Mission Statement:

Our mission is to serve as a leading center of Christian thought and action providing an excellent education from a biblical perspective and global context in pivotal professions to equip Christian leaders to change the world.

School Mission Statement:

Regent University’s department of Cinema-Television (CTV) exists to reclaim the power of “Story” to weave Christian values and enduring truths in infinitely fresh and relevant ways—using consummate craftsmanship and artistry to inspire, teach and entertain millions around the world.

COURSE SYLLABUS

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION & THE ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF CINEMA-TELEVISION

SSW 512 (MAD)
“WRITING THE SHORT FILM”
SPRING 2011
DISTANCE COURSE (ONLINE)
LECTURE POSTINGS, MONDAYS BY 5:00 PM (EASTERN)

All students are required to read and have a thorough understanding of the syllabus. Any questions or concerns need to be addressed to the instructor.

Students, please place your initials below to indicate that you have read and understood the requirements outlined in this syllabus. Online: cut and paste this shaded section and email to your professor the first week of the course.

___________________
Student initials
SECTION 1 - OVERVIEW

YOUR INSTRUCTOR FOR THIS COURSE:

Instructor: Kevin R. Crawford, M.F.A., Ph.D. (ABD)
Telephone: (757) 647-9003
Fax: (757) 352-4336
Email: Kevicra@regent.edu
Office Hours: (By Appointment)
Office Location: COM 250

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Examination of the special circumstances of the short film (less than 45 minutes running time). Students learn the narrative conventions of this format and write two or more film scripts through multiple drafts.

RATIONALE/COURSE OVERVIEW

Screenwriters are the most important people when it comes to choosing how Hollywood reflects and informs contemporary popular culture. Sadly, we see carnality and materialism strongly reflected in much Hollywood output, but there are many exceptions to this generalization. As a screenwriter, you can be part of a team of Christian writers who are working to reverse this trend without becoming “preachy” in the process.

The short film form is a great place to begin your journey into filmmaking. Whether you are a writer, director, producer, editor or researcher, the more you know how a story is formed from beginning to middle to end the better you will be in becoming an effective storyteller.

In this class, we will explore ways in which narrative short film scripts are created at the script level. While this style of film is generally less than 30 minutes in length, we will be looking at 5 minute, ten minute, fifteen minute and one longer 30 minute screenplay, the maximum length for student short narrative films. You will write three scripts during the semester, starting with a very short single scene script and developing from that point. The best scripts will be forwarded to the production classes for students to make your work on video or film, if you so desire, and they of course have the right to select or reject your work.

We will examine why certain types of script are preferred as against others for student short films, but you are free to write in any genre we choose, and we will consider the whole question of genre from the wider feature film length perspective.

We will end with a discussion of marketing techniques and the ever-changing environment of writing for film and video.

This as all courses in the School of Communication and the Arts is ultimately concerned with how the committed Christian can blend his/her faith with what they learn here. Especially of concern is how the issues raised by this course are to be considered in comparison to your own a priori world view. You will be urged to consider all readings, screenings and discussions in light of your own Christian faith.

SCRIPTURE THEME

My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer. (Psalm 45:1)
CINEMA-TELEVISION DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAM OUTCOMES

MFA IN CINEMA-TELEVISION:

- **Christian Worldview** Students will demonstrate the ability to integrate & apply the Christian faith & biblical principles to the study & practices of mediated communication.
- **Professional Artistry** Students will articulate their personal artistic “voice” and mastery of the production process as evidenced by excellence in their creative works.
- **Techniques (within majors):**
  - **Producing:** Students will demonstrate mastery of cinema and television producing, which includes the development of leadership and stewardship skills within a spiritual, social, cultural, and global framework.
  - **Directing:** Students will demonstrate mastery of cinema and television directing, in storytelling, pre-visualization, production design, casting & performance, cinematography, audio, post-production, and the application of Christian leadership skills to the directing process.
  - **Script & Screenwriting:** The student will demonstrate mastery of script & screenwriting for television, cinema, & stage-plays, in idea, story, & character development, narrative strategies, format & scene construction, pitching & marketing, and the application of Christian leadership to the script & screenwriting process.

