Regent University 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 of Communication & the Arts Mission Statement:
To prepare emerging and established Christian leaders to inspire, enrich and transform the
media, the arts, and the academy through excellence and innovation in scholarship and practice.

COURSE SYLLABUS

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION & THE ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF CINEMA-TELEVISION

SSW 511 (2)
PLAYWRITING
SPRING 2013
COURSE TYPE: DISTANCE

MEETING LOCATION: IN BLACKBOARD

COURSE INSTRUCTOR: GILLETTE ELVGREN, PH.D.

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.
SECTION 1 – COURSE OVERVIEW

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:
Instructor: Gillette Elvgren, Ph.D.
Telephone: 757-548-2071
E-mail: gillelv@regent.edu

In the subject line of your email, please include the course number (e.g. SSW 514) and have your full name in your email signature. Note: All students are required to keep their mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone numbers up to date in GENISYS to facilitate communication between instructors and students.

Office Hours: tba
Office Location: Communication Bldg. Rm. 215
Best time to contact me: Mornings by phone.

GREETINGS! We live in a media driven age. Film and television are the thing. So why write a play? For me, it’s several reasons. I write plays because I find that the excitement generated through the interplay of live actor and live audience is precious. It’s a more basic representation of the storytelling nature of our humanness. It’s immediate. It changes, it adapts, and the play itself is reinterpreted with every different production.

I also write plays because I find that I can explore character in a deeper manner, and have more fun and be more digressive with dialogue then you can in film or television, and create a ‘theatricalism’ that defies being realized in film or TV. For example: a man stands on an empty stage; he is nowhere. He is everywhere. He puts his palm out, looks up, and hunches down in his jacket. It’s raining. Of course it isn’t raining on the stage. It would be in a film. And on this stage for a brief moment we’ve shared the special nature of pretend in a way that is totally theatrical.

So, have fun this term. Find your voice. Love your characters. Write from your heart.

Blessings, Gillette Elvgren

SHORT BIO

Gillette Elvgren has been writing for over thirty-five years, his plays have been produced by professional theatre companies throughout the United States and Canada. He is co-founder and former resident playwright for Saltworks Theatre Company in Pittsburgh, PA., and for Children's Ministries, Scripture Union, Philadelphia, PA. There have been approximately 8,000 performances of Elvgren scripts.

While a Professor at the University of Pittsburgh he was head of the M.F.A. directing program and staff director for the Three Rivers Shakespeare Festival. Presently he is a Professor in Cinema-Television at Regent University, Virginia Beach where he teaches Playwriting and Screenwriting courses.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will investigate the building blocks of writing a full length play for the stage: dramatic action, exposition, subtext, characterization, dialogue, imagery, and theatrical viability. In addition, various readings will introduce the student to the playwright’s traditional and non-traditional place in the cultural milieu in which he/she creates—in other words, the role of the playwright will be under constant examination as one who holds a ‘mirror up to nature’. There will be an emphasis on how to bring together ones faith into the creative process as well as the creative output. Numerous contemporary playscripts will be read and discussed in order to better understand the ‘state of the art’ as it exists today.
Theme Scripture:
Then the Lord said to Moses, “See, I have chosen Bezalel . . . and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts—to make artistic design.” Exodus 31:1,2

INTEGRATION OF FAITH
An ongoing dialogue will be initiated in class which will challenge the student to justify their creative work in relationship to their faith. This will be done through discussion and an examination of the writings that the students produce, as well as various readings that will be assigned, pointing towards an understanding of the writer and worldview. Some of the questions addressed will be:
- What does it mean to live in a moral universe?
- What role does ‘destiny’ play in the dramatic action of a play?
- How does the Christian belief system support the idea of change in play construction?
- How does one approach both the reality of evil and of man’s fallenness in a redemptive context.

