

School of Communication

University of Miami

CMP 594

Writing the Feature Screenplay

Sec. 84-2

Spring - 2008

Instructor – Dr. Paul Lazarus

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Course Description:

This is an online course designed to prepare the student to conceptualize, outline and commence writing a feature-length narrative screenplay. Concepts, step-outlines, character biographies and ultimately screenplay pages will be forwarded to the instructor using Final Draft software, . Corrections and suggestions will, in turn, be returned to the student. At any time, the student may email the instructor to have questions answered, ideas discussed, or aspects of the screenwriting process explored.

The entire course work will be done online.

It is anticipated that some students enrolled in this course will have at least a modicum of experience in writing in screenplay format. Any student who does not have this background should discuss his/her particular situation with the instructor prior to enrolling in this course.

Required Texts and software:

Bowles, Stephen, Mangravite, Ron & Zorn, Peter, The Screenwriter's Manual (available in University Bookstore), Final Draft Software.

Lazarus, Tom, The Secrets of Film Writing, St. Martin's P., 2001.

Online Protocols:

Complete information and instruction on the use of Blackboard and email for this course will be distributed to each student by Carol Wilson (284-4411; carol@miami.edu) at Continuing Education.

Class Schedule:

Week 1

- Online submission of story idea(s) for feature-length script.
- Online feedback on story submission

Week 2

- Resubmission of story idea.

Submission of character biographies.
Online feedback of character biographies.

Week 3

Submission of step outline of first Act.
Online feedback.

Week 4

Reworking of Act I step outline.
Online feedback.

Week 5

Submission of step outline for Acts II and III.
Online feedback.

Week 6

Submission of first half of Act I.
Online feedback.

Week 7

Submission of rewrite of first half of Act I.
Online feedback.

Week 8

Submission of second half of Act I.
Online feedback.

Week 9

Rewrite of second half of Act I.
Online feedback.

Week 10

Online conclusion

Honor Code:

Students must conform to the University's Honor Code as detailed in the Student Manual. Plagiarism will not be tolerated.

N.B. – Rolling Enrollments

This course is of ten weeks duration with rolling enrollments. Therefore, each student will receive his own Syllabus with dates tailored to his commencement of the course.