MA IN COMMUNICATION:

- **Christian World-View** Students will demonstrate the ability to integrate & apply the Christian faith & biblical principles to the study & practices of mediated communication.
- **Academics** Students will demonstrate knowledge of relevant communication theories related to the study of film & television.
- **Artistic Practice (within concentrations)** Students will demonstrate proficiency and excellence in the rigorous exploration and application within their chosen artistic concentration:
  - **Producing:** In the logistics of a film/TV production, including story and production development, pre-production, scheduling & budgeting, legal issues & business development, post-production, distribution, and the application of Christian leadership to the producing process.
  - **Directing:** In storytelling, pre-visualization, production design, casting & performance, cinematography, audio, post-production, and the application of Christian leadership skills to the directing process.
  - **Editing:** In post-production – including non-linear, story structure, workflow, acquisition, sound design, compositing, media formats & technology, graphics, mastering, production process, and the application of Christian leadership skills in the post-production process.
  - **Critical Studies:** In the historical-critical analysis of film and television. This will include mastery of classical, contemporary, and international research methods, critical writing, understanding and application of relevant theory and histories (national and international) – all combined with an understanding of the Christian world-view.
  - **Script & Screenwriting:** In idea, story, & character development, narrative strategies, format & scene construction, pitching & marketing, and the application of Christian leadership to the script & screenwriting process.
**COURSE (WRITING THE SHORT FILM) OUTCOMES**

- Students will work toward an early handle on Hollywood’s changing genres.
  - By completing assigned readings in this category.
  - By creating their own short screenplays in the genre of their choice.
- Students will be able to highlight aspects of their faith in dramatic screenplay situations.
  - By completing the assigned writing exercises and discussing each other’s work.
  - By being challenged to locate and contextualize redemptive and pro-social values within the narrative paradigm of short film media experiences.
- Students will understand the dramatic structure of the short film, the importance of dialogue, and the critical tools required to assess good screen writing.
  - By completing assigned readings in this category.
  - By creating and using the tips, tools, and techniques encountered in the course and receiving peer feedback on their work.
- Students will be able to research, structure and write short film treatments.
  - By utilizing the examples of narrative structure provided in both the literature and films encountered/discussed in the course.
  - By discovering the kind of discipline it takes to apply creative ideas and make them work “on the page”.
- Students will write 3 screenplays, with approximate lengths of 5, 10 and 15 plus minutes.
  - By completing all written script work as assigned.
  - By practicing the disciplines of the writing craft, first-hand, including and especially the process of rewriting their own creative work.
- Students will have extensive practice is working in correct screenplay format using screenplay software.
  - By creating their own short screenplays with emphasis upon originality and execution of the idea “on the page,” through first-hand experience using one or more of the industry software packages required for this course.
  - By demonstrating proper and imaginative use of the basic narrative and screenwriting techniques (i.e., act structure, character, dialogue and elements of proper formatting).

**SECTION 2 – COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Course Materials**

Required Materials:

*Textbooks* (see “Course Schedule” below for list of required readings)


**Software**

Every year I have students ask me about using Celtx Software and other “free-ware” programs. Other faculty may permit this, but here's my policy:

I discourage use of all non-industry and public domain formats since they are unreliable, the formatting layout does not hold cross-platform, and I (mainly) want my students to become familiar with the software packages in use by professionals who work in Hollywood. If you want to "work" in the industry, someday (as I am sure all of you do) then consider it an investment in You, Inc. It's no different than buying animation, editing, production, budgeting or scheduling software for your other courses. These are simply the tools of our trade.

Consequently, it is *VERY important* that students obtain access to ONE (1) “industry standard” screenwriting program in order to complete class requirements (writing of scripts). If you do not already own one of these programs, *BELOW* is a list of required software packages with options for you to choose from. I expect you to have access to one (1) of these programs by the time our course begins.

**MovieMagic Screenwriter 6 (or higher)**

- Order from the Writer’s Store online at:
- **Cost to purchase:** $129.00 (Academic & Military Edition)
This is an academic version of Movie Magic Screenwriter. After you have purchased this product you must provide proof of current full time enrollment in a college or university (or record of military service) before it will ship.

MovieMagic development suite is now the software of choice at Amblin, Carolco, Disney, Fox, HBO, MGM/UA, NBC, New World, Orion, Paramount, Tri-Star, and Warner Bros.

Script Wizard 10

- Full service script writing add-on to Microsoft® Word. (PC only). Tools to write, format, page break, scene number, edit, proof, print and deliver scripts via fax or email. Ideal for both professionals and students working in Microsoft Office environments.
- **Script Wizard 10 requires Microsoft Word 2000 or later:** PC versions only (Mac versions not supported). Will **not** run with “Works” word processor or some “Starter” versions of Word. This is a Windows based add-on, if you don’t have a fully licensed version of Microsoft Word already installed on your PC – it will not work.
- Installs on all versions of Windows 2000, XP, Vista, Windows 7, or later (32 and 64 bit versions)
- **Cost to purchase:** $69.00
- Order from Script Wizard Software at:
  - Order from The Writers Store at:
  - [http://www.writersstore.com/script-wizard](http://www.writersstore.com/script-wizard)

