



1155 N. State Street Suite 410
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(360) 738-1616
<http://www.nwfilmschool.com>

INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPT WRITING

Instructor: Caleb Young

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Course Description:

Over eight weeks, students will learn the basics of script writing: format, character, and story structure (The Three Act structure). Students will work together in pairs and in large groups and workshops their scripts. There will be a lot of writing; both script writing and free writing. Students will be graded on the participation in class discussion and workshops, in-class writing, and a final draft of a ten-page script.

Students should plan on spending 20-30 hours outside of class working on their scripts. Previous scriptwriting experience is helpful but not necessary; the course is designed to provide a basis of fundamentals for beginning and amateur script writing.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will be able understand and apply the rules of the three acts script structure.
2. Students will be able to identify the elements of the three act structure in professional and in student's work.
3. Students will be able give helpful comments and constructive criticisms about other student's work that will benefit the scriptwriter
4. Students will be able to work together as a community in order to support the best possible products
5. Students will be able to show, through their writing and character, why they are telling their story.

Dates of Availability:

Instructor Bio:

Caleb Young is an award-winning filmmaker and has made five feature films, ten short films, and several commercials and music videos since 2005. Young's films have screened at local, national and international film festivals. He was recently on two panels at Boise's True West Cinema Festival (Shooting on film in the Digital Age, and Independent Film). Young has a BA in Creative-Writing from WWU and is currently finishing up his Post-Bach for Secondary Education – English. Young is the owner and co-founder of Lines and Blood Productions. Young's script *Afraid to Merge* was a finalist in ScriptShark Insider Screenplay Competition, and has received three Official Selections.

Required Text and Materials:

There is no required textbook for this course; reading will include online articles and handouts. Each student needs to pick-up and bring to class the script of their favorite film. (Ex; Almost Famous, Fight Club, Adaptation, Requiem for a Dream, etc.)

Handouts

The Three Act Structure, Formatting, Do's and Don'ts, Character Building



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Course Format - 8 weeks, 16 hours in class. Class meets on Tuesdays from 6-8pm.

Class Participation

Students will work in small and large groups discussing both student work and professional scripts. The class will be discussion based, with several in-class writing assignments. Failure to attend or participate will affect student grades. More than 2 absences could result in failure of course.

Late projects and assignments

Late work will not be accepted.

Grading:

- A = 90-100 points
- B = 80-89 points
- C = 70-79 points
- D = 60-69 points
- F = 59 points or less

Assignment	Points
Participation	15 points
Draft 1 Outline, Short Story, Explanation of Story	10 points
Draft 2 Rough Draft of Script	15 points
In-class writing	10 points
Final Script	50 points
1. Three Acts	10 points
2. Character Development	10 points
3. Dialogue and Action	10 points
4. Formatting	10 points
5. Editing	10 points
Total	100 points

Class Participation means attending each class session, asking questions, being involved in discussions and workshops. For each class session missed without an approved absence 5 points will be deducted from final grade.

Course Overview, Schedule, Weekly Assignments:

DAY 1 - INTRODUCTION, THREE ACT SCRIPT STRUCTURE

1. Introductions
2. Discussion on what makes a good story/script/film
3. In-class writing assignment – Why do we write?
4. Lecture: Introduction to The Three Act
5. Discussion on the Three Act Structure – Why do we use it?

Assignment:

Find a script of your favorite film and locate some of the elements of the Three Act structure in the script. Bring the script and your notes and ideas to the next class. Come to class ready to discuss what we found.



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DAY 2 – THREE ACT SCRIPT STRUCTURE AND FORMATTING

1. Discussion on our favorite scripts
2. Lecture on the Three Act Script Structure (in depth)
3. Discussion on the Three Act
4. In-class writing – write a scene between two people
5. Lecture on Formatting
6. Exercise on Formatting

Assignment: Draft 1

Write, in short story form, the story that your script will follow. Write and outline, will all the markers of the Three Act structure. Write about paragraph that explains why you are telling this story.

DAY 3 – STRUCTURE, FORMAT and CHARACTER

1. Draft 1 Due
2. Review of The Three Act, Structure and Formatting
3. Lecture/handout on Character
4. In-Class Writing Assignment : Building your character
5. Class Sharing/Discussion about their characters/story

Assignment:

Continue to build character. Come to class ready to introduce and discuss your character(s)

DAY 4– BEGIN WORK ON SCRIPTS

1. Introductions of Characters.
2. Review of formatting and structure
3. In Class Writing Assignment – Pick a scene from short story to put in script form
4. Workshop – small groups. Discuss each other's script.

Assignment:

Begin to work on Draft 2 – the rough draft in script form.

DAY 5 – PURPOSE, DIALOGUE and ACTION

1. In-class writing – Why are we telling this story?
2. Discussion on Purpose
3. Lecture on Dialogue and Action
4. Class reading of scenes

Assignment:

Finish Draft 2 – Bring 10 copies to class



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DAY 6 – WORKSHOPS

1. The class splits into small groups
2. Cast and Read the script in small groups.
3. Discuss scripts – concerns and comments
4. Lecture/Handout on Do's and Don'ts of Scriptwriting.

Assignment:

Revise script
Choose a film and take notes on script structure
Bring copies of scripts to class (enough for every student)

DAY 7 – SHORT FILMS VIEWING and DISCUSSION

1. Discussion of film notes
2. Short films viewing
3. Discussion of Structure and Dialogue
4. In class writing – Exercise using students' scripts
5. Small group workshops and Teacher Conferences
6. Cast for final readings.

Assignment:

Revise Script

DAY 8 – FINAL WORKSHOP

1. Discussion on progress and goals
2. How do we sell our scripts?
3. Copyright
4. Final Readings of Student Scripts/Discussion
5. Final Thoughts/Closure

Assignment:

Final Draft of Scripts due in a week.

Academic Dishonesty Policy - Western Washington University students are responsible for reading, understanding, and following the policy and procedures regarding academic dishonesty as set forth in the *WWU Academic Dishonesty Policy and Procedure* (see Appendix D of the University Bulletin).

Incomplete Course Work - Incomplete coursework will be judged on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the instructor.

Accessing Grade Reports - Grade Reports will be posted online at <http://www.nwfilmschool.com>.

Accessing Online Class Procedure - All class procedures and materials will be available at <http://www.nwfilmschool.com>.

Students with Disabilities - To request disability accommodation or assistance related to required course procedures please contact Disability Resources for Students, OM 110, 360-650-3083.