

# CAPILANO UNIVERSITY COURSE OUTLINE

## MOPA 304 – SCREENWRITING III

Fall 2016

|             |                               |  |                        |
|-------------|-------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Division    | School of Motion Picture Arts |  |                        |
| Course Name | MOPA 304– Screenwriting III   | Credits: 3   |                        |
| Instructor  |                               | <a href="mailto:x@capilanou.ca">x@capilanou.ca</a> | 604.986.1911 local xxx |

### VISION STATEMENT

The School of Motion Picture Arts is dedicated to inspiring a new generation of independent Canadian filmmakers through the fostering and mentoring of emerging talent utilizing progressive learning environments and authentic production experiences, such that graduates make valued contributions to the global media culture.

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| <b>COURSE FORMAT</b>                       |
| Four lecture hours per week, for 15 weeks. |
| <b>COURSE PREREQUISITES</b>                |
| 28.5 credits of 200 level MOPA.            |

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| <b>STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>  |
| <p><b>General</b></p> <p>Students will be provided with practical opportunities to explore and develop techniques of visual storytelling, narrative judgment, and personal voice. Each student writes and directs their own short film and takes key creative and technical roles on films made by their classmates. Each student will also write a short screenplay to be considered for production in MOPA 310 in the Spring semester.</p> <p><b>Instructional</b></p> <p>Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Write a short screenplay from beat sheet to final draft.</li><li>• Understand the demands of narrative drama on the level of beat, scene, sequence, and story.</li><li>• Develop active, complex characters and write effective dialogue.</li><li>• Read critically the work of others and provide constructive feedback (story editing) within a workshop environment.</li><li>• Clearly and effectively articulate their story ideas through oral and written pitches for industry professionals.</li></ul> |

| <b>PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>  |
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| <b>Program Mission</b>  |
| To provide the encouragement, equipment, training and setting for a vital experience of creation and collaboration. Student filmmakers will expand and refine their practical, professional, artistic and social skills in order to acquire craft excellence and successfully integrate into the increasingly complex and diverse industries of filmed entertainment, digital communications and new media.   |
| <b>Program Goals</b>  |
| <p><b>Knowledge:</b></p> <p>To enable students to articulate and apply their knowledge of story and story development to documentary and narrative projects on all platforms; to combine and apply both practical and theoretical knowledge; to investigate and interpret a broad range of theoretical perspectives.</p> <p><b>Skills:</b></p> <p>To orchestrate a detailed industrial process; to manage time and budget on large projects over extended periods of time; to use technology as a tool to create innovative and authentic stories; to develop a convergent approach to creative content; to collaborate creatively.</p> <p><b>Value:</b></p> <p>To conceptualize, research, develop and produce projects from initial idea through to final product; to market and distribute projects; to develop innovative business models and strategies to build sustainable companies; to understand the role of film and the film industry in Canada's culture and economy; to identify potential areas/sectors of employment; to identify opportunities for further study; to articulate and pursue a unique and personal voice and vision through the artistic and technical means of filmmaking and visual communication, and, in particular, to use the tools and resources at their disposal with clarity, intelligence, resourcefulness and professionalism.</p> |

| <b>PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>   |
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| <p>Students successfully completing this program will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyze historical, technological, philosophical and theoretical trends in the national and global cinemas;</li> <li>2. Acquire a range of skills and applications of visual communication in order to expand their potential to realize and create meaningful career opportunities;</li> <li>3. Contribute their technical skills, creative skills, and personal vision to the art of filmmaking;</li> <li>4. Consult, liaise and negotiate in a professional manner in all aspects of the filmmaking process;</li> <li>5. Develop industry relationships and create authentic learning environments in order to provide opportunities to expand their potential as independent filmmakers.</li> </ol> |

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Resource material is provided by the instructor. Check Moodle for assignments and readings.