Final Draft 8 (or higher)

- Another great industry standard program!
- **Cost to purchase:** $129.00 (Academic & Military Edition)
- This is an academic version of Final Draft. After you have purchased this product you must provide proof of current full time enrollment in a college or university (or record of military service) before it will ship.
- Order from the Writer’s Store online at:
  - [http://www.writersstore.com/final-draft-screenwriting-software](http://www.writersstore.com/final-draft-screenwriting-software)

**NOTE:** Please do not order your software from “shell companies” and software distributors like JourneyEd.com, since they don’t actually warehouse the products they sell. They use middle-men and other suppliers who are notorious for taking your money and NOT sending you the software for up to 6-8 weeks!

Also, "Demo" (Trial) Versions of MovieMagic and Final Draft software are no good because the files cannot be shared, uploaded to Bb. You **must** pay to license the product before you can
create, share and upload files for grading purposes on Blackboard. Believe me other students have tried this – it does not work! Don’t let your grade suffer needlessly.

I also suggest your order early and set aside time to become familiar with the features and benefits of your formatting software. These programs are not difficult to master (on a basics level), but a day spent with the program before the course begins should boost your confidence immensely. Thanks for taking care of this ahead of time, along with your textbook orders!

Recommended Resources:

Additional Materials

(e.g., PowerPoint lectures, links, multimedia resources, and the like) may be found on Blackboard in the form of e-Handouts. Students are responsible for the information and materials distributed through Blackboard. Please get in the habit of checking your “Course Resources,” “Week-by-Week” menus often.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

BlackBoard Information

Blackboard (Bb) has five primary purposes in our courses: (1) to provide a means for students to receive timely information about the course in general, assignments, grades, and announcements from the instructor; (2) to promote thoughtful interaction between the instructor and students and among students themselves as they work through course materials; (3) to provide a means for students to complete quizzes, writing assignments, and other forms of evaluation; (4) to enhance the learning process by providing a variety of materials; and (5) to enable students to check their grades.

Students complete their weekly assignments as posted/directed in Blackboard. Students are expected to check the Announcements section of Blackboard each week beginning two weeks before the start of the course. Students must keep their e-mail address current in Blackboard. Further, all email boxes should be kept well under “quota” by regularly archiving or emptying unanswered mail, mail left in message folders, etc. Students are expected to check their Regent e-mail daily to ensure timely receipt of messages from the professor. Please use your regent.edu address, as it appears in GENISYS, when corresponding with your professor. (Outside email may become lost in my SPAM folder!)

If you have problems and/or are not able to login, send an e-mail to helpdesk@regent.edu. Describe the problem in detail and include your full name, your Blackboard User Name, Password, Regent e-mail address, and telephone number(s). Or, for faster service, you can contact the Help Desk/IT department at 757.352.4076 if you are experiencing computer related problems.

ASSIGNMENTS

A. One Screenplay under 5 Minutes (10%) –

Students will write a short screenplay under 5 minutes with emphasis upon originality and execution of the idea “on the page,” demonstrating proper and imaginative use of basic narrative and screenwriting techniques (i.e., structure, character, dialog, and formatting).

B. Re-write of Screenplay under 5 Minutes (10%) -
Students will re-write their short screenplay under 5 minutes with emphasis upon originality and IMPROVED execution of the idea “on the page,” based upon feedback from the Instructor and their peers.

C. **One Screenplay under 10 Minutes (10%)** -

Students will write a short screenplay under 10 minutes with emphasis upon originality and execution of the idea “on the page” (i.e., form and content), including the demonstration of all proper and imaginative use of basic narrative and screenwriting techniques (i.e., structure, character, dialog, and formatting).

D. **Re-write Screenplay under 10 Minutes (10%)** -

Students will re-write their short screenplay under 10 minutes with emphasis upon originality and IMPROVED execution of the idea “on the page,” based upon feedback gleaned from the Instructor and their peers.

E. **One Short Screenplay between 15 to 25 Minutes (20%)** -

Students will write a short screenplay between 15 and 25 minutes with emphasis upon originality and execution of the idea “on the page” (i.e., form and content) including the demonstration of all proper and imaginative use of basic narrative and screenwriting techniques (i.e., structure, character, dialog, and formatting).

F. **Re-write Screenplay between 15 to 25 Minutes (20%)** -

Students will re-write their short screenplay between 15 and 25 minutes with emphasis upon originality and IMPROVED execution of the idea “on the page,” based upon feedback gleaned from the Instructor and their peers.

