



Birkbeck Internet Screenwriting Workshop

Introductory Course

Autumn/Spring 2006-7





Screenwriting On The Internet 2006-7

Dear Screenwriter,

Thank you for your interest in the Screenwriting Workshop course run with Birkbeck College, University of London. These courses are accredited by the University and complement the successful evening workshops Birkbeck continues to provide as part of its Certificate in Media Practice.

This is the **tenth** year that these Internet courses have been run with Birkbeck. Their continued success is testament to the original belief that workshopping on the Internet can be a very rewarding experience.

The courses are most suitable for students who cannot attend workshops but still want the feedback and support workshops can provide. The numbers of students are restricted **to a maximum of 10**. Our experience is that greater numbers reduce students' involvement in distance learning courses. All workshops are recorded as transcripts so you will never miss a lesson.

In a change, the course offered this year forms part of the Certificate of Media Practice and runs over two terms. This allows students to explore screenwriting to a greater depth than the previous Introductory course.

Before joining the course can we recommend that you check out the Chat demo (see Testing on the Web site) to ensure that your current set up can access Chat.

Students on previous courses have been based in throughout the UK, Austria, France, Denmark, Germany, Holland, the Middle East and Japan; so if you have web access, why not join us. Queries and applications for the courses should be directed to Birkbeck (details on the back).

Melanie Heard-White and John A Hobson



Course Schedule

Screenwriting on the Internet: Introduction

Covers the skills and techniques needed to create an effective script. You will explore and analyse ideas, formats, story, characterisation, structure, conflict, plot, scene, atmosphere, dialogue, visual style, subtext, rhythm and pace. You will also be encouraged to develop professional writing habits.

Thu 28 Sep, 7.30pm-9.30pm

24 meetings

£220 (£110)

Melanie Heard-White, BA, MA

FFME025UFCB [Central enrolment](#)

30 CATS points at Level

10 Students

Tutor Melanie Heard-White MA



COURSE OUTLINE

This is a practical module aimed at anyone who is keen to write screenplays. Previous screenwriting experience is not required, however, the ability to write in English is.

These classes will provide a supportive and thought-provoking environment offering students the opportunity to develop their imagination and relate their storylines to their own experiences and interpretation of life. For this is what makes your work original and unique and this is the side of your writing I am most keen to develop.

During the first term we will explore sources of narrative inspiration, approaches to plotting and ways to create original and credible characters. We will also focus on the craft of screenwriting, i.e. writing character-specific dialogue and creating dynamic scenes.

The second term will be geared towards students writing a ten minute film. We will seek to strengthen your screenwriting skills and critical awareness by reading professional scripts and analysing film structures. Approaches to plotting and characterisation will be examined in greater depth as we explore writing styles relating to different genres, i.e. comedy, romance, thrillers etc.

During the second term there will be an opportunity to have your ten minute screenplay read by the class and to be provided with feedback.

We will round off the course by examining pitching and marketing routes for your short film.

ASSESSMENTS

Students will be involved in a series of class exercises. For example, writing a premise, a character profile, treatment outline and a short scene. Two pieces of work from these class exercises should be included in your portfolio of work. However, this work will not be awarded a mark.

Students will be required to write a ten minute short film. This script will constitute 75% of your overall mark.

Students will also be required to write a 700 word self-evaluation. This will constitute 25% of your overall mark.



ONLINE REQUIREMENTS

Access to the internet
Broadband is not essential

This option covers the same syllabus as the face to face introduction to screenwriting programme of study run by Birkbeck College with one main difference: you can participate in it from the comfort of your own home. The sessions are live, synchronised, and conducted in real-time. The classes provide a supportive and stimulating environment wherein lecturer and students can ask and answer questions, participate in discussions, receive feedback on works in progress, crack jokes etc. The medium of communication is written texts and there is no time delay.



COURSE SYLLABUS

Week 1 Introduction, class aims and overview.

Week 2 Story and structure.

Week 3 Character development

Week 4 Characterisation continued.

BOOKS R. MCKEE, Story, (Methuen, 1999)

K. DANCYGER & RUSH, Alternative Scriptwriting,
(Focal Press, 1996)

Week 5 Workshop

Week 6 Treatments: we explore their function in the industry and how to write them.

Week 7 Treatments: we examine professional examples.

Week 8 Script layout

Week 9 Scenes: we examine their function, length and ways to enter and exit them.

Week 10 Screen language: we explore a variety of screen techniques including editing, settings, mise en scene etc..

Week 11 Dialogue: we examine ways to write character-specific dialogue.

Week 12 We explore approaches to plotting.

Week 12 Submit 2 pieces of work for your portfolio.

This can be a premise, character profile, treatment outline or a short scene.

CHRISTMAS BREAK

Week 13 Recap elements concerning screenwriting structure and techniques . Outline the aims of this term's course. Reading scripts.



Week 14 We study the ten minute screenplay format and develop individual story premises.

BOOKS

W.H. PHILLIPS, Writing Short Scripts, (Syracuse University Press, 1991)

P. COOPER & K. DANCYGER, Writing The Short Film, (Focal Press, 1994)

Week 15 Writing a short screenplay. We broaden our studies and start to examine various genres. We begin with comedy.

Week 16 Workshop session.

Week 17 Writing a short screenplay. We examine the thriller genre.

Week 18 Writing a short screenplay. We examine the romance genre.

Week 19 Writing a short screenplay. We explore ways to write drama.

Week 20 Workshop session.

Week 21 Re-writes: we examine which areas to focus on and how to go about it.

Week 21 **Assessment: a ten minute screenplay**

Week 22 Writing a short screenplay. We examine the horror genre.

BOOKS

L. SEGER, How To Make A Good Script Great, (Samuel French Trade, 1995)

Week 23 **Assessment: self-evaluation log. This should be 700 words in length.**

Week 23 Workshop session.

Week 24 Pitching and marketing screenplays.



Melanie Heard-White M.A.

I have worked as a script consultant and received two film commissions. I know how hard getting started is. I see my role as screenwriting lecturer as one of developing students' skills in the craft of screenwriting and helping new writers to get started in the industry. Former students have written for television, won the Carlton Award for Comedy and BAFTA Best Short Film.



Contacts

For further details including payment methods (Credit Cards can now be taken), course availability, please quote course no & contact Birkbeck:

Phone: 020 7631 6667

Fax: 020 7 631 6683

Write: Faculty of Continuing Education
Birkbeck College
26 Russell Square
London
WC1B 5DQ

Course Reference **FFME025UFCB**

WEB

Alternatively, go to [Central Enrolment](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/ce/courses/enrolment/ce.shtml)
<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/ce/courses/enrolment/ce.shtml>

For Technical queries, please contact John Hobson

EMail your query to John@xerif.com

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