SECTION 2 – COURSE EXPECTATIONS

COURSE OUTCOMES
Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- **OUTCOME:** Students will create the building blocks towards play structure through log lines, synopsis’, and treatment. **ASSESSMENT:** Evaluation through grades of final Treatment submitted, and through the completion of a first draft of a play with plot points identified.
- **OUTCOME:** Students will identify and write scenes from a full length structured play that will include: exposition; inciting incident; first act climax; midpoint crisis; second act climax. **ASSESSMENT:** each scene will be graded during the process of the course.
- **OUTCOME:** Students will be required to successfully complete take home exams in the area of play formatting. **ASSESSMENT:** exam will be graded by instructor.
- **OUTCOME:** Students will complete and post in a timely fashion all other reading assignments and exercises as required. **ASSESSMENTS:** students will respond to the readings and to other students responses on Blackboard’s DISCUSSION area.
- **OUTCOME:** You will be required to pitch a full length play idea at pitching session, date to be announced. **ASSESSMENT:** professor will evaluate verbally pitching professionalism.

REQUIRED MATERIALS
Students are responsible for acquiring the following books and materials for this course **before the first class meeting:**

- **Note:** The School has partnered with the Regent Bookstore to have textbooks available for purchase for all students, including distance students. Items may be ordered using the secured online catalog found at [www.regentbookstore.net](http://www.regentbookstore.net).
- Daily access to the Internet and email
Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.) version 2007 or later.

The latest version of a web browser compatible with Blackboard and media players. For assistance, visit the links provided in the Helpful Resources section of the course in Blackboard or contact IT Helpdesk via their website, phone at 757-352-4076, or email at helpdesk@regent.edu.

Additional materials (e.g., PowerPoint files, quizzes, media, and the like) will be provided via Blackboard. (see “Use of Blackboard” below for more information).

Understand and adhere to the Regent Honor Code found in the Student Handbook. A persistent link can also be found in Blackboard’s “RU Resources” tab.

Recommended Course Materials:

TEXTS:
Perkins, Sarah. “Christian Ethical Issues in Playwriting. (To be distributed through handouts on Bb.)
ISBN: 0-671-21332-6
Elvgren, Gillette. Paper Wings, and Everywoman sent out over Bb.
Harrel, Wayne. Song of the Bow. Unpublished manuscript sent over Bb.

Various handouts and playscripts as provided.

- Other resources such as writing style guides, Blackboard tutorials, University policies, IT Helpdesk, and information may be accessed via the “RU” and “Helpful Resources” tabs in Blackboard as well as in the Helpful Resources section of this course.
- FINAL DRAFT and MOVIE MAGIC both have Theatre templates if you subscribe to their formatting offerings. It is highly recommended that you get one of these because they will also prove to be invaluable in your screenwriting and television writing courses.

USE OF BLACKBOARD
Blackboard will be used to facilitate this course. Please keep the following in mind:

- All discussion posts should be scholarly in nature and respectful of colleagues.
- Students are expected to check the Announcements section of Blackboard each week beginning one week before the start of the course. Students are also expected to have verified that their computer hardware and software meet the requirements for online courses at Regent University before the first week of the term.
- Students must keep their e-mail address current in Genisys in order to receive communications from Blackboard and the instructor. Students are expected to check their Regent e-mail daily to ensure timely receipt of messages from the professor.
• Students will be required to post on Discussion Board their reactions to the lecture material and
the reading material. For most weeks audio lectures will be provided that deal with structural and
thematic aspects of playwriting and meditations on faith based issues dealing with the creative
process.

• In addition, students will be required to react to another students posting each week.

• Be SURE to check the ASSIGNMENT FORUM each week. You must turn in your assignments
here. If you don’t, they will not be graded.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Attendance and active participation is required in order to complete this course.
Please note that you are required weekly to provide Bb entries and to respond to other students postings.

Note: International students should consult the Office of International Student Services before
registering for a Distance or Modular course.

SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Unless otherwise instructed, all assignments for this course must be submitted via the “Assignment Link”
found in Blackboard. All files should be submitted using the following naming convention:

YourName_AssignmentName (e.g. John Smith_Essay 1)

• Papers should be in MS Word format (.docx) compliant with the MLA writing style guide.

• Scripts should be in Final Draft or Movie Magic software format.

Unless otherwise stated in Blackboard, no assignment will be accepted if submitted via any
method other than Blackboard. Assignments are due no later than 11:59 pm on Thursday. It is
recommended that students give themselves a buffer of time before the deadline to allow for trouble-
shooting should your upload attempt fail. Students should look at the assignment submission page to
verify that the submission was successful.