G. **Originality (5%)** -

As a reflection of the overall quality, dedication to craft and degree of seriousness of the student’s approach to each script – including and especially the way meaning is structured and perceived in the screen image – these points will be awarded at course-end based upon development of:

- **The Premise**: A) Is it clear early-on where each story is going? B) Is it coming into focus or does it wander about? Can we “hear” the logline? C) Does the writer give us a reason to care about what’s going in each piece attempted? Hook us?
- **The Story**: A) Has the writer presented a conflict and does it build to a dramatic climax? B) Is it interesting? Too slow? Are there enough twists and turns? Over-use of flashback, gimmicks, or other devices? C) Is the action focused? Does it move the story forward? If it’s a genre piece, does the writer appear to understand the conventions of the particular genre s/he is working within?
- **The Theme**: A) Does there appear potential for larger connection with the audience? B) Does the script offer Christian or pro-social commentary, including any unique perspective on the issues? C) Human interest/value?
- **It’s Production Value**: A) Is there commercial value, marketability associated with the piece, or potential to go forward as a “classy” student film project? Can we “see” the poster? B) If used, are FX appropriately “seeded” as integral part of the story? Do they help to drive the narrative forward, or do they feel clichéd like they are simply throw-in? C) Would we pay money to see this film shown at the NARO? Would others (student producers and directors) likely want to make this film?
H. Class Participation (15%) –

In the form of fifteen week’s worth of class discussions, insightful and regular comments about film screenings and the work of others, in addition to regular and timely posting of online materials and assignments – including (and especially) weekly peer feedback (student responds to a minimum of 2 classmates each week) via “Threaded” Discussion in Bb. Since this is a graduate level course & “notes” drive so much of the film business, learning to give/receive feedback is an important part of your professional development as a writer.

The schedule of weekly postings/exercises is as follows:

- You must write one (1) Original Post by Friday midnight between (100-150 words) based upon the assigned reading(s) AND any required exercises due for that week. (See weekly course “Announcements” and my “Lecture” posting for details; also check the “Class Schedule” below).
- You must also make a (50-75 word) Response Post to at least two (2) of your classmate’s by Sunday midnight.
- Note: On the weeks (Friday, Jan. 21st/Friday, Feb. 25th/Friday, Apr. 8th) when your short scripts come due (see “Class Schedule” below) students should offer their two (2) required responses in the form of feedback based upon your reading of classmate’s scripts.
- Note: To ensure that everybody receives adequate peer feedback (depending on class size), I may (at my option) assign you “writing partners,” for comment during the Term, after the roster has settled.

Please know that I monitor all discussion threads each week and may enter the discussion at any time. However, if I choose not to enter the discussion by writing my own post, be assured that it is not because I have not read your posts. I always monitor discussion threads, whether my name appears in them or not, in order that by the end of the course I have a firm grasp of the quality of your discussion contributions. Also, Blackboard allows me to call up a quantitative review of each individual’s contributions to threaded discussions, so it is a relatively easy matter to determine this gross quantitative aspect of your achievement by course end.

Since this is an online education course, you must log into Bb a minimum of twice per week in order to meet State Education Requirements. Discussion and debate are crucial for the successful integration of scholarly & artistic materials. Other students depend on your participation in the form of online dialogue, and in providing them with copies of your written assignments, as well.

SECTION 3 – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments (unless otherwise instructed) for this course should ALWAYS be submitted via Assignment Manager as an attachment. (See the “Tools” menu in Bb) Directions how to use the Assignment Manager can be found under “Help” tab and “Tutorials.” (See also the “Assignments” section of Blackboard for more detailed instructions.)

NOTE: *Bb is down on the day your assignment comes due, email as an attachment direct to: Kevicra@regent.edu clearly labeling your assignment.

Except for your Script work, all submitted assignments should be in Microsoft Word (.doc and .docx) or Rich Text File (.rtf). No other file types will be accepted. If you send me a file that I cannot read, I will automatically enter a grade of “0” for that assignment. Plus, any assignment will be returned in like kind (that is, I will return an attached Word file that is marked up with the Word Comment function). You will
Every assignment must have your name on it, and, if it is more than one page, each page must have your last name and the page number in the upper right-hand corner; for example: “Smith 2, Smith 3,” etc. To do that, you will need to know how to use the “Header and Footer” option under the “View” menu button in Microsoft Word and/or your particular screenwriting program of choice. (Note: Email “tagging” is not a guarantee that the assignment received will be easily identifiable, especially if pages become separated during reading, so please get into the habit of writing your name on every page of every assignment.

Further, in posting material, each student should label their assignments with something that includes their last name and the type of assignment. For example, Jim Smith would submit his 10 minute short script as JSmith-10minute.doc (or JSmith-10minute.rtf), etc. A file called “script.doc” will get lost when I copy it to my class files for reading/grading.

