



Universidad
de Navarra

Introduction to screenwriting

Subject guide 2024-25

OVERVIEW

- **Degree:** Comunicación Audiovisual + Screen Studies
- **Module/Area:** Module 3 (Screenwriting), Area 1 (Introduction)
- **ECTS:** 6
- **Year/Semester:** 2nd year, 2nd semester (Winter-Spring)
- **Type:** Mandatory
- **Instructor:** Pablo Castrillo (Associate Professor) (pcastrillo@unav.es)
- **Language:** English
- **Class Hours:**
 - Lecture: Tuesdays, 3.30-5.15pm (classroom 12)
 - Lecture: Thursdays 12-1.45pm (classroom 5)
 - Workshops: Select Fridays (see Course Calendar), 10-11.45am (room 1540)

LEARNING OUTCOMES (Competencies)

COURSE OUTCOMES

1. Students will understand the nature and form of dramatic writing.
2. Students will become familiarized with the professional standards of script format.
3. Students will learn how to use the essential tools and structures of audiovisual storytelling.
4. Students will understand the different phases of the screenwriting process, as well as the role that a script plays in the film and television industry.

DEGREE OUTCOMES

1. SKILLS

- RA10 - Students should learn how to apply their acquired knowledge to their job or work vocation in a professional manner, and make use of the skills usually demonstrated by elaborating and defending authorized arguments as well as by solving problems within their area of study.
- RA12 - To correctly express their acquired knowledge and ideas in the field of audio-visual communication, both in oral and written form.
- RA16 - To identify and apply the elements that are specific to the construction of the screenplay.

2. COMPETENCIES

- RA19 - Que los estudiantes tengan la capacidad de reunir e interpretar datos relevantes (normalmente dentro de su área de estudio) para emitir juicios que incluyan una reflexión sobre temas relevantes de índole social, científica o ética.

SYLLABUS



Universidad
de Navarra

1. Introduction: what is screenwriting?
2. Dramatic writing for the screen
3. The screenwriting process
4. Dramatic conflict
5. Characters
6. Structure
7. Devices and conventions
8. Dialogue and subtext
9. An introduction to the art and business of adaptation
10. Pitching and the script development process
11. Writing the short film
12. The entertainment industry and the screenwriter's career

COURSEWORK

Lectures: 46 hours

Screenwriting theory, film and TV case-studies, in-class creative exercises

Workshops: 14 hours

Discussion of assignments, exercise reviews, and analysis of screenings

Writing exercises: 42 hours

Writing exercises assigned on the workshops; final assignment

Personal study: 38 hours

Mandatory readings, lecture notes, assigned viewings and screenplays

Tutoring: 0,5 hours

(TOTAL: 150 hours)

GRADING

MAY SESSION (ORDINARY)

Attendance and participation: 10% (1 point)

Attendance to all lectures and workshops is mandatory. Active engagement in the class discussion will be especially taken into consideration.

Practice: 40% (4 points)



Universidad de Navarra

- Writing assignments from workshops: 20% (2 points)
- Final project consisting of a short film script: 20% (2 points)

Theory: 50% (5 points)

Final exam based on assigned readings, class notes, and viewings analyses.

* IMPORTANT: a passing grade must be achieved in the final exam to pass the course.

JUNE SESSION (RETAKE)

Students who fail the course in the ordinary session in May will have to take a final exam for the entirety of their grade in the June session.

OFFICE HOURS

By appointment, scheduled via e-mail: pcastrillo@unav.es

Office #2561, Department of Film, TV & Media

Sánchez-Bella Building, 2nd floor

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mandatory Readings

Texts assigned each week constitute the mandatory readings of the course. These will be posted on the course website (please refer to the "Readings" section.)

Assigned films are mandatory. Reading the corresponding screenplays for each viewing is also required.

Recommended Bibliography

Balló, J., Pérez, X. (1997). *La semilla inmortal : los argumentos universales del cine*. Barcelona: Anagrama.