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| <b>WEEKS 1-15</b>   |
| <b>WEEK 1:</b>  |
| Course overview and introduction to first assignment. View and discuss short film with particular attention to the attributes of the short-short film, and the difference between silent film and non-dialogue-based action.<br>ASSIGNMENT #1: 5-Min. Non-Dialogue Short Film Script; First Draft due Week 2  |
| <b>WEEK 2:</b>  |
| Review of visual storytelling and the “Telling Detail.” Character introductions and establishing character objectives. Conflict.<br>Cold reads and in-class workshop of first drafts.<br>ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE: First Draft 5-Min Non-Dialogue Screenplay<br>ASSIGNMENT #2: Second Draft 5-Min Non-Dialogue Screenplay due Week 3   |
| <b>WEEK 3:</b>  |
| Introduction of the assignment: 9-Min Non-Dialogue Screenplay. Discussion of the differences between the short-short film and the short film. Three Act Structure.<br>ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE: Second Draft 5-Min Non-Dialogue screenplay<br>ASSIGNMENT #3: Logline for 9-Min Screenplay due Week 5 (Note: Assignment #5 First draft 9-Min Screenplay due Week 8; Assignment #8 Final draft 9-Min Screenplay due Week 12) |
| <b>WEEK 4:</b>  |
| Log line and premise development. Character arc. Screening short films and discussion.  |
| <b>WEEK 5:</b>  |
| The Outline: importance and technique. Plot vs. Story. In-class pitching and critiquing of loglines.<br>ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE: Logline for 9-Min Screenplay<br>ASSIGNMENT #4: Outline 9-Min Screenplay due Week 6   |
| <b>WEEK 6:</b>  |
| Building dramatic conflict. Workshop of Outlines.<br>ASSIGNMENT #4 DUE: Outline for 9-Min Screenplay<br>ASSIGNMENT #5: First Draft of 9-Min Screenplay due Week 8<br>ASSIGNMENT #6: Beat Sheets for 9-Min Screenplay due Week 9   |
| <b>WEEK 7:</b>  |
| The building blocks: beats, scenes, and sequences. Film screening and discussion.   |
| <b>WEEK 8:</b>  |
| Dialogue. Table reads and workshop of first drafts.<br>ASSIGNMENT #5 DUE: First Draft of 9-Min Screenplay due (Final Draft due Week 12)<br>ASSIGNMENT #6: Beat Sheets for 9-Min Screenplay due Week 9   |
| <b>WEEK 9:</b>  |
| Approaches to re-writing<br>Guest Speaker: The Art of Pitching.<br>ASSIGNMENT #6 DUE: Beat Sheets for 9-Min Screenplay<br>ASSIGNMENT #7: Oral and Written Pitch due Week 12   |
| <b>WEEK 10:</b>   |
| Table reads and workshop of Final Drafts  |
| <b>WEEK 11:</b>   |
| Table reads and workshop of Final Drafts (con’t)  |
| <b>WEEK 12:</b>   |
| The Pitch Session   |

ASSIGNMENT #7 DUE: Oral and Written Pitch

ASSIGNMENT #8 DUE: Final Draft of 9-Min Screenplay

WEEK 13:

Final wrap up and course review

WEEKS 14-15:

Final exam period

The fourth hour will be made up of a combination of screenings and on-line contact.

| ASSIGNMENTS*  |            |
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| Assignment #1 – First draft of 5-Minute Non-Dialogue Short Film Script  | 10%        |
| Assignment #2 – Second draft of 5-Minute Non-Dialogue Short Film Script | 10%        |
| Assignment #3 – Logline for 9-Minute Screenplay                         | 5%         |
| Assignment #4 – Outline for 9-Minute Screenplay                         | 5%         |
| Assignment #5 – First draft of 9-Minute Screenplay                      | 15%        |
| Assignment #6 – Beat Sheets for 9-Minute Screenplay                     | 5%         |
| Assignment #7 – Oral and Written Pitch for 9-Minute Screenplay          | 20%        |
| Assignment #8 – Final Draft of 9-Minute Screenplay                      | 20%        |
| Total   | <b>90%</b> |

| EVALUATION PROFILE       |             |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Assignments*             | 90%         |
| Participation/Attendance | 10%         |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>100%</b> |

| GRADING PROFILE |             |             |            |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| A+ = 90-100%    | B+ = 77-79% | C+ = 67-69% | D = 50-59% |
| A = 85-89%      | B = 73-76%  | C = 63-66%  | F = 00-49% |
| A- = 80-84%     | B- = 70-72% | C- = 60-62% |            |

