CAPILANO UNIVERSITY

COURSE OUTLINE	
TERM: Fall 2025	**COURSE NO:** ENGL 297
INSTRUCTOR:	**COURSE TITLE:** Introduction to Screenwriting in Fiction
OFFICE: **LOCAL:** **E-MAIL:** @capilanou.ca	**SECTION NO(S):** **CREDITS:** 3.0
OFFICE HOURS:	
COURSE WEBSITE:	

Capilano University acknowledges with respect the Lil̓wat7úl (Lil'wat), xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), shíshálh (Sechelt), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) people on whose territories our campuses are located.

COURSE FORMAT
Three hours of class time, plus an additional hour delivered through online or other activities for a 15-week semester, which includes two weeks for final exams.

COURSE PREREQUISITES
ENGL 190 or ENGL 191; OR MOPA 106 and MOPA 206

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION
This is an intensive introduction to the writing of screenplays and scripts that builds and draws extensively on the literary arts. Focusing on short-form works, students will learn the fundamental key concepts of scriptwriting and the film production process, including the roles of the director, cinematographer, and other creative collaborators in the film and televisual arts. Students will explore the basic theory and formal aspects of story, dramatic structure, character development, and dialogue. Assignments may include original short screenplays and/or screenplay adaptations of one or more literary works.

COURSE NOTE
ENGL 297 is an approved Culture and Creative Expression course for Cap Core requirements.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND/OR RESOURCES
The course may make use of a published anthology or course pack. Specific texts will vary depending on the instructor and term. Readings and video links should be accessible on *eLearn*, and most films will be available at the Capilano University Library. See examples under Course Content for example texts and media.

Students are highly encouraged to download a copy of Final Draft screenwriting software for class submissions http://trial.finaldraft.com/edutrial/.

COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
On successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

1. Employ key concepts of screenwriting in the analysis and critique of student writing and literature using oral and written forms of analysis, communication, and collaboration.
2. Produce drafts and final scripts that are aware of their relationship to community, history, public knowledge, and citizenship.
3. Initiate and engage in creative processes including screenplay conception, research, drafting, workshopping, and generation of a final product.
4. Participate in the creative process of peer evaluation and response to feedback and critique (from drafting, to workshopping, to final version) in a manner mindful of diversity, equity and inclusion.
5. Interpret diverse forms of writing for the screen and engage in research from multiple perspectives (e.g. artistic, historical, political, literary, scientific, etc.).
6. Demonstrate the connection between different modes of screenwriting and the ideas, traditions, and belief systems of characters, audiences, and stories.
7. Examine film and TV traditions and the influence of systemic racism, colonization, and heteropatriarchal power structures in shaping media and entertainment.
8. Produce a developed final script formatted according to industry standards.

Students who complete this Culture and Creative Expression course will be able to do the following:
1. Engage in creative processes including conception, investigation, execution, and ongoing critical analysis.
2. Identify, analyze, and critique the elements of a form of expression using its specific vocabulary.
3. Explain or demonstrate the connection between various events, ideas, traditions, and belief systems and the modes in which they are artistically or culturally expressed.
4. Interpret diverse forms of creative expression from different perspectives (e.g. artistic, historical, Indigenous, literary, scientific, philosophical).

COURSE CONTENT
The content and week-by-week breakdown of the course will vary by term and instructor. The following is an example:

Week 1	COURSE INTRODUCTION: What is Screenwriting? Anatomy of a script page. Adaptations.
Week 2	DRAMATIC FORM I: Dramatic Structure. Act I. Narrative and non-narrative forms. Discuss short story form. D. Lodge: "What is Fiction?"
Week 3	CHARACTER: Protagonists. Secondary characters. Formatting scripts using Final Draft software. Optional tutorials about the fundamentals of script formatting.
Week 4	VISUAL STORYTELLING. Writing an effective screenplay description. Story beats.
Week 5	CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES I: Indigenous characters and worldviews. Violence and drama. Decolonizing the story. "Otherness."
Week 6	SCENES: Defining a scene. Good scenes. Conflict. Compression. Excerpts from D. Mamet, *On Directing*.

