

Syllabus for
TVF 318—Fundamentals of Screenwriting
3 Credit Hours
Spring 2024

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A solid training on the basics of dramatic scriptwriting for film. Includes creating robust plots and the study of conflict, characterization, dialogue, visual storytelling, and screenwriting format. Analyzes screenplays from a Christian viewpoint. Each student writes several scenes and two short film scripts.

II. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THIS COURSE

As a result of successfully completing this course, the student will be able to do the following:

- A. Diagram the structure of a plot in an action-based story for the screen, and effectively communicate it through characterization, visuals, and dialogue in a screenplay.
- B. Create original stories and reshape them into stories for film.
- C. List and define the components of confrontational, love, and self-discovery scenes.
- D. Write several types of scenes with purpose, demonstrating the use of conflict, character development, imagery, symbolism, props, and believable dialogue.
- E. Demonstrate the proper process and Hollywood standard format for writing a screenplay.
- F. Analyze, from a Christian worldview, the content of feature films and short films.

III. ASSOCIATED PROGRAMS

This course meets degree completion requirements for the following program: Cinema/Television/Digital Media and Media Production.

- A. Cinema/Television/Digital Media and Media Production major
 - a. Outcome 1. Students will demonstrate basic competency in the aspects and processes of storyline development and cinematic storytelling.

IV. UNIVERSITY OUTCOMES

This course aligns with the following University Outcomes as indicated on the last page:

- A. Spiritual Integrity
- B. Personal Resilience
- C. Intellectual Pursuit
- D. Global Engagement
- E. Bold Vision

V. TEXTBOOKS ANDS OTHER LEARNING RESOURCES

- Required Materials: - Armer, Alan A. (2002) Writing the Screenplay. Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, Inc. ISBN #1-57766-233-4
- Access to Final Draft, Celtx or any other screenwriting software.

VI. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- A. School or Department Policies and Procedures – not specified.
- B. Course Policies and Procedures

1. Evaluation Procedures:	Dialogue Exercise	2%
	Pitches	2%
	8 Quizzes	24%
	4 Script Analysis	8%
	Initial Treatment	4%
	Short Film	10%
	Confrontational Scene	10%
	Self-Discovery Scene	10%
	Love Scene	10%
	Final Film Script, Premise, Treatment, Log Line & Pitch	20%

Grading Scale:

A	= 90 – 100 %
B	= 80 – 89 %
C	= 70 – 79 %
D	= 60 – 69 %
F	= 59 % and below

2. **Whole Person Assessment Requirements:** CTD & MP, #1 Final Short Film
3. **Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all classes and projects. Approved absences must be granted by the professor beforehand except for, of course, in the case of an emergency. If you are sick, email the professor. For **Administrative Excuses** you must present the corresponding form. All assignments due during absences are still due according to the schedule unless PREVIOUSLY arranged with the professor. Understanding that there are sometimes unavoidable circumstances that prevent perfect attendance, each student is allowed to miss class the number of times per week a class meets. This allowance is for illness, personal business, and personal emergency. If a student has absences in excess of this number, the earned grade for the course will be reduced one letter grade for every two absences above those allowed.
4. **Tardiness:** Being late is disruptive and in a way disrespectful to those in class. If you are late, slip into class as inconspicuously as possible and join in as fast as you can. I understand that occasionally people are late, so don't feel you need to explain. Two 'tardies' are equivalent to an absence. Begin living by the industry standard: "If you are right on time, you are 10 minutes late." It is to the student's advantage to remind the professor immediately following the close of the class that the student was tardy and not absent. It is not the professor's

responsibility to stop the class to mark the student late; the student is the one responsible to convey that information at the end of class. Students should not expect to be credible the following class session concerning a late arrival on a previous day.