All submitted scripts/screenplays should be created and sent to me in MovieMagic (.scw and .mmsw), Script Wizard (.doc and .docx), or FinalDraft (.fdr and .fdx) file format, as specified above under required course software. Please do not send me files in Adobe Reader (.pdf), as these cannot be marked/edited on screen. All other file types will be returned to you with a grade of “0”.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION POLICY

Regent University recognizes the importance of class attendance and participation for students’ learning. While attendance alone does not guarantee learning, engagement with the class through regular attendance and participation is essential to learning, both to the individual student and to the class itself as all benefit by others’ contributions. At Regent University, class attendance, understood as the act of being present, is considered to be separate from participating in the class, understood as active engagement through discussion and other forms of interaction. Both are valuable to student learning.

Like other institutions of higher education, Regent University is required to maintain accurate attendance records by the U.S. Department of Education.

Attendance is tracked weekly. For any week (7 days from Monday to Sunday) in which a student does not attend class time or, for online classes, log into the course in Blackboard at least twice-weekly, the student will be marked absent in the Blackboard grade book. The standard by which a final date of attendance in the class is measured will be the last date on which the online student logs into the course in Blackboard or the on campus attends the on-campus class for a course, whichever is more recent. Students should be aware that this date could affect their financial aid and financial obligations.

Normally, expectations for participation—such as those for quality work in the group discussions (including those in Blackboard)—differ from the minimal requirements for attendance. Thus, at the instructor's discretion, a student who is present or absent might lose participation points. Instructors determine whether students may gain back lost participation points (for example, through additional work). Students should be aware that instructors follow their posted policy for receiving late work from students (see below). Work turned in late (papers, discussion board posts, etc.) could result in the loss of participation points or other components of the final course grade. Instructors are responsible to maintain accurate records regarding attendance and to follow course policies for grading student work, including students’ participation. Students are responsible to attend and participate in class and to follow campus policies. Four (4), or more, unexcused absences may result in failure of the course. I also reserve the right to deduct up to 10% from your final grade for late attendance/habitual absence from class.
UNIVERSITY WITHDRAWAL

Students who have not attended or logged into a class, will, at the end of the second week of the session/semester—in accordance with university practice—be assumed to have unofficially dropped and will be administratively dropped from that class.

INSTRUCTOR’S POSTED POLICY FOR RECEIVING LATE OR MISSED WORK

Work not submitted within four (4) days of the assignment due date will be normally given a grade of “0.” Unless prior arrangements have been made with the Professor, there is a grade reduction of 10% points per day through the fourth day. At the Professor’s discretion, late work may be received for full credit only under extenuating circumstances. Timely communication with me is of paramount importance, if you are experiencing setback or difficulty.

NOTE: The Department of Cinema-Television is holding its Spring Film shoot during the first half of our course (i.e., Modular Week). While on campus and local area students are encouraged to participate, please be advised that involvement with the fall film project will not excuse you from regular and timely participation in our course.

When handing in an assignment, always be sure to retain one copy just in case the material should “mysteriously” disappear enroute from you to me. Late assignments will be assessed a ten percent (10%) grade reduction per calendar day from the date the assignment is due, unless the instructor explicitly grants an extension due to unusual circumstances. Meeting assignment deadlines and class participation is a substantial portion of your total grade and is important to your personal and professional development.

NOTE: As tragic as it may be, on many levels, losing computer access – a crashed computer hard drive, or “thumb drive” – will not excuse lack of participation in the course. All monetary burden and responsibility for computer equipment, maintenance, and viable online access are borne by the student.

UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC HONOR CODE

Students are on their honor to complete assignments with honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty involves intentionally or unintentionally stealing the intellectual property of others. Students are expected to be familiar with the university’s policy on academic integrity found in both the University Student Handbook and School of Undergraduate Studies Catalog (http://www.regent.edu/general/catalog/) and to follow it. As an academic and Christian community, Regent University takes seriously the call for integrity and penalizes breaches of academic integrity.

Students should be aware that submitted papers may be checked using Safeassign (Blackboard’s plagiarism detection feature. This feature will determine the percentage of the submitted paper that matches other sources and will generate a report. Scores below 15% include quotes and few common phrases or blocks of text that match other documents, these papers indicate no evidence of the possibility of plagiarism. Scores between 15% and 40% include extensive quoted or paraphrased material or may include plagiarism and will require further review. Scores over 40% indicate a high probability the text in the paper was copied from other sources and should be reviewed for plagiarism. The professor or instructor will contact the student if plagiarism is a concern.

