

**ENG 325  
Screenwriting  
Syllabus**

<b>COURSE TITLE:</b> Screenwriting	<b>COURSE NUMBER:</b> ENG 325
<b>TERM:</b>	<b>PREREQUISITES:</b> English 102
<b>INSTRUCTOR:</b>	<b>EXTENSION:</b>
<b>OFFICE:</b>	<b>EMAIL:</b>
<b>OFFICE HRS:</b>	<b>OTHER:</b>
<b>MEETING TIME:</b>	<b>LOCATION:</b>

### Course Description

This course teaches the craft of screenwriting for film and television, covering various screenplay formats (sit-com, one-hour drama, feature-length film), the business of screenwriting, and past and current trends in Black cinema.

### Required Course Texts and Materials

- Field, Syd. *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*. Random House: New York, 2005.
- Spiral notebook

**English 325  
Screenwriting  
Connecting the SLOs**

Course SLO	Core Curriculum SLO	English Program SLO	Mass Comm Program (Broadcast Journalism) SLO
(1) Define and use vocabulary pertinent to the analysis and construction of film and television screenplays.	(1) Listen and effectively communicate ideas through written, spoken, and visual means.	tion of a range of terms and concepts of literary analysis, literary theory, and methodology making effective use of standard academic English.	(4) Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for mass media industries and/or graduate school.
(2) Identify and explain the structural elements of a half-hour	(1) Listen and effectively communicate ideas		(4) Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for

<p><b>sit-com, one-hour drama, feature-length film, and digital short.</b></p>	<p><b>through written, spoken, and visual means.</b></p> <p><b>(7) Demonstrate an understanding of visual and/or musical literacy through a formal, contextual, or expressive analysis of the arts.</b></p>		<p><b>mass media industries and/or graduate school.</b></p>
<p><b>(3) Devise and compose an original short film screenplay that adheres to industry standards.</b></p>	<p><b>(1) Listen and effectively communicate ideas through written, spoken, and visual means.</b></p>		<p><b>(4) Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for mass media industries and/or graduate school.</b></p>
<p><b>(4) Evaluate and discuss the merit of published screenplays, as well as those written by your classmates.</b></p>	<p><b>(1) Listen and effectively communicate ideas through written, spoken, and visual means.</b></p>	<p><b>(2) Analyze significant aesthetic and ethical aspects of major works of literature produced by Anglophone writers: English, American, African American, African, and others.</b></p>	<p><b>(2) Observe First Amendment and ethical principles in the production of film and television content.</b></p> <p><b>(4) Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for mass media industries and/or graduate school.</b></p>
<p><b>(5) Develop materials necessary to market and sell your work to managers, agents, and production studios.</b></p>	<p><b>(7) Demonstrate positive interpersonal skills by adhering to the principles of freedom, justice, equality, fairness, tolerance, open dialogue, and concern for the common good.</b></p>		<p><b>(4-General Program Goal) Apply knowledge of mass media technologies consistent with the changes in mass media industries, including multimedia convergences.</b></p> <p><b>(2) Observe First Amendment and ethical principles in the production of film and television content.</b></p>

**Course Student Learning Opportunities**

*Dramatic/Comedic Scene*

Using action, dialogue, narrative instruction, and parenthetical asides, write a 2-3 page dramatic/comedic scene. The scene should involve at least two characters, and demonstrate conflict at either an interpersonal or extra-personal level.

*Analyses*

Outside of class, students will view and analyze a half-hour sit-com, a one-hour drama, and a feature-length film. They will distinguish between formal elements (e.g. inciting incident and obligatory scene), and judge their effectiveness within the context of the larger work.

*Mid-term Exam*

The mid-term exam assesses knowledge of critical vocabulary, and asks a series of open questions about the form and content of screenplays read in class.

*Short Film Screenplay*

Working in groups of three, students conceive and construct a 5-10 page short film screenplay. They will write a plot synopsis, character history, treatment, polished script, blurb, and tagline, all of which will be submitted in a portfolio at the end of the semester.

*Critical Response/Class Participation*

Class participation is vital to success in this class. During the second half of the semester, students will be workshopping their short film screenplays. As part of the workshop requirement, students will be expected to critically respond to classmates' work, and, if prompted, explain and defend their own.

