CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

Course title: Script Analysis
Course code: SCRW 3001 PRFS
Programs offering course: Film Studies
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 4.00
Contact hours: 60.00
Term: Fall 2020

Course Description

This class is a core course for the Film Studies Screenwriting track and offers the screenwriting students an opportunity to experience how screenplays become transformed by factors outside of the sphere of writing. The screenwriting students join students from the CIEE film studies production track in three eight week sections of the following topics in production: acting, film language and editing. In these classes the students analyze and exercise how plays become transformed by the work of the actor, cinematographer and editor: exploring how story is divided into acting beats and tactics and the tools actors use beyond dialogue, how story is told with additional film language tools such as color, line, point of view, angle and movement, and how story is cut and rhythmically arranged in editing. All of these factors dynamically interact with the screenplay to put the story into filmic space.

Units Description:

Script Analysis 1: The purpose of this course is to study film language and form by close analysis of scenes and shots; looking at narrative construction and the significance of every detail in the film's language. It has a strong practical dimension. Meets over 13 of 14 weeks, two academic hours weekly.

Acting: The course introduces the students to basic principles of acting, namely Goal/Obstacle, Other, Tactics and Expectations. Each principle is exercised separately and students engage in short scenes and improvisations to combine the principles and work additional techniques related to character portrayal and building a scene. In some exercises students gain practice directing each other, and specific problems, such as casting or work with non-actors are addressed to prepare them for their upcoming shoot. Meets over 10 weeks, two academic hours weekly. Note: Meets weeks 1-7, then in weeks 11-14, Acting class time used as preparation for final presentation, plus acting exercises on handling dialogue.

Camera and Film Language: This unit complements the practical dimension of the cinematography lectures by focusing on those cinematic tools that serve a dramatic purpose in storytelling with film. Several styles of cinematography are evaluated in terms of storytelling effectiveness. Technical elements such as shot sizes, axis rules, angles of view, color, composition, and especially, camera movement, are analyzed with a view to their cultivation of film language. Meets over 7 weeks, two academic hours weekly.

Editing: In editing class we focus on examples of editing in short films, as well as stylistic analysis of famous films. Main objectives: structure, creating empathy with a character, editing style as a tool of storytelling, work with time and space, influence of location and camera style on the editing, work with sound effects, music and voice over. Meets over 7 weeks, two academic hours weekly.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Analyze and evaluate how screenplays eventually interact with other modes of language specific to filmmaking;
- Acquire and apply specific vocabulary in film language used by the actor, cinematographer and editor;
- Analyze specific tools for story-telling used by the actor, cinematographer and editor;
- Acquire and implement tools available in spheres beyond the written word that will eventually shape the work of the writer;
- Assess how story is shaped by many collaborative systems within filmmaking;
- Gain practical experience in the collaborative work of the screenwriter with other film artists.
Course Prerequisites
The course is part of the core curriculum of the Film Studies program, Screenwriting track.

Methods of Instruction
The course is team taught and each professors’ methods vary. Classes in film language include lecture supported by powerpoint plus segments of films screened. Classes on editing involve lecture and screening of short films which are then discussed and analyzed in class. Classes in acting are largely devoted to in-class exercises revolving around a principle of acting, plus scene work in pairs.

Assessment and Final Grade
1. Acting, Camera and Film Languages, Editing units: 50%
2. Script Analysis 1 unit: 50%
TOTAL 100%

Course Requirements
Acting, Camera and Film Languages, Editing units:
Active participation in classes - 40%
Final Exam on course material - 20%
Participation and reflection on pitch - 10%
Participation as crew member on shoot - 20%
Participation in Final Presentation - 10%

Script Analysis 1 unit:
Students will be expected to recognize the dramatic and narrative elements explained in class, and to present a cogent analysis of a film selected for a mid-term exam and for a final paper.
Active participation in classes - 20%
Mid-term examination - 20%
Take-home final - 60%
Participating as a crew member in production is important for the student to realize that the screenplay is a blueprint for a collaborative event. The final presentation of work on her own feature screenplay, which is work for another core class – Feature screenwriting - is also counted in the assessment of this class because the student will use her screenplay in further collaboration to make a presentation with and for others of its contents.
(In the event that in the feature screenwriting class the student realizes a work that does not lend itself to a staged reading, perhaps because of a lack of dialogue or perhaps because of a personal or delicate nature to the material, this final presentation could be waived for the student. The student is encouraged however to find an alternative form of presentation, perhaps through images evoking locations or themes from the work. It is not advisable that the student will be writing in the feature screenwriting class with a view toward the product presented during the last week. A few weeks before the end of the semester, choices concerning the presentation will be discussed among the students and professor.)

Attendance
Regular class attendance is required throughout the program.
If you will miss a class for any reason, notify the Program Coordinator and your instructor beforehand via Canvas. You are responsible for any materials covered in class during your absence, and except in the specific cases listed below, credit will not be granted for missed assessments.

Excessive absences will result in a notification letter, and finally a warning letter, sent to you and your home school, based on the following:
The notification letters are intended to ensure that you are well advised in advance of any potential for failure or dismissal, so that you can take steps to avoid this.

