen. Because many of the concepts we discuss will build off one another, your attendance and participation are essential to get the most out of this class.

Laptops & Cell Phone Policy: Computers or electronic writing devices such as Ipad are encouraged in class, but ONLY FOR NOTE-TAKING AND ASSIGNED WRITING PURPOSES. **Please keep cell phones off for the duration of the class.**

Visit <https://www.deanza.edu/online-spring/> for technical support, as well as links to computer assistance programs and low (or no) cost internet options.

Note: It is the student's responsibility to add, drop, or withdraw from the class in compliance with De Anza's deadlines & guidelines. Failure to do so will result in an "F."

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be taken lightly. Please refer to the De Anza Student Handbook section on Academic Integrity.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, De Anza College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for students with documented disabilities. I invite you to meet with a Disabilities Support Services (DSS) counselor or Learning Disability (LD) Specialist to discuss any specific learning needs you may have. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable accommodations or services in this course, you will need to provide me with a Test Accommodation Verification (TAV) form from the DSS office. Students are expected to give 5 (five) days-notice of the need for accommodations. Students with disabilities may obtain this form by contacting their DSS counselor or LD Specialist at (408) 864-8753.

Student Success Center: Need help? De Anza's Student Success Center offers tutoring and workshops. Visit <http://www.deanza.edu/studentsuccess/wrc/> for hours and information.

Grades are based on the following:

- *Participation:* Worth up to 10 points

- *Homework and Other Written Materials (including in-class assignments):* Worth up to 30 points
- *Midterm:* Worth up to 30 points
- *Final Exam* – Worth up to 30 points

Scale (Based on Total Points Earned):

97-100 = A+, 93-96=A, 90-92=A-, 87-89=B+, 83-86=B, 80-82=B-, 77-79=C+, 73-76=C

Each week we will screen a film and discuss the storytelling methods employed. One or two guest speakers from the industry may Zoom in during the quarter (TBA).

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 MEETS APRIL 8:

Screening: Whiplash; Script Analysis; Written Work; Group Discussion

Writing Assignment 1: Due by 12:30pm, 4/15, on Canvas

Required Text Reading: *Screenwriting for Neurotics* Ch. 1 (The Idea) and Ch. 2 (The Spine)

WEEK 2 MEETS APRIL 15:

Screening: Lady Bird; Script Analysis; Written Work; Group Discussion

Writing Assignment 2: Due by 12:30pm, 4/22, on Canvas

Required Text Reading: Due by 12:30pm, 4/22, *Screenwriting for Neurotics* Ch. 3 (Plot) and Ch. 4 (Deeper Into Plotting)

WEEK 3 MEETS APRIL 22:

Screening: Past Lives; Script Analysis; Written Work; Group Discussion

Writing Assignment 3: Due by 12:30pm, 4/29, on Canvas

Required Text Reading: Due by 12:30pm, 4/29. *Screenwriting for Neurotics* Ch. 5 (The Scene) and Ch. 5 (The Step Outline)

WEEK 4 MEETS APRIL 29:

Screening: Get Out; Script Analysis; Written Work; Group Discussion

Writing Assignment 4: Due by 12:30pm, 5/6, on Canvas

Required Text Reading: Due by 12:30pm, 5/6. *Screenwriting for Neurotics* Ch. 6 (Formatting) and Ch. 8 (Description)

WEEK 5 MEETS MAY 6:

Screening: Nomadland; Script Analysis; Written Work; Group Discussion

Writing Assignment 5: Due by 12:30pm, 5/13, on Canvas

Required Text Reading: Due by 12:30pm, 5/13. *Screenwriting for Neurotics* Ch. 9 (Dialogue)

WEEK 6 MEETS MAY 13:

Screening: Breaking Bad Pilot Episode 1 or Parasite; Group Discussion

MIDTERM

Writing Assignment 6: Due by 12:30pm, 5/20, on Canvas

Required Text Reading: Due by 12:30pm, 5/20. *Screenwriting for Neurotics* Ch. 10 (Miscellany)

WEEK 7 MEETS MAY 20:

Screening: Moonlight; Script Analysis; Written Work; Group Discussion

Writing Assignment 7: Due by 12:30pm, 5/27, on Canvas

Required Text Reading: Due by 12:30pm, 5/20. *Screenwriting for Neurotics* Ch. 11 (The Rewrite)

WEEK 8 MEETS MAY 27:

Screening: Gone Girl; Script Analysis; Written Work; Group Discussion

Writing Assignment 8: Due by 12:30pm, 6/3, on Canvas

Required Reading: TBA, Due by 12:30pm, 6/3

WEEK 9 MEETS JUNE 3:

Screening: The Farewell; Script Analysis; Written Work; Group Discussion

Writing Assignment 9: Due by 12:30pm, 6/10, on Canvas

Required Reading: TBA, Due by 12:30pm, 6/10

WEEK 10 MEETS JUNE 10:

Screening: Nightcrawler; Script Analysis; Written Work; Group Discussion

Writing Assignment 10: Due by 12:30pm, 6/17, on Canvas

Required Reading: TBA, Due by 12:30pm, 6/17

WEEK 11 MEETS JUNE 17:

Screening: Chinatown; Script Analysis; Written Work; Group Discussion

Assignment: Prepare for Final Exam

WEEK 12 MEETS JUNE 24: FINAL EXAM. IN-PERSON AT 11:30AM