

HZ9205 Creative Writing: Creative Non-Fiction

Division of English, Nanyang Technological University

Semester 2, AY 2016/2017

Day: Thursday, 2:30 – 5:30pm

Location: TR+1

Seminar Leader: Senior Lecturer Ben Slater

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Pre-requisite: HZ9101

A screenplay is a written document that attempts to convey the narrative and cinematic experience of a film. It is both a creative and 'technical' form of writing. This course will introduce students to the processes involved in the development of stories and scripts for the screen. Students will complete two short professionally formatted screenplays, while developing critical skills around script writing and reading, developing story, structure and cinematic story-telling. The course will be taught through a combination of lectures, seminar-style discussion sessions, workshops and peer-review of works-in-progress in small groups.

Course Outline

S/N	Topic	Seminar Hours
1	<u>Introduction</u> Cinematic Storytelling. 'First Pages'	3
2	Story Structure Understanding dramatic shape and character arcs as tools for developing story.	3
3	Screenplay formats Examining professional screenplay layouts and conventions, plus other development documents (Logline, treatment, outline). In-class writing exercises	3
	Character Exercise Presentation and discussion of student selected clips Brief for first Script Project	3
5	<u>Initial Story ideas</u>	3

	Student pitches for story ideas for first script project.	
6	Story Development Discussion of first draft outlines	3
7	Screenplay Drafts Discussion of first draft screenplays	3
8	Recess	
9	Short Film Screenings Screening and discussion of 10-15 minute short films. Brief for second Script Project	3
10	Initial Story ideas Student pitches for outlines for second script project.	3
11	Story Development Discussing Treatments	3
12	Screenplay Consultancy Discussing first 5 pages	3
13	Screenplay Consultancy Discussing completed first drafts	3

Learning Outcome

Students will obtain an introduction to screenwriting craft through two short screenplays and a self-analytical essay.

Assessment

Course grades will be determined by the following:

Class participation	20%
Script Project 1 (3 pages)	20%
Script Project 2 (10 pages)	45%
Critical Self-Commentary (1500 words)	15%

Suggested Reading

John Yorke, *Into the Woods: A Five Act Journey into Story* (2013: Penguin)

Dan O Bannon, *Guide To Screenplay Structure* (2013: Michael Weise Productions)

Ben Slater (Ed), *NANG: Screenwriting, Issue One* (2016: Cinemasias Editions)

Suggested Listening

Scriptnotes Podcast, John August & Craig Mazin (look for it on iTunes)

Grading Criteria for Script Projects

In assessing scripts I will be looking for the following qualities.

Technical Proficiency: The script is correctly formatted. It follows the rules and conventions of the form. It's written clearly and effectively in a style that is appropriate to the material.

Engagement in Process: The writer needs to be willing to explore alternatives, to be self-reflective and critical, to listen to and adapt to feedback, to creatively solve problems within the script in order to develop their ideas and the quality of the work.

Storytelling Skills: The work tells an interesting story in a clear and effectively structured manner. The script uses the capabilities of the filmic medium (image, sound, time, space) to convey narrative in an original way. Imaginative and intriguing development of story, scenes and character. Ability to create and structure a story arc and create compelling scenes within that structure.