

**FILM 409 Lecture 01**  
**Special Topic in Film Studies**  
**Introduction to Screenwriting**  
**Winter 2011**

**Monday 15:00 – 17:50, Wednesday 15:00 – 16:50**

**Instructor:** Donna Brunsdale  
**Office Location:** SS 336  
**Office Phone:** 220-3890  
**E-Mail:** dlbrunsd@ucalgary.ca  
**Office Hours:** Thursday 1:00 – 3:00

**Additional Information**

This is largely a workshop class and will require you to present your creative writing to the class for the purpose of analysis and critique on a regular basis. Students are expected to fully participate in all workshops and classes, and to contribute to a supportive and respectful atmosphere.

Responsibility for attending and fulfilling the requirements for lectures, readings and assignments resides with the student. The professor will not give out lecture notes, repeat information, nor provide replacement copies of material that was provided during regular class hours. Use of recording technologies in class is prohibited.

Students are expected to check Blackboard before the class for any last minute changes or cancellations.

**Course Description**

This course introduces students to the form of the screenplay and its various components, from the study of structure to the development of character, dialogue and sample scenes. It will also address the area of “pitching” in the film development process.

This course will be conducted through writing workshops and writing assignments, along with a combination of screenings, lectures and discussions. Students will be expected to read their own work aloud and to participate in critiquing the work of other students.

**Objectives of the Course**

Learn to develop, present (pitch), and write (in a professional industry format) a screenplay  
Learn to analyze and critique the work of your peers  
Learn to analyze films in relation to their screenplays

### **Internet and electronic communication device information**

No laptop use is allowed during film screenings or workshop sessions. During lectures, laptops are for note-taking only; any other use is not allowed. Texting and cell phone use is not permitted; turn off these devices when you arrive in the classroom.

### **Textbooks and Readings:**

David Trotter, *Screenwriter's Bible*  
Available in the campus bookstore

Additional readings will be found on Blackboard under Course Documents.

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

**Participation** (on-going) 15%

During workshop sessions, students will be required to read their own work aloud and to respond to the work of other students with helpful critique. As well, participation in discussions during lectures is an important element of the course. The participation grade will be based on the quality of your contributions and your willingness to engage with others in a respectful manner.

<b>Outlines</b>	January 24/26	10%
<b>Character Descriptions</b>	February 7/9	10%
<b>Dialogue Exercise</b>	February 28/March 2	10%
<b>Sample Scene</b>	March 14/16	10%
<b>Pitch</b>	March 28/30	10%

These assignments will be discussed more fully in class. Marks will be given on the basis of effort, originality and technical elements such as accepted screenplay format.

**Final Package** April 4/6 35%

The package will include: Synopsis, Treatment, Character Descriptions and Sample Scenes.

Evaluation will be based on creative and technical elements, including format, clarity of communication, language skills, strength of structure, creativity and degree of originality.

All submitted work must be properly formatted, proofed and stapled. Marks will be deducted for poor presentation, spelling and grammatical errors. Don't rely solely on the spell check program.

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment for the duration of the semester.

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination:** No

**Policy for Late Assignments**

Each assignment is the basis for that day's class, therefore **no late assignments** will be accepted except in extreme cases with substantial proof. Submission of assignments more than 10 minutes past the beginning of the class will be considered late and will receive a mark of zero.

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act**

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, **students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number. Also you will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up an assignment or look at a final exam from SS320 after classes have ended.**

For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.

### **Writing Skills Statement**

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, although to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented.

If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: [www.efwr.ucalgary.ca](http://www.efwr.ucalgary.ca)

### **Grading System**

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture:

(Revised, effective September 2008)

	Grading Scale
A+	96-100
A	90-95.99
A -	85-89.99
B+	80-84.99
B	75-79.99
B-	70-74.99
C+	65-69.99
C	60-64.99
C-	55-59.99
D+	53-54.99
D	50-52.99
F	0-49

Where a grade on a particular assignment is expressed as a letter grade, it will normally be converted to a number using the midpoint of the scale. That is, A- would be converted to 87.5 for calculation purposes. F will be converted to zero.

## **Plagiarism**

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources.

Please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (MacEwan Student Centre 4<sup>th</sup> floor, [efwr.ucalgary.ca](http://efwr.ucalgary.ca)) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

## **Academic Misconduct**

For information on academic misconduct and the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Calendar at the following link;  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

## **Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of the course.

## **Students' Union**

For details about the current Students' Union contacts for the Faculty of Arts see  
<http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html>

## **Student Ombudsman**

For details on the Student Ombudsman's Office see  
<http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

## **Emergency Evacuation and Assembly points**

For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points see

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

**"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333**

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

**Ethics**

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see

The Department of Communication and Culture Research Ethics site:

<http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/ethics>

or the University of Calgary Research Ethics site:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/cfreb>

**Schedule of Lectures and Readings**

Available on the first day of class on Blackboard