EMAILING YOUR INSTRUCTOR

The subject line of all e-mail messages related to this course should include the course number (e.g., SSW 512) and the name of the student (Example, SSW 512_JohnSmith). Following these directions enables the professor to quickly identify the student and course, facilitating a timely response. Students
should always include (“sign”) their first and last name at the end of all e-mail messages. Because instructors often need to reach students, all students are required to keep their mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone numbers up-to-date in GENISYS. Do not correspond with me or send attachments through .hotmail, .gmail, yahoo or other outside email systems. Always use the regent.edu and/or Bb “Communication” platform.

SECTION 4 – SCHEDULE AND EVALUATION

EVALUATION AND GRADING

A. Assignments will be graded as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Screenplay under 5 minutes</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due: Friday, January 21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewrite of One Screenplay under 5 minutes</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due: Friday, January 28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*I will record the higher of the two grades as both</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the first draft grade and revision grade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Short Screenplay under 10 minutes</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due: Friday, February 25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewrite of One Screenplay under 10 minutes</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due: Friday, March 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*I will record the higher of the two grades as both</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the first draft grade and revision grade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Short Screenplay between 15 and 25 minutes</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due: Friday, April 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewrite of One Screenplay between 15 to 25 minutes</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due: Friday, April 22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*I will record the higher of the two grades as both</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the first draft grade and revision grade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Originality</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL:</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. The grading scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE SCORE</th>
<th>QUALITY POINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>96-100</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>93-95</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>81-84</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76-80</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-77</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>71-73</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-70</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COURSE SCHEDULE (WEEK-BY-WEEK)

PRINT A COPY OF THIS SCHEDULE AND KEEP IT NEAR YOUR WORKSPACE/DESK, ENTER IT INTO YOUR BLACKBERRY, PDA, OR OTHER ELECTRONIC CALENDAR DEVICE.

LEGEND:

WSF = Writing Short Films, Cowgill
CSS = Crafting Short Screenplay, Johnson
SB = The Screenwriter’s Bible, Trottier
HAND = Handout from professor
OR = On Reserve in the Library (check at main desk)

NB (nota bene): all exercises must be sent to the Instructor using the “View/Complete Assignment” link provided in Bb and also attached and posted for student review within the appropriate Discussion Board “Forum” the week the script is due (Jan. 21st, Feb. 25th, and Apr. 8th).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ONLINE SESSIONS</th>
<th>TOPICS</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Week 1: Jan. 3 - 9, 2011 | Storytelling in General & Telling a Story in Images | **Readings:**
   - Read: Johnson chapter 1 - Connecting to Purpose
   - Cowgill chapter 1 - Before We Start - The Principles of Drama

   **Assignment:**
   - Exercise: Write/Post a 5 page screenplay about a character making a decision that makes a difference to the character - **due Friday, January 14**
   - Do not go over 3 pages. |

| Week 2: Jan. 10 – 16, 2011 | Connecting to Process (p.23) Discovering and Exploring a Main Character | **Readings:**
   - Read:  Johnson chapter 2 - Connecting to Self
   - Cowgill chapter 2- Starting out - What’s it About?
   - Read: Johnson chapter 3- Connecting to Process
   - Cowgill chapter 3- Character & Emotion - Who does what and why?