As the table shows, missing more than 20% of any class (e.g., due to undocumented illness, travel delays, flight cancellations, over-sleeping, etc.) results in automatic failure of the course.

If you miss an assessment in class due to an absence, you will be able to make it up in the following instances:

- You provide a relevant doctor's note from a local medical professional to your Program Coordinator within 24 hours of your absence (a scan or photograph sent via e-mail are acceptable)
- A CIEE staff member verifies that you were too ill to attend class.
- You provide evidence of a family emergency to your Program Coordinator.
- You have an approved absence related to the observance of a religious holiday from the Academic Director based on a request submitted before you arrived onsite.

Please note: Absences incurred due to documented illness, documented family emergency or the observance of a religious holiday approved before arrival onsite do not count towards the total of absences. Students may self-certify one absence due to illness without providing a doctor's note as long as they notify the Program Coordinator within 24 hours of their absence by e-mail or a text message.

Other attendance-related policies

If you transfer from one CIEE class to another during the Add/Drop period, you will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of the new class provided you were marked present for the first session(s) of the original class.

If you are over 15 minutes late for a class, the instructor is required to mark you absent.

In case of class conflicts (irregularities in the class schedule, including field trips and make-up classes), always contact the Academic Department to decide the appropriate course of action.

Please remember to track your attendance on the Canvas Course Sites and report any errors in the record to the Academic Department within one week of the discrepancy date, as later claims may not be considered.

These attendance rules also apply to any required co-curricular excursion, activity, or event, and to for-credit internships.

CIEE staff does not manage absences at partner institutions providing direct enrollment classes (FAMU, ECES and FSV), but they have similar attendance policies and attendance is monitored there. Grade penalties may result from excessive absences.

N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.

Weekly Schedule

**Week 1**

Class: Acting, Editing and Film Language Classes meet.

- Acting – focus on basic acting principles; short scene to be memorized assigned as homework
- Editing – focus on basic editing principles
- Film language – focus on expressive tool of movement

**Week 2**

Class: Acting, Editing, Film Language Classes meet
Acting – focus on good acting choices; short text on choices distributed in class to be read as homework

Editing – focus on basic editing principles

Film language – focus on expressive tool of frame.

Attendance at Production track pitch.

Script Analysis meets – focus on three act structure and sequence structure

Reading due for Script Analysis 1: Aristotle Poetics in course reader, pp. 4-21

Week 3
Class: Acting, Film Language and Editing Classes meet

Acting – focus on scenework

Editing – focus on editing principles

Film Language – focus on expressive tool of POV

Script Analysis 1 meets: Screening of Kolya

Reading due for Script Analysis 1: Course reader selection from Story by Robert McGEE, pp. 28-31

Week 4
Class: Acting, Film Language and Editing Classes meet;

Acting – Focus on improvisation technique

Editing – Focus on editing principles

Film Language – Focus on Expressive Tool of Composition

Script Analysis 1 – lecture topics: character and conflict

Reading due for Script Analysis 1: Course reader selection from Story by Robert McGEE, pp. 43-49

Week 5
Class: Acting, Film Language and Editing Classes meet;

Acting – Focus on improvisation technique

Editing – Focus on editing principles

Film Language – Focus on Expressive Tool of Shot Sizes

Script Analysis 1 – Screening of Harold and Maude

Reading due for Script Analysis 1: Course reader selection from Story pp. 32-33, 63-65

Week 6
Class: Acting, Film Language and Editing Classes meet

Acting – Focus on inner monologue

Editing – Focus on editing principles

Film Language – Focus on expressive tool of angles and axis

Script Analysis 1 - lecture on scene by scene construction within the dramatic curve.

Reading due for Script Analysis 1: Course reader selection, pp. 60-62, 66-70

Week 7
Class: Acting, Film Language and Editing Classes meet

Acting – Focus on Characterization
Editing – Focus on Editing principles
Film Language – Focus on Color as Expressive Tool
Script Analysis 1 - Screening of *The Commitments*

**Reading due for Script Analysis 1**: Course reader selection, pp. 81-90

**Week 8**
Class: Final Exam from Topics classes.

Script Analysis 1 – lecture topics: internal scene construction; advancing the plot
**Reading due for Script Analysis 1**: Course reader selection, pp. 91-94

**Week 9**
Class: Script Analysis 1 class – Screening of *Toy Story*

**Reading due for Script Analysis 1**: Course reader selection, pp. 95-97

**Week 10**
Class: Script Analysis 1 class meets - lecture topics: genre

Assignment – preparation of film analysis paper due in week 14

**Week 11**
Class: Acting class resumes – focus on dialogue

Script Analysis 1 class meets – Screening of *Titanic*

**Assignment**: – preparation of film analysis paper due in week 14

**Week 12**
Class: Acting class meets – focus on preparing scene for final presentation

Script Analysis 1 class meets – lecture topic: screenplay format, trimming; dialogue;

Instructions for Final Paper

**Week 13**
Class: Acting class meets, work on preparation for final presentation

Last Script Analysis 1 class – Review of topics and films

**Assignment due for Script Analysis 1**: Final Film Analysis paper

**Week 14**
Class: Acting class meets, work on preparation for final presentation

Presentation from feature screenplay

**Course Materials**

**Readings**