**ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE**

**Humanities Division**

**CMS 113 – Writing for Film and Television**

**Course Outline**

**Course Number & Name:**  CMS 113 Writing for Film and Television

**Credit Hours:**  3.0 **Contact Hours:**  3.0 **Lecture:** 3.0 **Lab:**  N/A **Other:**  N/A

**Prerequisites**:  Grade of “C” or better in ENG 101

**Co-requisites:** None **Concurrent Courses:** None

**Course Outline Revision Date:**  Fall 2010

**Course Description**: This course familiarizes students with the basics of writing for film and television. Students are taught to apply industry standard formats in preparing scripts. Topics covered include style, story structure and content, characterization, dialogue, and opportunities for new writers in the industry. Students practice writing in the different styles of film and television shows.

**Course Goals:** Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. explain and utilize multiple-act story structure in film and television screenplays;
2. write a film or television program screenplay; and
3. utilize professional screenplay formats.

**Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs)**: Upon successful completion of this course, students should specifically be able to do the following:

1. Explain and utilize multiple-act story structure in film and television screenplays:

1.1 *describe three-act story structure*;

1.2 *utilize set-up, confrontation and resolution in the screenplays;* and

1.3 *explain the function of the three-act story structure*

2. Write a film or television program screenplay:

2.1 *use brainstorming techniques to generate screenplay ideas;*

2.2 *utilize script outlines, treatments and other tools to develop the screenplay;*

2.3 *employ dialog, scene and plot construction in the screenplays;* and

*2.4 write either a complete short script for a 20 – 30 minute film, a complete script for a half-hour TV program, or the first 20 – 30 pages of a TV drama or feature film*

**Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs)** (continued):

3. Utilize professional screenplay formats:

3.1 *employ professional screenplay formatting;*

3.2 *identify and describe differences and similarities between television and film screenplays;* and

3.3 *distinguish between various elements of screenplay structure (e.g., dialog, action, character description, etc.) and their respective formatting*

**Methods of Instruction**: Instruction will consist of lectures, class discussions, and group and individual presentations of screenplays produced in the course.

**Outcomes Assessment:** Rubrics are used to assess the student productions and writing assignments for the presence of the measurable objectives. Quiz questions are blueprinted to the MPOs. Data is collected and analyzed to determine the level of student performance on these assessment instruments in regards to meeting course objectives. The results of this data analysis are used to guide necessary pedagogical and/or curricular revisions.

**Course Requirements:** All students are required to:

1. Participate actively in class.

2. Complete all written assignments on time and take all quizzes as scheduled.

3. Complete all projects on time.

**Methods of Evaluation:** Final course grades will be computed as follows:

**% of**

**Grading Components final course grade**

* **Class Participation 15 – 30%**

Class participation includes attendance, completing class assignments, and involvement in class discussion. Assignments and discussion will provide evidence of student mastery of course objectives.

* **Writing Assignments 15 – 30%**

Writing assignments are assessed to determine the extent of student mastery of course objectives.

* **2 or more Quizzes** (dates specified by the instructor) **15 – 30%**

Quizzes will provide evidence of student mastery of course objectives.

* **Final Script 15 – 30%**

The Final Script will provide evidence of student mastery of course objectives as well as synthesis of course material.

Note: The instructor will provide specific weights, which lie in the above-given ranges, for each of the grading components at the beginning of the semester.

**Academic Integrity:** Dishonesty disrupts the search for truth that is inherent in the learning process and so devalues the purpose and the mission of the College. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

* plagiarism – the failure to acknowledge another writer’s words or ideas or to give proper credit to sources of information;
* cheating – knowingly obtaining or giving unauthorized information on any test/exam or any other academic assignment;
* interference – any interruption of the academic process that prevents others from the proper engagement in learning or teaching; and
* fraud – any act or instance of willful deceit or trickery.

Violations of academic integrity will be dealt with by imposing appropriate sanctions. Sanctions for acts of academic dishonesty could include the resubmission of an assignment, failure of the test/exam, failure in the course, probation, suspension from the College, and even expulsion from the College.

**Student Code of Conduct:** All students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible and considerate adults who respect the rights of others. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. All students are also expected to attend and be on time for all class meetings. No cell phones or similar electronic devices are permitted in class. Please refer to the Essex County College student handbook, *Lifeline*, for more specific information about the College’s Code of Conduct and attendance requirements.

**Course Content Outline:** based on Field, Syd. Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting.

**WeekContent/Topic**

1 Course introduction | Read Chapters 1 & 2

2 Generating Ideas & Characters | Read Chapters 3 – 5 | **Quiz 1**

3 Creating a Story & Screenplay Format | Read Chapters 6 & 7 | **Script Outline due**

4 Act I: The Set-Up | Read Chapters 8 & 9 | **Script Pitches due**

5 Act II: Confrontation | Read Chapters 10 & 11 |**No Dialog Scene due**

6 Act III: Resolution | Read Chapters 12 – 14 | **Script Treatment due**

7 The Setup | **Quiz 2**

8 Incidents and Plot Points |**Final Script First Five Pages due**

9 Writing Dialog | **Final Script Second Five Pages due**

10 Two Incidents/Plot Points | **Final Script Third Five Pages due**

11 The Sequence/Suspense vs. Surprise | **Final Script Fourth Five Pages due**

12 Rewriting Scripts | **Final Script Fifth Five Pages due**

13 Writing Scenes | **Final Script Sixth Five Pages due**

14 Writing Scenes | **Final Script First Rewrite due**

15 Writing Scenes | **Final Script due**