

FILM/TV 78x: SPECIAL TOPICS IN FILM STUDIES | FOCUS: SCREENWRITING

Spring 2025, 2 Units; Wednesdays: 5:30 pm-7:20 pm; Canvas Online Zoom; April 7 – May 16

Instructor: Thomas Gamburg (he/him); gamburgthomas@fhda.edu

Class Online Zoom Meetings: April 9, 16, 23, 30, May 7 and 14

Office Hours: Tuesdays in-person, or online over Canvas or email. *Please contact instructor ahead of time.* 11:30am -12:30pm in AT120 and 5:30-6:30pm in AT103.

Description: Concentrated investigation of an influential film artist, studio, national cinema, genre, movement or historical period.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Analyze the various creative, craft and business aspects of the current film, television and digital media industry through screenings, events, and visits from working professionals.
- Apply an analytical approach learned in class to examine a screenplay and/or the narrative, visual and aural elements of a motion picture.

Goals: By the end of the quarter, students will:

- Have gained a working knowledge of the day-to-day working life of a professional screenwriter.
- Have a clearer understanding of the industry at large, including tangible steps one should consider to launch a career.

Assignments: Students will engage with guest speakers from the entertainment industry and analyze selected media, articles and screenplays linked from Canvas.

This class will start by exploring the work of screenwriters, writer-director auteurs, and broaden to include areas of development in film and television, career paths and opportunities. Students will have the opportunity to ask guest speakers about development, filmmaking and writing, and strategies for breaking into the industry. Guests may include an Emmy-winning local filmmaker and editor, a film archivist, working screenwriters including recent Academy Nichol Fellowship Winners and writing and development assistants at major management and production companies.

Methods: Assigned readings, lectures, film and video screenings, class discussions and workshops, written work.

Note: Due to the nature of the course, adult themes and language will be used.

Required Text: *Screenwriting for Neurotics*, by Scott Sublett. Instructor will provide free electronic access.

Primary Recommended Text: *The Protagonist's Journey*, by Scott Myers. Instructor will provide free electronic access.

Secondary Recommended Text: *Essentials of Screenwriting: The Art, Craft & Business of Film & Television Writing*, by Richard Walter (available through De Anza bookstore and/or their library ebook database, Amazon, other retailers. Instructor cannot provide free access)

More Recommended/Optional Reading: Please feel free to request other recommendations that speak to your specific interests and development, including plays, autobiographies, writers, filmmakers and actors' advice on the film artist's craft, literary and popular fiction, films and screenplays.

- Directing Actors: Creating Memorable Performance for Film & TV, by Judith Weston
- Shakespeare's Complete Works
- Plays by Pinter, Ibsen, Strindberg, Beckett, Chekhov, O'Neill, Williams
- An Actor Prepares, Building a Character, Creating a Role. Stanislavski
- Poetics, by Aristotle
- The Screenwriter's Roadmap, by Neil Landau
- Write Screenplays That Sell, by Hal Ackerman
- Hitchcock/Truffaut, by Francois Truffaut
- The Art of Dramatic Writing, by Lajos Egri

Recommended Listening:

3rd & Fairfax: The Official WGA West Podcast
The Treatment, hosted by film critic, Elvis Mitchell
Scriptnotes Podcast (available on iTunes, Spotify, etc.)
The Town, with Matthew Balloni (available on iTunes, Spotify, etc.)
On Story, presented by the Austin Film Festival
The Bafta Screenwriters' Lecture Series

Attendance: Guest interviews will not be recorded. This class is synchronous and only 6 weeks long. Attendance is critical to success in this class. Students not present when instructor takes attendance will be marked absent.

If you miss a lecture, it is your responsibility to get notes from your classmates and revisit any screenings or Zoom work you missed on your own time.

Drop Policy: A student may be dropped from this class for:

- More than 2 unexcused absences
- Chronic tardiness
- Severe or chronic disruptive behavior*

Disruptive Behavior: The college will enforce all policies and procedures set forth in the *Standards of Student Conduct* (see catalog or <https://www.deanza.edu/judicial-affairs/rights-responsibilities.html>). Any student disrupting the class may be asked to leave that class. Administrative follow-up may result.

Laptops & Cell Phone Policy: Laptop use is acceptable for reading and responding to classwork only. For more information about minimum technical requirements, as well as some free internet and tech resources visit www.deanza.edu/online-spring

Cell phones off for the duration of the class, please.

