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9-2013

MAR 210.01: Creation of Media Story

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Recommended Citation

Roos, Aaron A., "MAR 210.01: Creation of Media Story" (2013). *Syllabi*. 510.

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SYLLABUS: MAR 210-01 - CREATION OF MEDIA STORY – Fall 2013

MONDAYS & WEDNESDAYS 9:10am-10:30am

INSTRUCTOR: Aaron Roos

OFFICE: MG228 / hours by appointment

E-MAIL: aaron.roos@umontana.edu

OVERVIEW

In this course, students learn the critical skills necessary to create and develop ideas from original conceptions through the pre-production process for the short film. Essential to this process, students will be given the opportunity to hone their voice as an artist through a series of activities and exercises, ultimately working towards answering the question As an artist/filmmaker, what do I want to say? A critical component of this course is the student's ability to create and write in strong VISUAL IMAGES that tell a story. This means telling the story through shots that clearly articulate human actions and interactions as well as the situations, settings, places and moods essential to the story's impact. Throughout this course, students will be expected to gain a basic understanding of major components of the PRE-PRODUCTION process, as well as fundamental skills essential to film production.

These include (but are certainly not limited to):

- Idea and concept development
- Basic Screenwriting techniques and formatting for short film using Final Draft
- Rudiments of Dramatic Action critical to story telling
- Blocking – where to move actors
- The Shot – where to put the camera
- Basic Film Grammar
- Working with Shot Plots and Story Boards
- Casting, Working with Actors, and Rehearsing
- Working effectively as a member of a production team

- Basic organizational preparations for the shoot:
 - Scene Breakdown
 - Shot List
 - Preparing for Camera Set-ups
 - Selecting Locations

GRADING

Grading for the course will be based on the teacher's assessment, through assignments, screenplays, exercises and projects, of each student's growth in understanding and demonstrating the ability to effectively use the basic concepts and skills referred to above.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory. Each student can miss three (3) class periods. Four or more absences will result in withdrawal from the class. Anyone who uses either a cell phone or the lab computers for the purpose of emailing, social networking, or other non-class related activities during class hours could have their physical attendance stricken for that day.

PARTICIPATION

Each student is expected to attend class, complete assignments by established deadlines, work creatively as a collaborator with other team members, live up to commitments and develop verbal skills necessary for expressing ideas and thoughts in a clear and concise way. Students are expected to read fellow students' work outside of class, and to then provide constructive and critical thoughts (workshop) on that work in class. As part of the workshop process, students are expected to be open to constructive and critical thoughts about their own work as well.

THINGS YOU WILL NEED

Final Draft (Screenwriting Software)

Production Notebook (Will be discussed in-depth in class)

Flash drive or External hard drive

All students are responsible for keeping and developing a NOTEBOOK that will include all class schedules, handouts, assignments, class notes and paperwork associated with this class. This notebook will also contain

complete notes and work you do as part of a production team member during the class. From time to time, students might be required to make copies of their writings for members of the class.

COMMUNICATION

Moodle and Grizmail are the preferred method of mass communication about course updates. As such students are required to use Moodle and Grizmail on a regular basis. Please list the course name (MAR210) in the subject line of all emails.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Required Text: The Tools of Screenwriting: A Writer's Guide to the Craft and Elements of a Screenplay by David Howard and Edward Mabley, ISBN: 0-312-11908-9

*All other reading assignments will be provided electronically.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

All script assignments must be completed in Final Draft. This software is the industry standard and as such, will be the standard for this course. Please label projects with your last name_assignment name.pdf (ex. Hale_A3.pdf)

PROJECTS

Each person will write, workshop and create a preproduction binder for an original story idea. In addition, a pitch presentation will be delivered to the entire class as a final project.

SUGGESTED READING

Goldberg, Natalie. Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within. Boston, MA: Shambhala. 2005.

Katz, Steven D. Film Directing Shot by Shot: Visualizing from Concept to Screen. Stoneham, MA: Focal Press, 1991.

Lumet, Sidney. Making Movies. New York, NY: Knopf Inc., 1995. McKee, Robert. Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the principles of Screenwriting. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1997.

Mamet, David. *On Directing Film*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1991.
Murch, Walter. *In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing*. Los Angeles, CA: Silman-James Press, 2001.

Seeger, Linda. *Making a Good Script Great*. Hollywood, CA: Samuel French, 1994.