

ENG545 Creative Writing: Performance Writing **(3 credit hours)** **Course Syllabus**

Course Description

This course develops skills in the art and craft of telling stories through film, e.g., screenwriting. Through writing tightly focused exercises, scenes, and a script for a short film, students will learn correct screenplay format, develop a “feel” for screenwriting style, enhance their powers of description, their skills in writing dialogue and action, and in constructing scenes and plot. The overarching emphasis of the course is on learning how to translate mental moving images (the film that the writer sees in his or her head and all it encompasses or evokes), to words on the page in a way that those words create approximately the same (or at least very similar) moving images in the reader’s mind.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate skills in visual storytelling.
2. Recognize and apply appropriate dramatic structure, style, characterization, description, sound, etc., in relation to the subject matter of the story.
3. Apply thoughtful approaches to screenplay analysis and writing critiques.
4. Apply knowledge of professional screenplay format.
5. Identify and employ filmmaking/screenwriting terminology.
6. Describe and identify types of short films.
7. Apply knowledge and skills to writing of short film screenplays.

Required Textbook(s) and Resources

Riley, C. & Zorn, P. (2021). *The Hollywood Standard: The Complete and Authoritative Guide to Script Format & Style, 3rd Ed.* Studio City, CA: Michael Weise Productions.

Digital versions of your books are included automatically as part of your course fees. You can access your book through the DragonACCESS tool below.

Additionally, you will need to obtain software that allows or enables you to write your assignments in proper screenplay format. You can use Word to type up and format your scripts if you follow the formatting rules that will be covered in the beginning of the course - but it is not particularly easy and can be time consuming. Many screenwriters use special programs, such as Final Draft or Celtx, though these have varying price ranges. Here are 9 good software tools that you can choose from (some are free; others only have a free trial, see Studiobinder). Please note that if you use a different program than Word, you need to be able to save your exercises as a Word document or a .pdf document so the rest of us can read it (not everyone has Final Draft or Celtx). Also note that you will not receive technical training on software. It is up to you to learn how to use whatever software program you choose to write your scripts.

Be sure to also review the weekly **Explore** sections for additional library or web resources. For access to databases, research help, and writing tips, visit the [Tiffin University Library](#). You might consider registering for one of the library's many webinars on library research, source evaluation, copyright, and other topics, at the [Library Events - Upcoming Events](#) web page. For further assistance email a librarian, at: library@tiffin.edu.

Recommended

Field, S. (2018). *The Essential Screenplay (3-Book Bundle)*. Penguin Random House Education.

Time Commitment

Effective time management is possibly the single most critical element to your academic success. To do well in this online class you should plan your time wisely to maximize your learning through the completion of readings, discussions, and assignments. Because of our accelerated, seven-week term, TU online courses are designed with the expectation that you dedicate a little over **six (6)** hours per credit hour to course activities and preparation **each week**. For example, for successful completion of a three-credit, seven-week online course you should reserve roughly **twenty (20) hours per week**.

To help plan your time and keep on track toward successful course completion, note the distinctive rhythm of assignment due dates:

1. All times assume Eastern Time (GMT-4).
2. Weeks begin at 12:00 a.m. ET on Monday and end at 11:55 p.m. ET on Sunday.
3. Unless otherwise noted, initial assignments or discussion posts are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Wednesdays**.
4. Additional assignments or follow-up discussion posts are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Saturdays, and**

5. Major assignments and reflections are typically due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Sundays**.

Learning Activities

In this course, students will be completing activities such as character development, specialty scene writing, dialogue activities, and more, that are designed to build screenwriting skills. The final project will be to write a complete short screenplay using all of the techniques learned in the class. In every week, students will also be workshopping their assignments with their peers.

Grading

The chart below identifies the individual contributions from each type of activity, per week.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Total
Discussions Activity 1.1 (n/a) Activity 1.2 (25) Activity 1.3 (25)	Workshop Activity 2.1 (50)	Workshop Activity 3.1 (50)	Workshop Activity 4.1 (50)	Workshop Activity 5.1 (50)	Workshop Activity 6.1 (50)	Workshop Activity 7.1 (75)	375
--	Assignments Activity 2.2 (75) Activity 2.3 (80)	Assignments Activity 3.2 (80)	Assignments Activity 4.2 (80)	Assignments Activity 5.2 (80)	Assignments Activity 6.2 (80)	Final Project Activity 7.2 (150)	
50	205	130	130	130	130	225	1000

Grading Scale

A: 90-100%

B: 80-89%

C: 70-79%

F: <70%

Please see the [Academic Bulletin](#) for grade appeal information.