Recording Policy: To ensure compliance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), **student recording of class lectures or other activities is prohibited** without the explicit written permission of the instructor and notification of other students enrolled in the class section. Exceptions may be made for approved accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his approval.

Note: It is the student's responsibility to add, drop, or withdraw from the class in compliance with De Anza's deadlines & guidelines. Failure to do so will result in an "F."

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be taken lightly. Please refer to the De Anza Student Handbook section on Academic Integrity.

Student Success Center: Need help? De Anza's Student Success Center offers tutoring and workshops. Visit <http://www.deanza.edu/studentssuccess> for hours and information. Online resources available on Canvas: <https://deanza.instructure.com/enroll/MAF7Y8>

Students eligible for accommodations by Disability Support Services (DSS), please follow up to ensure that your accommodations have been authorized for the current quarter. If you are not registered with DSS and need accommodations, visit <https://www.deanza.edu/dsps> for additional information.

Grades are based on the following:

Participation: Worth up to 25 points; *Written Materials/Homework:* Worth up to 25 points; *Quiz:* Worth up to 25 points; *Oral Presentation:* Worth up to 25 points

Scale (Based on Total Points Earned):

93-100=A, 90-92=A-, 87-89=B+, 83-86=B, 80-82=B-, 77-79=C+, 73-76=C

How to Succeed:

Check the class Canvas page regularly.

Attend all classes.

Come prepared and on time.

Take notes about the lectures and discussions.

Actively participate in class discussions and activities.

Do all of the assignments and turn them in on time.

Ask instructor for help if you need it, and communicate in advance about issues.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE:**Subject to change depending on speaker availability!**

Check Canvas every week for up-to-date information about guest speakers and required reading and screenings.

WEEK 1 APRIL 9: Multi-media sources including select screenings and video clips, written materials including screenplays, electronic textbook excerpts and articles.

Guest speaker Q & A with Tiffany Shinn, currently Showrunners' Assistant to writer/director Adele Lim (Crazy Rich Asians, Joy Ride, Raya and the Last Dragon)

Writing Assignment 1: Due by 5:30pm, 4/16, on Canvas

Outside of Class Film/TV Viewing: Due by 5:30pm, 4/16.

Required Text Reading: Due by 5:30pm, 4/16. *Screenwriting for Neurotics*: Ch. 1 (The Idea) and Ch. 2 (The Spine)

WEEK 2 APRIL 16: Multi-media sources including select screenings and video clips, written materials including screenplays, electronic textbook excerpts and articles, guest speaker Q & A (TBA)

Writing Assignment 2: Due by 5:30pm, 4/23, on Canvas

Outside of Class Film/TV Viewing: Due by 5:30pm, 4/23

Required Text Reading: Due by 5:30pm, 4/23. *Screenwriting for Neurotics*: Ch. 3 (Plot) and Ch. 4 (Deeper Into Plotting)

WEEK 3 APRIL 23: Multi-media sources including select screenings and video clips, written materials including screenplays, electronic textbook excerpts and articles, guest speaker Q & A (TBA)

Writing Assignment 3: Due by 5:30pm, 4/30, on Canvas

Outside of Class Film/TV Viewing: Due by 5:30pm, 4/30

Required Text Reading: Due by 5:30pm, 4/30. *Screenwriting for Neurotics*: Ch. 5 (The Scene) and Ch. 6 (The Step Outline)

WEEK 4 APRIL 30: Multi-media sources including select screenings and video clips, written materials including screenplays, electronic textbook excerpts and articles, guest speaker Q & A (TBA)

Writing Assignment 4: Due by 5:30pm, 5/7, on Canvas

Outside of Class Film/TV Viewing: Due by 5:30pm, 5/7

Required Text Reading: Due by 5:30pm, 5/7. *Screenwriting for Neurotics*: Ch. 7 (Formatting) and Ch. 8 (Description)

WEEK 5 MAY 7: Multi-media sources including select screenings and video clips, written materials including screenplays, electronic textbook excerpts and articles, guest speaker Q & A (TBA)

Writing Assignment 5: Due by 5:30pm, 5/14, on Canvas

Outside of Class Film/TV Viewing: Due by 5:30pm, 5/14

Required Text Reading: Due by 5:30pm, 5/14. *Screenwriting for Neurotics*: Ch. 9 (Dialogue) and Ch. 10 (Miscellany)

WEEK 6 MAY 14: FINAL CLASS; multi-media sources including select screenings and video clips, written materials including screenplays, electronic textbook excerpts and articles, guest speaker Q & A (TBA)