#### OPERATIONAL DETAILS:

Capilano University has policies on Academic Appeals (including appeal of final grade), Student Conduct, Cheating and Plagiarism, Academic Probation and other educational issues. These and other policies are available on the University website.

#### ATTENDANCE:

Attendance will be taken daily and will form part of the final grade (See Evaluation Profile). When students are absent from class/production, their professionalism grade will be affected. Crew time sheets will be filled out each day during production. Lateness or unexplained absences will affect professionalism grade. Additionally, where lateness or unexplained absence prevents student from executing their designated crew responsibilities, term grade for that specific role will be impacted as well – up to and including overall course failure for substantially incomplete work.

#### PUNCTUALITY:

Punctuality is essential and forms part of the participation grade.

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| <b>LATENESS:</b>   |
| All student work must be performed at the place and time authorized by the instructor. Lateness will only be accepted if prior approval for lateness has been given by the instructor.   |
| <b>CHEATING/PLAGIARISM:</b>  |
| Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's work or ideas as if they were one's own. Plagiarism is both dishonest and a rejection of the principles of scholarship. All students should familiarize themselves with the University Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism (See the University Website) as such behaviour can result in suspension from the University.   |
| <b>INCOMPLETE GRADES:</b>  |
| Grades of Incomplete "I" will be granted only if there is a valid reason for extending the evaluation deadline and if students have a reasonable chance of improving their grade to pass the course.   |
| <b>ENGLISH USAGE:</b>  |
| All written work submitted must use good academic English and follow the guidelines provided in the Capilano University Guide to Writing Assignments (available from the University Bookstore). It is the responsibility of students to proof-read all their writing for any grammatical, spelling and stylistic errors.   |
| <b>STUDIO/FILMING DISCIPLINE:</b>  |
| Students must be dressed appropriately. Wet and cold weather requires waterproof and warm clothing. Students are required to wear work clothes for technical and production sessions. Clothing may be subjected to dirt, paint and dust. Sturdy shoes are a must. No food or beverages are allowed on set during production activities and during technical classes.   |
| <b>COMPUTER COURSE REQUIREMENTS/RESPONSIBILITIES:</b>  |
| You are expected to abide by the Statement of Appropriate Use of Information Technology Facilities and Services in any use of computers at the University. This statement can be obtained from your department, the Library, Computer Services or on the University website.   |
| <b>ELECTRONIC DEVICES/LAPTOPS:</b>   |
| Use of electronic devices is not allowed during class time, except at the discretion of the instructor.  |
| <b>COMPUTER LAB USAGE:</b>   |
| No food or beverages are allowed in the University's computer labs at any time. Students must not abuse internet privileges by visiting inappropriate or illegal websites. Intentionally opening and/or altering other students' projects will not be tolerated. Respect for other students' work is of utmost importance. Offences regarding the above will result in the "0" mark in the participation grade, and restricted access to facilities.   |
| <b>PARTICIPATION/PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR:</b>   |
| Students are expected to demonstrate a professional attitude and behaviour towards their work, fellow-students, and their instructor. Students should demonstrate reliability, respect for and co-operation with colleagues. A willingness to work calmly and courteously under difficult conditions as well as a determination to achieve first-class work while meeting deadlines is necessary in this course. Students should have respect for equipment and systems, and a constructive response to criticism. |
| <b>EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:</b>   |
| Students should familiarize themselves with emergency procedures posted in the classroom.  |