



## SUMMER PROGRAM 2024

**Course title:** Writing the Short Film: Introduction to Screenwriting

**Meeting Times and Days:** July 1st – July 12th, 2024 / Monday - Friday, 9am-5pm

**Instructor:** Christopher Manning

**Room:** - 102

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Although the short film is often viewed as a stepping-stone for budding filmmakers looking to gain experience and practice their craft, a closer look reveals that writing the short film is an art form of its own. What makes a good short film? How does a writer create a credible story world in the short form? How does one go about developing a character? What about structure? Can I tell an engaging story that offers the audience a sense of resolution in just a few minutes? In this class, we'll probe for the answers to all of these questions and more. The objective is to learn a professional approach to writing a screenplay from conception of the idea through to the outlining process and onto a finished short script. Students will enter the course with or without an idea for a film, and in the first sessions develop and build a coherent synopsis and outline before beginning and completing a first and second draft of their short film. The city of Paris will serve as the backdrop to our workshop: screenings, guest lecturers, a walking tour and visits to the Cinémathèque will get the creative energy flowing as you join a long tradition of writers and filmmakers seeking inspiration in the city of light.

## ASSESSMENT

TBD

## ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to fully participate in every session to be sure not to miss important information, which will lead to the successful completion of the course.

Substantial absences are factored into grades. Please note the following:

- 2 late arrivals (more than 15 minutes) or early departures = one full absence
- 2 absences = excessive absence for a course that meets once per week
- 3 absences are grounds for failure in the course

## SCHOOL POLICIES

1. Plagiarism is a serious offence and will not be tolerated. All research, text, and image sources must be cited using Chicago (Turabian) style. See your instructor or the Student Handbook if you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism.
2. You are required to attend and participate in class critiques and other presentations. Be respectful of your fellow classmates.
3. No phones, devices for listening to music, or other electronics are allowed in class, unless otherwise specified by the instructor.
4. No emailing, web surfing, or instant messaging, etc. is allowed during class time, unless otherwise specified by the instructor.



5. Classrooms are community space. Please leave them clean and tidy.
6. All *Paris College of Art* buildings are NON SMOKING, including balconies and the courtyard. You must go outside in the street to smoke. Students found smoking on PCA premises will be fined.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

This schedule is subject to modification.

### **Monday, July 1st**

'Morning Pages' Writer's Warm Up.

Introductions & Class Overview: Storytelling in the Short Form (Structure, Character Arch and Scene Structure), Outlines, Synopsis, etc.

Writing Exercise: Into the Unknown

Read Assigned Screenplay in Class. Watch the corresponding film and discuss.

Lecture: Generating Ideas

Short Films Screening and Discussion: *Three Centimeters*, Lara Zeidan  
*The Chairs*, Orkhan Aghazadeh

Assign Workshop Group Coordinator

***Assignment: 1) What's Around You? exercise 2) In the News exercise 3) Write the first draft of a short synopsis for three ideas that you would potentially like to develop as a script in this class. Be prepared to informally present and share these in class.***

### **Tuesday, July 2nd**

'Morning Pages' Writer's Warm Up.

Lecture: Receiving and Giving Criticism: The Art of Giving Notes.

The Good Story, Dramatic and Thematic Questions, and Writing Log Lines

Writing Exercises: Finding Your Compass

What's the Problem?

Short Film Screening and Discussion: *The Translator*, Emre Kayis

Reading Time.

Writer's Workshop: Synopsis

***Assignment: 1) The Hardest Choice exercise 2) Revisit Your Synopses / Develop one or write several new synopses, Write Log Lines for each of your short synopses.***

### **Wednesday, July 3rd**

'Morning Pages' Writer's Warm Up.

Lecture: Building Character

Writing Exercises: The Supermarket Sweep

Motivating Action

Short Film Screening and Discussion: *Rosa*, Francisco Neffe

Reading Time.

Writer's Workshop: Synopsis and Loglines

**Afternoon Outing TBD.**



**Assignment: 1) Character Past and Present: Write Backstory, Attitudes and Values. 2) Select One Synopsis to Develop and Write a 1st Draft of the Outline.**

**Thursday, July 4th**

'Morning Pages' Writer's Warm Up.

Lecture: Character, the Emotional Journey, Inciting Incidents, Scenes, and Beats.

Short Film Screening and Discussion: *Thirteen Blue*, Jacqueline Lentzou

Writing Exercise: What Happens Next?

Character as Structure

Afternoon Writing Time: Use this time to Complete 1st Draft of an Outline for the short film that you will deliver for the course.

**Assignment: Deliver your outline by 6 pm.**

**Friday, July 5th**

'Morning Pages' Writer's Warm Up.

Lecture: Starting Over

Writing Exercise: The Heart of the Matter

Short Film Screening and Discussion: *Fauve*, Jeremy Comte

Draft Reading Time.

One to One Meetings with Christopher

Writer's Workshop: Outline.

Assign Workshop Group Coordinator and new groups for week 2.

***MID-TERM Assignments:***

**Assignment 1: Write the 1st Draft of your Screenplay and deliver by 3 pm on Sunday.**

**Assignment 2: Draft Reading. Students must arrive at class on Monday at 2pm having read their peers' first drafts for the workshop.**

**Monday, July 8th**

***Morning Artist's Date:*** This is 2 hours for you alone and your inner artist: A film, a walk in the woods, a swim – a moment of solitude that takes care of your inner creative being. Unplugged, connecting only with yourself (no phones, social media).

Class Meeting at 2pm.

Class Discussion: How Did It Go?

Workshop: The 1st Draft.

**Assignment: Work on your 1st Draft, making revisions based on today's feedback and notes.**

**Tuesday, July 9th**

'Morning Pages' Writer's Warm Up.

Lecture: Scene Structure

Short Film Screening and Discussion: *Mother*, Mikael Bundsen

Writing Exercises: Fulfilling the Function

The Telling Moment

Afternoon Writing Time: Use this time to work on your next draft.



***Assignment: Deliver the next draft of your screenplay by 5 pm.***

**CLASS OUTING: TBD.**

**Wednesday, July 10th**

'Morning Pages' Writer's Warm Up.

Short Film Screening and Discussion: *The Angler*, Yu-Lin Chung

Draft Reading.

Workshop: 1st Draft Revisions.

Lecture: Visual Storytelling

Writing Exercises: Doing Not Being

Creating Atmosphere

***Assignment: Work on your 1st Draft, making revisions based on today's feedback and notes.***

**Thursday, July 11th**

'Morning Pages' Writer's Warm Up.

Lecture: Last Dance

Create Step Outline and Shift Things Around (cut up outline)

Short Film Screening and Discussion: *Bastringue*, Josza Anjembe

Writing Exercise: Last Dance

Afternoon Writing Time.

***FINAL SUBMISSION: Deliver the Final Version of your Screenplay by 10 pm.***

**Friday, July 12th**

'Morning Pages' Writer's Warm Up.

Table Reads of Final Drafts.

Class Outing: Closing Thoughts and Reflections.

Short Film Screening and Discussion: *Ecdysis*, Fevronia Tsolina

Course Feedback.

Afternoon Vernissage: Presentation of Projects.