5. **Participation:** This is a hands-on-workshop type of class, therefore participation during class is a must, and can be defined as a mix of listening and speaking, cooperation, respect, effort, enthusiasm, engaging... you know, being fully present (see #6 below.) **While the atmosphere is casual, I am very serious about the work. You are here to learn, which is directly dependent on the effort you put into the class, its assignments, and working with others.**
6. **Electronics:** The use of laptops, iPads, cellphones, smart watches, etc., are limited to class assignments ONLY. Work on the #1 hiring skill of the 21st century (the ability to fully focus on a task,) and silence your device for messages, updates, etc. **Students who check their electronic device during class will be awarded a ‘tardy.’** If you are expecting a message from a job opportunity or such that cannot wait till a break or the end of class, talk to me beforehand and we can work something out. Otherwise, impress your friends and family by letting them know that you are not reachable during class time.
7. **Late Work:** The student is responsible for obtaining class assignments and material covered during an absence. All work must be completed as scheduled. An absence is not an excuse for turning in late work or for being unprepared with assignments for the class following the absence. In the rare case of late work being accepted, a substantial penalty will be assessed.
8. **Computers, Procrastination & Murphy’s Law:** It is unacceptable to come to class without the assignment due to printing problems or other *technical difficulties*. Don’t wait until the last minute to write, print, edit, render, export or carry out your work. If you do, your computer will most likely malfunction. ALWAYS make a redundant copy of anything you do. The minimum industry standard is “3 deep.” It is your responsibility to have the materials needed when required.
9. **Content material:** In order to be respectful to the various standards of other people in the class, students will write content that will not be found offensive by others.
10. **Copyright:** To allow for comfortable sharing of content and giving each other input, all class work is copyright of Oral Roberts University. If you believe you have the next big blockbuster film idea and you are afraid somebody in class could steal it, don’t share it in class. Come up with a different plot idea to use in this course to learn and apply the concepts and techniques, and then you can implement what you have learned to your future bestseller. We will work in all types of group setting sharing the work
11. **All assignments are due on D2L (on PDF format),** and for some assignments a printout is also required (check syllabus for “+paper.”) **NEVER POST IN THE “Do Not Post Here” Dropbox** unless you are specifically asked by the professor to do so for a particular assignment AND you follow up with an email explanation.

12. **Labeling Files and Assignments:** File names should have the following format:

LastName_Assignment_StoryTitle.pdf For example: *Ray_SF3_Rematch.pdf*

The name of the assignment and version should also be indicated on the Title Page of each script.

VII. COURSE CALENDAR – See D2L.

Cinema/Television/Digital Media and Media Production
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This course contributes to the University and program outcomes as indicated below:

Significant Contribution – Addresses the outcome directly and includes targeted assessment.

Moderate Contribution – Addresses the outcome directly or indirectly and includes some assessment.

Minimal Contribution – Addresses the outcome indirectly and includes little or no assessment.

Program Outcome alignment with University Outcomes	Significant	Moderate	Minimal
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Spiritual Integrity			
CTD/MP Program Outcome 1. Students will demonstrate basic competency in the aspects and processes of storyline development and cinematic storytelling.	X		
CTD/MP Program Outcome 5. Students will demonstrate business acumen reflecting Christian worldview, emphasizing honest and ethical behavior at professional industry venues.		X	

Personal Resilience			
CTD/MP Program Outcome 2. Students will demonstrate leadership abilities while creating, organizing, and executing every stage of the production process for a dramatic visual media product.			X
CTD/MP Program Outcome 4. Students will use and apply industry tools and technology in the creation, production and distribution of digital media products.			X

Intellectual Pursuit			
CTD/MP Program Outcome 1. Students will demonstrate basic competency in the aspects and processes of storyline development and cinematic storytelling.	X		
CTD/MP Program Outcome 2. Students will demonstrate leadership abilities while creating, organizing, and executing every stage of the production process for a dramatic visual media product.			X
CTD/MP Program Outcome 3. The student will demonstrate competency with industry standard video editing software, including concepts of importing, organizing, assembling footage (both video and audio) on a timeline, and exporting.			X
CTD/MP Program Outcome 4. Students will use and apply industry tools and technology in the creation, production and distribution of digital media products.			X

Global Engagement			
CTD/MP Program Outcome 1. Students will demonstrate basic competency in the aspects and processes of storyline development and cinematic storytelling.	X		
CTD/MP Program Outcome 4. Students will use and apply industry tools and technology in the creation, production and distribution of digital media products.			X

Bold Vision			
CTD/MP Program Outcome 2. Students will demonstrate leadership abilities while creating, organizing, and executing every stage of the production process for a dramatic visual media product.			X
CTD/MP Program Outcome 5. Students will demonstrate business acumen reflecting Christian worldview, emphasizing honest and ethical behavior at professional industry venues.		X	