**Grading****Direct Measures**

Scene	10%	(Scene Rubric)
Analyses (3)	15%	(Analysis Rubric)
Mid-term	15%	
Short Film Screenplay	50%	(Screenplay Rubric)
Synopsis	5%	
Character History	5%	
Treatment	10%	
Script	20%	
Blurb	5%	
Tagline	5%	
Critical Response/Class Participation	10%	

**Writing Conference**

Writers generally make improvements when they have someone to talk to about their writing. Class time will be important and useful, but students will schedule at least one conference with the instructor outside of class. This will enable a discussion of any problems with a specific assignment.

## Course Schedule

- Week 1 Introduction to Course  
*Assignment:* Read Ch. 1 in Field, “What is a Screenplay?” pp. 7-18, and Ch. 3, “Character,” pp. 26-34.
- Week 2 The Elements of Screenwriting 1  
*Assignment:* Read Ch. 10 in Field, “The Scene,” pp. 132-157, and Ch. 13, “Screenplay Form,” pp. 180-204.
- Week 3 The Elements of Screenwriting 2: The Sequel  
*Assignment:* Write Dramatic/Comedic Scene.
- Week 4 The Half-hour Sit-com  
*Assignment:* View and analyze a half-hour sit-com of your choice.
- Week 5 The One-hour Drama  
*Assignment:* View and analyze a one-hour drama of your choice.
- Week 6 The Feature-length film  
*Assignment:* Read Ch. 6 in Field, “Endings and Beginnings,” pp. 59-73, and Ch. 9, “The Plot Point,” pp. 114-132.
- Week 7 The Feature-length film: Director’s Cut  
*Assignment:* View and analyze a feature-length film of your choice.
- Week 8 Mid-term Week  
*Assignment:* Read Ch. 16 in Field, “On Collaboration,” pp. 230-242, and Ch. 4, “Building a Character,” pp. 34-44.
- Week 9 The Short Film  
*Assignment:* Plot synopsis due; read Ch. 8 in Field, “The Sequence,” pp. 95-114.
- Week 10 Bride of the Short Film  
*Assignment:* Character Histories and Treatment due

- Week 11      Short Film Screenplay Workshop  
*Assignment:* Critical Responses
- Week 12      Short Film Screenplay Workshop  
*Assignment:* Critical Responses
- Week 13      The Business of Screenwriting  
*Assignment:* Read Ch. 17 in Field, “After It’s Written,” pp. 242-254.
- Week 14      Black Cinema: That Was Then, This Is Now
- Week 15      Conferences  
*Assignment:* Assemble Short Film Screenplay Portfolio.
- Week 16      Roll Credits

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Lincoln University uses the class method of teaching, which assumes that each student has something to contribute and something to gain by attending class. It further assumes that there is much more instruction absorbed in the classroom than can be tested on examinations. Therefore, students are expected to attend all regularly scheduled class meetings and should exhibit good faith in this regard.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES STATEMENT:**

Lincoln University is committed to non-discrimination of students with disabilities and therefore ensures that they have equal access to higher education, programs, activities, and services in order to achieve full participation and integration into the University. In keeping with the philosophies of the mission and vision of the University, the Office of Student Support Services, through the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Program, provides an array of support services and reasonable accommodations for students with special needs and/or disabilities as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The Services for Students with Disabilities Program seeks to promote awareness and a campus environment in which accommodating students with special needs and/or disabilities is natural extension of the University’s goal.

**UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT:**

Students are responsible for proper conduct and integrity in all of their scholastic work. They must follow a professor's instructions when completing tests, homework, and laboratory reports, and they must ask for clarification if the instructions are not clear. In general, students should not give or receive aid when taking exams, or exceed the time limitations specified by the professor. In seeking the truth, in learning to think critically, and in preparing for a life of constructive service, honesty is imperative. Honesty in the classroom and in the preparation of papers is, therefore, expected of all students. Each student has the responsibility to submit work that is uniquely his or her own. All of this work must be

done in accordance with established principles of academic integrity.

**Late Work**

All work must be submitted on time and during class. Late work will be accepted with a penalty of 1/3 of a full grade for each calendar day that the work is late (including weekends). If you are unable to turn in an assignment for emergency reasons, please inform me either by phone or email. The decision of whether or not I accept late work, regardless of excuse, is solely mine.