Week 7 DIALOGUE: Compression. Characterization through dialogue. Subtext.
Week 8 SUBPLOTS: The pitfalls and value of subplots.
Week 9 DRAMATIC FORM II: Creating an effective opening and conclusion. Techniques for Act II. Episodic writing and character development.
Week 10 TONE & THEME: Developing tone through genre and world building. Types of tone and theme.
Week 11 CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES II: Feminist drama. LGBTQIA2S+ story and characters. "Queer coding." Reading against the grain.
Week 12 REVISION: Exploration of the various stages of revision. Act III. Interactive media and writing story for new media (video games, etc.)
Week 13 FINAL READINGS: Class presentations and feedback. OPTIONAL discussion of loglines, treatments, pitches.
Weeks 14-15 Final Exam Period

Possible texts include:

Cooper, Pat, and Ken Dancyger. *Writing the Short Film (3rd Edition).* Focal Press, 2005.
Lodge, David. *The Art of Fiction*. Penguin, 1994.
Zavattini, Cesare. "Some Ideas on the Cinema." (Overview of Italian Neorealism)
Short stories by Kafka, Chekov, Cheever, Kincaid, Roupenian, and others.

Possible screenings include:

The Bicycle Thieves. Dir. R. Rosselini. 1948.
"I May Destroy You." *BBC* (Series). M. Coel. 2020. [Content warning: Discussion of sexual assault]
True Grit. Dir. The Coen Brothers. 2010.
Assorted Academy Award-winning and other film shorts: *Handsome and Majestic*, *Mino Bimaadiziwin*, *The Phone Call*, The Music Box, and others.

Content Warnings

The readings and lessons in this course are designed to challenge and transform your thinking and to help you develop your capacities for engaging critically and empathetically with the world around you. At times, course materials may contain potentially triggering content for some students. In the interest of creating safer spaces for all members of our university community so that everyone's learning can flourish, instructors and students will aim to provide content notes ahead of time and will encourage everyone to communicate any specific concerns they might have.

Also, please note that questioning our social conditioning, assumptions, or privileges may make us uncomfortable at times, but doing so is a vital part of collective learning and self-growth. While students may feel uncomfortable when engaging with certain course materials or class discussions, they should not be made to feel unsafe. In order to create a supportive classroom environment, it is vital that we all respect each other's privacy, boundaries, and identities.

EVALUATION PROFILE:

Written Assignments*	50-80%
Presentations & Group Projects	0-20%
Portfolio	0-30%
Participation**	0-10%
Total	**100%**

* Individual assignments may be worth more than 35% (have received Dean approval.)

** Participation grades are based on the consistency, quality, and frequency of contributions to class discussions. Consistency means attending every class, maintaining a positive and respectful presence in the classroom, and actively contributing to discussions on a regular basis. Quality means demonstrating respect for peers and their contributions, listening attentively during lectures and when other students are speaking; and participating in all activities with an open and inquisitive mind.

ASSIGNMENTS

The assignment structure for this course is determined by the instructor in accordance with the learning outcomes outlined above. Please refer to individual course syllabi and eLearn sites for a more detailed breakdown.

Written Assignments

These assignments might include a combination of close reading, critical writing, adaptation and creative projects. These may take the form of pitches, drafted screenplay, outline, scene, character bibles, narrative, creative nonfiction, or other critical or creative writing formations.

Presentations & Group Projects

This course may include a presentation component, in which individuals will discuss their creative work or critical analysis either in presentation form or together on a panel, much like an academic conference. Group assignments will focus on a particular theme from screenwriting or adaptation, and as a class we will discuss these themes in light of our wide reading and experimentation. These projects, which combine literary and critical writing, allow students to collaborate on their work together, ultimately contributing to the larger academic discourse.

Portfolio

A portfolio of polished work, representing a combination of critical and creative writing, may be required. This work should demonstrate clarity and fluency in its diverse forms of writing for film. The final revised portfolio is assessed by a rubric that considers application of class discussion and readings, restructuring of drafts, demonstrated experimentation with the writing process, and depth of revision.

GRADING PROFILE

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D = 50-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	F = 0-49
A- = 80-84	B- = 70-72	C- = 60-62	

Incomplete Grades
Grades of Incomplete "I" are assigned only in exceptional circumstances when a student requests extra time to complete their coursework. Such agreements are made only at the request of the student, who is responsible to determine from the instructor the outstanding requirements of the course.

Late Assignments
Assignments are due at the beginning of the class on the due date listed. If you anticipate handing in an assignment late, please consult with your instructor beforehand.

Missed Exams/Quizzes/Labs etc.
Make-up exams, quizzes and/or tests are given at the discretion of the instructor. They are generally given only in medical emergencies or severe personal crises. Some missed labs or other activities may not be able to be accommodated. Please consult with your instructor. Accommodations can be made to honour community needs and traditional practices.

Attendance
Students are expected to attend all classes and associated activities.

English Usage
Students are expected to proofread all written work for any grammatical, spelling and stylistic errors. Instructors may deduct marks for incorrect grammar and spelling in written assignments. All written assignments must be typed. Unless noted otherwise by the instructor, and except where industry script standards are required, assignments they must follow the MLA documentation format and other guidelines set forward in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 8th Edition* or *The Capilano Guide to Writing Assignments* (2020 Edition).