Course Schedule and Weekly Checklist

Start Here

- MON: Activity 1.1: Introductory Forum

Week 1

- WED: Activity 1.2: Introduction to Screenwriting - Initial Post
- WED: Activity 1.3: The Act of Writing - Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 1.2: Introduction to Screenwriting - Secondary Posts
- SAT: Activity 1.3: The Act of Writing - Secondary Posts

Week 2

- WED: Activity 2.1: Peer Review - Favorite Scene - Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 2.1: Peer Review - Favorite Scene - Secondary Posts
- SUN: Activity 2.2: Finding Your Story
- SUN: Activity 2.3: Favorite Scene

Week 3

- WED: Activity 3.1: Peer Review - Character - Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 3.1: Peer Review - Character - Secondary Posts
- SUN: Activity 3.2: Character Development & POV

Week 4

- WED: Activity 4.1: Peer Review - Dialogue - Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 4.1: Peer Review - Dialogue - Secondary Posts
- SUN: Activity 4.2: Show, Don't Tell & Dialogue as Action

Week 5

- WED: Activity 5.1: Peer Review - Monologue & Montage - Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 5.1: Peer Review - Monologue & Montage - Secondary Posts
- SUN: Activity 5.2: Monologue & Montage

Week 6

- WED: Activity 6.1: Peer Review - Writing Conflict - Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 6.1: Peer Review - Writing Conflict - Secondary Posts
- SUN: Activity 6.2: Writing Conflict

Week 7

- WED: Activity 7.1: Peer Review - Final Project - Initial Post
- SAT: Activity 7.1: Peer Review - Final Project - Secondary Posts
- SUN: Activity 7.2: Final Project

Tips for Success

Online learning requires self-discipline and self-direction. As seekers of the truth, we should be willing to challenge one another's academic work in a spirit of respectful comradery. Your course is a place for you to grow as you benefit from the expertise, experience, and diverse perspectives of your instructor and peers. Constructive feedback will challenge you to stretch your own thinking, thereby expanding your knowledge and understanding.

To get the most out of your learning experience, you should actively engage (participate) in **ALL** course activities. Course elements are arranged chronologically. To complete a week, simply work your way "down the page" through all of the course materials and activities.

Your Instructor Will Expect You to:

- Thoroughly review orientation materials (Start Here) within the first 48 hours of the term.
- Monitor your TU email account **daily** for important updates and announcements.
- Take ownership of your learning experience and act in a proactive, self-directed manner. That means:
 - Fully participate in all learning activities.
 - Complete assignments as described in rubrics or other instructions.
 - Submit all work on time and in the specified format (e.g. APA format for citations).
 - Utilize and incorporate instructor provided feedback to improve your work.
 - Ask questions so you can better understand course material or assignments.
 - Use the highest standards of intellectual honesty and integrity. For details, see the TU Library guide: [Digital Literacy: Netiquette and Internet Safety](#).

- Treat others respectfully and demonstrate "netiquette" (online politeness and respectfulness) at all times. TU celebrates cultural uniqueness and expects all students to be considerate and thoughtful throughout their learning experiences.

You Should Expect Your Instructors to:

- Post an introductory announcement/email at the beginning of each week to provide updates and help you prepare for the week's activities.
- Maintain an active and engaged presence in all course activities and throughout the course.
- Respond to your emailed questions within 48 hours, if not sooner.
- Clearly communicate any absences or expected non-participation due to extenuating circumstances. For example, "I will be traveling to attend a funeral this week and may not be able to respond to questions or participate in forums for a couple of days."
- When grading your work:
 - clearly indicate their grading approach (what they like to see in submitted work as well as what types of errors they tend to penalize more harshly),
 - thoroughly review and evaluate your submissions in a timely manner (in less than 5 days for most assignments), and
 - provide constructive feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of your work with suggestions on how you can improve your performance on future assignments.
- Advocate for your success as a learner and help guide you toward successful completion of the course activities and most importantly, attainment of the course learning outcomes.

Accommodations (Disability Services)

The Office of Disability Services supports the institutional commitment to diversity by providing educational opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities through accessible programs and services in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. If you need reasonable accommodations due to a documented disability, contact the Office for Equity, Access, & Opportunity via email at disabilityservices@tiffin.edu or by calling 419-448-3021.

Technical Support

For Moodle support, either email moodlesupport@tiffin.edu or call the 24/7 Technical Support Call Center at 855-664-1200 (3430, Option 2, from on-campus). For non-Moodle

support, contact the Tiffin University ITS helpdesk at the number above or submit a [support ticket](#).

Veterans

The Veteran and Military Resource Center assists veterans, active Military, and spouses of current service members in utilizing their education benefits. VMRC provides information regarding benefit processes and procedures, as well as support in navigating the transition from military to academic life by facilitating connections with the appropriate support services on campus. More information can be found on the Veteran and Military Resource Center website, at <http://www.tiffin.edu/va>.

Additional Support

If you need to consult an academic advisor refer to TU's [Meet the Team](#) page. For information about TU's peer tutoring program see the Murphy Center's [Tutoring Policies and Procedures](#) page.

Comments or Concerns

TU's online programs are designed to be student *driven*: to empower you with a voice and stake in your learning. Our courses feature multiple and varied ways that you can share feedback, and we invite you to become an active voice and help drive our improvement efforts. In addition to providing in-course feedback, we encourage you to submit questions or comments directly to the online team at online@tiffin.edu.