   **Assignment:**
   - Assignment Exercise: Write/Post a 5 page screenplay about a character making a decision that makes a difference to the character - **due Friday, January 21** |
| Week 3: January 17-23, 2011 | **Connecting to Screenplays**  
**Film/s:** TBA | **Readings:**  
Read: Johnson chapter 4- Connecting to Screenplays  
Chapter 8- The Boxing Match  
**Assignment:**  
Assignment: revise and resubmit exercise 2 - due Friday, January 28 |
|---|---|---|
| Week 4: January 24 – 30, 2011 | **Connecting to Screenplays: Telling the Dramatic Story**  
**Film/s:** TBA | **Readings:**  
Read: Cowgill chapter 4- The Three-Part Nature of Film Structure  
chapter 5- Plotting - the Twists and Turns  
**Assignment:**  
Assignment: Boxing Match exercise part one |
| Week 5: Jan. 31 – Feb. 6, 2011 | **Connecting to Collaboration: Telling the Dramatic Story (part 2)**  
**Film/s:** TBA | **Readings:**  
Read: Johnson chapter 5- Connecting to Collaboration  
Cowgill chapter 6- Openings & the Main Exposition  
chapter 7- The Middle - Keeping the Story Alive  
chapter 8- The End - Revelation, Climax & Resolution  
**Assignment:**  
Assignment: Boxing Match revision |
| Week 6: Feb. 7 – 13, 2011 | **The Discovery** (p.63)  
**Film/s:** TBA | **Readings:**  
Read: Johnson chapter 6- The Discovery  
**Assignment:**  
Assignments: write Discovery per instructions in Johnson chpt 6 and my lecture notes. |
| Week 7: Feb. 14 – 20, 2011 | **The Discovery** (part 2) (revised)  
**Film/s:** TBA | **Readings:**  
Read: Cowgill chapter 9- Constructing the Scene  
Chapter 10- Dialogue - The Search for the Perfect Line  
Chapter 11- The Subtext of Meaning  
Watch the film Life Lessons (from the anthology film New York Stories) (add to your NetFlix que, or catch it on YouTube: |
| Week 8: Fe. 21-27, 2011 | **The Decision.** (p.78) | **Readings:**  
Read: Johnson chapter 7- The Decision  
**Assignment:**  
Assignment: revise *Discovery* per instructions  
Assignment: *The Boxing Match* – **due** Friday, February 25 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPRING BREAK/ MODULAR WEEK: (Feb. 28 – Mar. 6, 2011)</td>
<td><strong>NO CLASSES THIS WEEK</strong></td>
<td><strong>NOTHING DUE -- Use this time to catch up on readings, work ahead on your scripts, etc.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week 9: Mar. 7-13, 2011 | **The Improbable Connection.** (p.102) | **Readings:**  
Read: Johnson chapter 9- The Improbable Connection  
**Assignment:**  
Assignment: *The Boxing Match* : final revision - **due** Friday, March 11 |
| Week 10: Mar. 14-20, 2011 | **The Long-Short Screenplay** (p.112) | **Readings:**  
Read: Cowgill chapter 12- Keeping Focused: What Does My Protagonist Really Want?  
**Assignment:**  
The Improbable Connection. Part one |
| Week 11: Mar. 21-27, 2011 | **On Revision: substance and Style ...** | **Readings:**  
Read: Johnson chapter 11-*Kosher* by Aimee Barth  
**Assignment:**  
Assignment: the Improbable Connection part two;  
Watch the movie *Kosher* (Johnson, DVD) |
| Week 12: Mar. 28-Apr. 3, 2011 | **Characterization Strategies & Dialogue Strategies** | **Readings:**  
Read: Johnson chapter 10- The Long/Short |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 13: Apr. 4-10, 2011</th>
<th>Genres: <em>A Work in Progress</em></th>
<th>Readings:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Film/s: TBA</td>
<td>Read: Johnson chapter 13- <em>A Work in Progress</em> by Wes Ball</td>
<td>Assignment:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment: Reminder: 15-25 Minute Screenplay revision - due Friday, April 22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 14: Apr. 11-17, 2011</th>
<th><em>Schreiber Theory</em></th>
<th>Readings:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Film/s: TBA</td>
<td>Opportunities for renewal p.159 <em>Lena’s Spaghetti</em> by Rachel A. Witenstein</td>
<td>Assignment:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Johnson chapter 14-<em>Lena’s Spaghetti</em> by Rachel A. Witenstein</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 15: Apr. 18-24 FINAL WEEK OF CLASS</th>
<th>General discussion and conclusion of the course</th>
<th>Readings:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Film/s: TBA</td>
<td>Marketing the Short Screenplay: <em>American GEM</em>, Short Screenplay Contest, et al.</td>
<td>“Breeze &amp; Buzz” (p.188)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINAL re-writes DUE on/before 5:00 pm, Friday, April 22nd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES**

Please review the following links and summaries for important information on University policies:

- [Academic Calendar/Registrar Information](#)
- [Bookstore](#)
- [Honor/Plagiarism Policy](#)
- [Regent Library](#)
- [Student Services](#) (includes links to student handbook, disability services, University calendar, University Writing Center, etc.)
- [Technical Support – University Helpdesk](#)
- Disability Statement – the student is responsible for contacting the assistant director of Student Services at 757.352.4486 to request accommodations, provide necessary documentation, and make arrangement with each instructor. The following website is designed to help our disabled students learn of their rights and responsibilities with regard to disability services. The site also has resources for faculty to become better
informed of their responsibilities toward the disable students in their classes.

www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/student_life/disabilities.cfm

EXTENSIONS

Unless stated by the instructor in class, all assignments are due on the date stated in the syllabus at the beginning of that class period. **Late assignments will be graded down as indicated above without an approved extension.** Except in cases of extreme emergency, requests for extensions must be made to the instructor, at least (24) twenty-four hours before the assignment is due. Be prepared to defend your reason why you need the extension. Remember, deadlines in the film business are taken very seriously. This class, in preparing students to work professionally, will take the same attitude.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