Eszterhas, J. (2006). *The Devil's Guide to Hollywood: the screenwriter as God!* New York: St. Martin's Press.

De Rosendo, T. & Gatell, J. (2015). *Objetivo Writers' Room: las aventuras de dos guionistas españoles en Hollywood*. Barcelona: Alba.

Field, S. (1979). *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*. New York: Delta Book.

Forsyth, M. (2013). *The Elements of Eloquence. How to Turn the Perfect English Phrase*. London: Icon.



Universidad de Navarra

Goldman, W. (1985). *Adventures in The Screen Trade: a personal view of Hollywood and screenwriting*. New York: Warner Books.

Gulino, P. (2004). *Screenwriting: The Sequence Approach*. New York: Continuum.

Iglesias, K. (2005). *Writing for Emotional Impact: advanced dramatic techniques to attract, engage, and fascinate the reader from beginning to end*. Livermore, CA: WingSpan Press.

Kleon, A. (2012). *Steal like an Artist : 10 Things Nobody Told You about Being Creative*. New York: Workman Pub. Co.

Mackendrick, A. (2005). *On Film-making: An Introduction to the Craft of the Director*. Edited and with an introduction by Paul Cronin. Faber & Faber.

McKee, R. (1999). *Story : Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting*. New York: Regan Books.

Norman, M. (2007). *What Happens Next: A history of American Screenwriting*. New York: Harmony Books.

Palmer, S. (2008). *Good in a Room: How to Sell Yourself (and Your Ideas) and Win Over Any Audience*. New York: Crown Business.

Pressfield, S. (2012). *The War of Art: break through the blocks and win your inner creative battles*. New York: Black Irish Entertainment.

Riley, C. (2009). *The Hollywood Standard: the complete and authoritative guide to script format and style*. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions.

Russin, R. & Downs, W.M. (2000). *Screenplay: Writing the picture*. Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers.

Sánchez-Escalonilla, A. (2014). *Estrategias de guión cinematográfico: el proceso de creación de una historia*. Barcelona: Ariel.

Snyder, B. (2005). *Save The Cat!: the last book on screenwriting you'll ever need*. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions.

Storr, W. (2020). *The Science of Storytelling*. London: William Collins

Strunk, W. & White, E.B. (1979). *The Elements of Style*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000.

Yorke, John (2014). *Into the Woods: How Stories Work and Why We Tell Them*. London: Penguin.

Screenwriting Software

Proper formatting is a minimum requirement of this course. The choice of one software or another falls under your responsibility (feel free to use open-code suites, Microsoft Word... anything as long as you deliver a professionally formatted script).

However, it is generally advisable to use a specialized screenwriting software. There are [a number of free \(or freemium\) options available](#), each with their own pros and cons. The free



Universidad
de Navarra

license of [Fade In](#) has delivered functional results in this course. Another option with full features at no cost —albeit less user-friendly— is [Trelby](#).

Screenwriting Websites

Go Into The Story <http://gointothestory.blcklst.com/>

John August <http://johnaugust.com/>

Script Magazine <http://www.scriptmag.com/>

The Script Lab <http://thescriptlab.com/>

Wordplay <http://www.wordplayer.com/>

Screenwriting Services & Competitions

Academy Nicholl Fellowships <http://www.oscars.org/nicholl>

American Zoetrope Screenplay Contest <https://www.zoetrope.com/contests/>

Austin Film Festival Screenplay Competition <https://austinfilmfestival.com/submit/screenplay-and-teleplay-submissions/>

The Black List <https://blcklst.com/>

Screencraft <https://screencraft.org/>

Writers Guild of America West (WGAW) <http://www.wga.org/>

Screenplay Databases

Script Slug <https://www.scriptslug.com/>

Go Into the Story – Screenplays <https://gointothestory.blcklst.com/tagged/screenplays>

The Internet Movie Script Database (IMSDBb) <http://www.imsdb.com/>

Screenplays for You <https://sfy.ru/>