Late Assignments

Points will be taken off for late assignments. You can lose up to a full letter grade with an assignment
posted a week late.

NOTE: Technical difficulties when submitting to Blackboard will not be accepted unless
documented by the IT Help Desk. The IT Help Desk is your first point of contact for problems with
Blackboard. Deadline extensions will be allowed only when a system issue occurring on Blackboard’s
side is documented by Regent University IT department.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

The final grade for the course will reflect mastery of course content and quality of thought as expressed
in:

ASSIGNMENTS:
Write major portions of a full length play: 60%
Other Writing assignments: 15%
Comments and Questions on Bb: 15%
Exams: 10%
Grading Rubric
Each assignment will be apportioned a letter grade congruent with the following:

The following grading scale will be used:

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<th>Percentage Score</th>
<th>Quality Points</th>
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<td>90-92</td>
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<tr>
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SECTION 3 – SCHEDULE AND EVALUATION

COURSE SCHEDULE

The schedule below includes the due dates for all assignments in this course. It is recommended that you place this Course Schedule in a convenient place and refer to it each week of the course. You need to follow it closely, as late assignments may be subject to a grade reduction.

Thursday marks the beginning of the week for this course. Therefore, unless otherwise stated in Blackboard, assignments for each week must be submitted no later than Thursday, 11:59 pm (Eastern time) of each week.

Week 1: January 3 to January 10
Click to enter bulleted list of topic(s) [window will expand as you type].

Week 2: January 11 to January 17
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Week 3: January 18 to January 24
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Week 4: January 25 to January 31
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Week 5: February 1 to February 7
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Week 6: February 8 to February 14
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Week 7: February 15 to February 21
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Week 8: February 22 to February 28
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Week 9: Spring Break March 1 to March 7
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Week 10: March 8 to March 14
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Week 11: March 15 to March 21
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Week 12: March 22 to March 28
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Week 13: March 29 to April 4
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Week 14: April 5 to April 11
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Week 15: April 12 to April 18
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Week 16: April 19 to April 25
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SECTION 4 – PROGRAM GOALS

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION AND THE ARTS MISSION STATEMENT
To prepare emerging and established Christian leaders to inspire, enrich and transform the media, the arts, and the academy through excellence and innovation in scholarship and practice.

PROGRAM GOALS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF CINEMA-TELEVISION.

MFA in Cinema-Television:

1. **Christian Worldview** Students will demonstrate the ability to integrate & apply the Christian faith & biblical principles to the study & practices of mediated communication.

2. **Professional Artistry** Students will articulate their personal artistic “voice” and mastery of the production process as evidenced by excellence in their creative works.

3. **Techniques (within majors):**
MA in Communication:

1. **Christian World-View** Students will demonstrate the ability to integrate & apply the Christian faith & biblical principles to the study & practices of mediated communication.

2. **Academics** Students will demonstrate knowledge of relevant communication theories related to the study of film & television.

3. **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 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.

**SECTION 5 – UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

Students should become familiar with all university policies as outlined in the Student Handbook including:

- Disability services (Note: Requests for accommodation must first be submitted through Disability Services).

- Regent Honor Code (as an academic and Christian community, Regent University takes seriously the call for integrity and penalizes breaches of academic integrity.)

- Withdrawing from a course or the University

- Discipline policies
A link to the Student Handbook can also be found in Blackboard’s “RU Resources” tab along with links to University Library, Student Services, University Bookstore, academic writing assistance resources, and more.

Blackboard’s "Help" tab provides additional resources including:

- Blackboard tutorials
- IT Help Desk contact information

STUDENT COURSE EVALUATION

Students have the opportunity to provide feedback throughout the course through e-mail, telephone, and on-campus appointments. Near the end of the course, students will complete an anonymous online course evaluation form. Since the results contribute to improving course design and presentation, it is important that students be honest and constructive in their evaluations. Students will receive an e-mail reminder from the University when it is time to complete these evaluations. Please take time to provide this input. Students can access the online evaluation system at:

http://eval.regent.edu/regent/survey/students.cfm

If you have questions about the online evaluation please contact evaluation@regent.edu.

This syllabus is subject to change without notice.

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