Students desiring an incomplete must submit their request to the course instructor and academic dean prior to the end of the term. An incomplete grade will be given in a regular course only for legitimate deficiencies due to illness, emergencies or extraordinary reasons acceptable to the professor, including equipment breakdown and shortages, and not because of neglect on the student’s part. Incompletes require the final approval of the school dean or his/her authorized representative. A regular grade will be given by the instructor if all requirements for the course are submitted by the end of the following academic term. The instructor will submit the new grade to the Registrar’s Office no later than two weeks after the beginning of the subsequent term. If all work is not submitted by the end of the term following the granting of the incomplete, a grade of FX (NP on pass/fail courses) will be posted automatically unless a Request for Extension of Incomplete has been approved and submitted to the Registrar’s Office. The FX shall be counted as an F in the computation of the GPA. Any student desiring reinstatement to the course after an FX or NP has been posted must register for the course in a subsequent term and pay the full current tuition for the course. In progress grades can only be given for independent studies, internships, practica, portfolios, theses and dissertations.

No incompletes for “lack of time” will be offered for SSW 512. Part of the discipline of obtaining a college or university education is the ability to plan deadlines for required work and to meet them.

I consider assigning a grade of “incomplete” only when the following conditions are satisfied: (a) the student has completed a substantial majority of the work required for the course (75%); (b) there is an acute, severe, and unforeseen emergency that involves either the student or a member of the student’s immediate family, an emergency that—in the judgment of any reasonably objective person—renders the student completely incapable of finishing the remaining work in a timely manner; and (c) prior to this emergency, the student’s academic standing in this course has been good (i.e., at least at the “B” level). Under no circumstances will I assign such a grade because of procrastination or neglect on the student’s part.

SCREENINGS

We are all adults in this school. Any film or video I encourage you to study is purely for educational and instructive purposes to develop critical abilities – rather than for entertainment. In the case that the film or video recommended is at the R-rated level, and you politely indicate to me that you are having problem, I will offer a substitute at the PG-13 or lighter rating.

That said as Christians we must be careful to remember: 1) not even the Bible, itself, “pulls the shades” on the blemishes of its characters – in other words, realism is there for an apparent purpose, and not to gloss over the radical depravity of the human heart (Jer. 17:9); 2) if we “whitewash” human sin and try to “sentimentalize” the gospel, people in the world will challenge our dishonesty and may even make light
of the “answers” we offer. Sin is serious business – it cost the sinless Son of God His life on a cross. For these reasons, truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it emotionally. Indeed, the Bible is filled with PG-13, R, and even (what some might call) X-rated material (i.e., rape, incest, murder, adultery, dismembered concubines, etc.).

Of course our purpose as Christian writers is not to "glamorize" human sin, or to dwell upon it. But as Catholic novelist Flannery O’Connor was fond of saying: "the message of redemption is of no effect in a world without any memory of the violence of human sin" (Mystery and Manners). In other words, for O’Connor the gospel must become bad news before it is good news, etc.

Christian writer and film critic Ken Gire hears God speak in the most unlikely places in his millennial offering, Reflections On The Movies, where he proposes there is often far more at stake than our offended sensibilities when it comes to film and art, “... I would rather be told an R-rated truth than a G-rated lie” (35). In other words, for Gire, it is not a G-rated world that we live in and yet our God is present to speak in/through everything.

**Student Course Evaluation**

Becoming Christian leaders includes learning how to evaluate others by providing honest evaluations that include positive affirmation and constructive feedback, as appropriate. In addition, such evaluation leads to the continual improvement of courses and student learning. Consequently, university policy requires that all students submit a formal student evaluation of teaching form at the end of the academic term. This mandatory requirement must be completed before students will be able to access their final course grade. This form is only available in an online format. Prior to the end of the course, students will receive an e-mail indicating that the form is available. Instructions on accessing the evaluation will be included. Since these evaluations are only available for a limited time, students should complete the evaluation as soon as they receive the e-mail notification that the evaluation form is available. Instructors will not have access to course evaluations until after grades have been submitted and will only have access to anonymous summary data. Students are also encouraged at any point during the term to offer comments that may be helpful to the improvement or refinement of the course. Students can access the online evaluation system at: [http://eval.regent.edu/regentsurvey/students.cfm](http://eval.regent.edu/regentsurvey/students.cfm). If you have questions about the online evaluation please contact evaluation@regent.edu.

Last Updated: 11/19/2010

*At times, due to unforeseen circumstances, course content may be subject to change. Please check with your professor to insure you have the most recently updated Syllabus for this course.*

Regent University
1000 Regent University Drive, Virginia Beach, VA, 23464
Phone (888) 718-1222
© 2010 Regent University, All Rights Reserved.