



SUMMER PROGRAM 2021

Course title: Writing the Short Film: Introduction to Screenwriting

Meeting Times and Days: June 28 – July 9, 2021 / Monday - Friday, 9am-5pm

Instructor: Christopher Manning

Room: TBD

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.

RESOURCES AND READINGS

TBD

COURSE SCHEDULE

This outline is subject to modification.

Monday, July 28

Introductions & Class Overview: “Into the Unknown: Storytelling in the Short Form”

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

Writing exercise: Into the Unknown

Lecture: Structure, Character Arc and Scene Structure.

Assignment: 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.

Readings: TBD.

Tuesday, July 29

Daily Pages Writer’s Warm Up.

Discuss Readings.

Synopsis Workshop.

Writing Exercise: “The Hardest Choice”

Lecture: The Good Story and Writing Log Lines

Assignment: “What’s the Problem?” Exercise, Revisit Your Synopsis / Develop one or write several new synopses, Write Log Lines for each of your short synopses.

Readings: TBD.

Wednesday, July 30

Daily Pages Writer’s Warm Up.

Discuss Readings.

Synopsis and Logline’s Workshop.

Lecture: Building and Writing Character

Writing Exercise: “The Supermarket Sweep”

Short Film Screening and Discussion: TBD

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



Thursday, July 1

Daily Pages Writer's Warm Up.
Lecture: Character Journey, Scenes and Beats.
Exercise: Motivating Action.
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.
Evening Event: Lost in Frenchlation: Cinema Screening in a typical Parisian cinema.

Friday, July 2

Daily Pages Writer's Warm Up.
Lecture: Receiving and Giving Criticism: The Art of Giving Notes.
Outline Writer's Workshop.
Short Film Screening and Discussion: TBD.
Guest Speaker TBA.
Assignment: Write the 1st Draft of your Screenplay and deliver by 6 pm on Sunday.

Monday, July 5

Daily Pages Writer's Warm Up.
Class Discussion: How Did It Go?
Workshop: The 1st Draft.
Short Film Screening and Discussion.
Lecture and Exercise: Beginnings, Middles and Ends.
Assignment: Work on your 1st Draft, making revisions based on today's feedback and notes.

Tuesday, July 6

Daily Pages Writer's Warm Up.
Exercise: Putting the Scene to Work.
Afternoon Writing Time: Use this time to work on your next draft.
Assignment: Deliver the next draft of your screenplay by 6 pm and then relax!

Wednesday, July 7

Daily Pages Writer's Warm Up.
Workshop: 1st Draft Revisions.
Writing Exercise: "Doing Not Being"
Afternoon Cinémathèque Visit and Guided Walking Tour of the Latin Quarter.
Assignment: Work on your 1st Draft, making revisions based on today's feedback and notes.

Thursday, July 8

Daily Pages Writer's Warm Up.
Lecture: Visual Storytelling in Script Form
Writing Exercise: Creating Atmosphere
Meeting the Actors and Giving Direction (TBD)
Assignment: Deliver the Final Version of your Screenplay by 10 pm.

Friday, July 9

'Morning Pages' Writer's Warm Up.



Closing Thoughts and Reflections.
Table Read of Final Scripts with Actors.
Farewell “Apéro”.