Electronic Devices
For in-person classes, students may use electronic devices during class for note-taking only.

Online Communication
Outside of the classroom, instructors will (if necessary) communicate with students using either their official Capilano University email or eLearn. Official communication between Capilano University and students is delivered to students' Capilano University email addresses only.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONAL DETAILS

Tools for Success
Many services are available to support student success for Capilano University students. A central navigation point for all services can be found at: https://www.capilanou.ca/student-services/

Capilano University Security: download the CapU Mobile Safety App

Policy Statement (S2009-06)
Capilano University has policies on Academic Appeals (including appeal of final grade), Student Conduct, Academic Integrity, Academic Probation and other educational issues. These and other policies are available on the University website.

Academic Integrity (S2017-05)
Any instance of academic dishonesty or breach of the standards of academic integrity is serious and students will be held accountable for their actions, whether acting alone or in a group. See policy and procedures S2017-05 Academic Integrity for more information:
https://www.capilanou.ca/about-capu/governance/policies/

Violations of academic integrity, including dishonesty in assignments, examinations, or other academic performances, are prohibited and will be handled in accordance with the Student Academic Integrity Procedures.

Academic dishonesty is any act that breaches one or more of the principles of academic integrity. Acts of academic dishonesty may include but are not limited to the following types:

Cheating: Using or providing unauthorized aids, assistance or materials while preparing or completing assessments, or when completing practical work (in clinical, practicum, or lab settings), including but not limited to the following:
- Copying or attempting to copy the work of another during an assessment;
- Communicating work to another student during an examination;
- Using unauthorized aids, notes, or electronic devices or means during an examination;
- Unauthorized possession of an assessment or answer key; and/or,
- Submitting of a substantially similar assessment by two or more students, except in the case where such submission is specifically authorized by the instructor.

Fraud: Creation or use of falsified documents.

Misuse or misrepresentation of sources: Presenting source material in such a way as to distort its original purpose or implication(s); misattributing words, ideas, etc. to someone other than the original source; misrepresenting or manipulating research findings or data; and/or suppressing aspects of findings or data in order to present conclusions in a light other than the research, taken as a whole, would support.

Plagiarism: Presenting or submitting, as one's own work, the research, words, ideas, artistic imagery, arguments, calculations, illustrations, or diagrams of another person or persons without explicit or accurate citation or credit.

Self-Plagiarism: Submitting one's own work for credit in more than one course without the permission of the instructors, or re-submitting work, in whole or in part, for which credit has already been granted without permission of the instructors.

Prohibited Conduct: The following are examples of other conduct specifically prohibited:

- Taking unauthorized possession of the work of another student (for example, intercepting and removing such work from a photocopier or printer, or collecting the graded work of another student from a stack of papers);
- Falsifying one's own and/or other students' attendance in a course;
- Impersonating or allowing the impersonation of an individual;
- Modifying a graded assessment then submitting it for re-grading; or,
- Assisting or attempting to assist another person to commit any breach of academic integrity.

Sexual Violence and Misconduct
All Members of the University Community have the right to work, teach and study in an environment that is free from all forms of sexual violence and misconduct. Policy B401 defines sexual assault as follows:

> Sexual assault is any form of sexual contact that occurs without ongoing and freely given consent, including the threat of sexual contact without consent. Sexual assault can be committed by a stranger, someone known to the survivor or an intimate partner.

Safety and security at the University are a priority and any form of sexual violence and misconduct will not be tolerated or condoned. The University expects all Students and Members of the University Community to abide by all laws and University policies, including B.401 Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy and B.401.1 Sexual Violence and Misconduct Procedure (found on Policy page https://www.capilanou.ca/about-capu/governance/policies/)

Emergencies: Students are expected to familiarise themselves with the emergency policies where appropriate and the emergency procedures posted on the wall of the classroom.

DEPARTMENTAL OR PROGRAM OPERATIONAL DETAILS

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Treating everyone with respect and compassion is a responsibility we all share in creating an inclusive environment that is conducive to learning. Our diverse backgrounds, identities, experiences, languages and learning styles should not only be respected in the classroom but also celebrated as a source of expanding our understanding of other people and, in turn, our capacity for empathy. Students and instructors are expected to cultivate open-mindedness and remain aware of, and sensitive to, the diversity of identity and experience in our university community.

AI-Generated Writing
Submitting AI-generated text as your own writing will be treated as plagiarism. In accordance with Capilano's Academic Integrity policy (see above), any use of generative AI tools for work in this class must be authorized by your instructor. Unauthorized use of technological writing tools is a form of cheating. Do not assume all available technologies are allowed.