
“The Hero’s Journey is... a set of principles that govern the conduct of life and the world of storytelling the way physics and chemistry govern the physical world.”

- Christopher Vogler, *The Writer’s Journey*



Course number(s): CMS/THEA 3820

Screenwriting

Fall / 2015 / 3.0 credit hours, online



Instructor: Jonathan M. Harris, MFA

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Course Website: [Course Website in GA View](#)

Faculty Website: <http://faculty.clayton.edu/jharris91>

Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 10:00a.m.-11:00a.m., 2:00p.m.-4p.m. and by appointment. I’ll be in my office on campus AND available via office phone, text message via Google voice, and chat via Blackboard Online Collaborate.

You can access our course in GeorgiaView by clicking on the link above. You will need to login with your CSU username and password. Don’t know what your username and password are?

[Click here.](#)

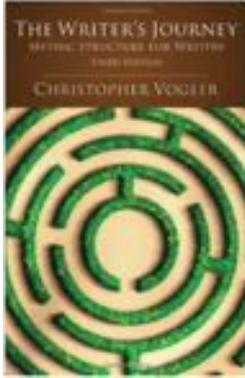
Communication

Please feel free to e-mail questions, concerns, ideas or just to check in whenever you like. I will try to respond during the week within 24 hours. I may not respond during the weekend but rest assured, I will get back with you during the week. Please include information about which class you are in when e-mailing, thanks! Also, please be aware that all students and faculty are expected to use the official CSU e-mail system for security reasons and to abide by federal regulations. During office hours I will be available face to face in my office or via phone, Blackboard Collaborate, text message, e-mail, etc.

If you have a course-related question that may help out other students in the class, please post it in the Questions for Instructor discussion forum in our class. Thanks!

Introduction

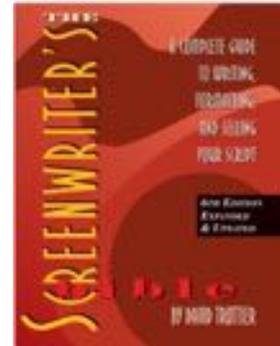
This course will be 100% online. All lectures, discussions, and assignments will be conducted and delivered online. To get started with the class, please find the **START HERE** module on the first page of our course site on Georgia View. After that, you will work your way through a series of videos, film clips, readings and discussions each week. You may already know that when taking an online class, it's very important to stay up to date with the syllabus and forward progress in the course, thanks! All lectures, assignments, discussion questions should be posted by 8a.m. Monday morning each week. All assignments for the week will be due by the following Sunday night at 11:59p.m. Thanks!



Textbooks

Vogler, Chandler. *The Writer's Journey, third edition*. ISBN: 978-1932907360. *This text is available [in the CSU bookstore](#).*

Trottier, David. *The Screenwriter's Bible, 6th edition*. ISBN: 978-1935247104. *This text [is available in the bookstore](#).*



Course Catalog Description

In this course, students will study the mechanics of screenwriting. The course explores dramatic structure including film language, story, and character development. Students will analyze and apply various techniques in writing for the screen.

Course Prerequisites:

CMS 2100 with a grade of “C” or better. AND
CMS 2010 with a grade of “C” or better.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

Students will learn to:

Use industry-standard screenplay format.

Understand screenwriting structure.

Develop basic competency writing short screenplays.

Identify and use storytelling elements in their work.

Program Outcomes

The following link provides the Communication and Media Studies learning outcomes:

<http://www.clayton.edu/vpa/cms/programoverview>

This course provides support for the following CMS learning outcome:

“Apply media aesthetics to the production of communication vehicles using appropriate technologies”

Course Format

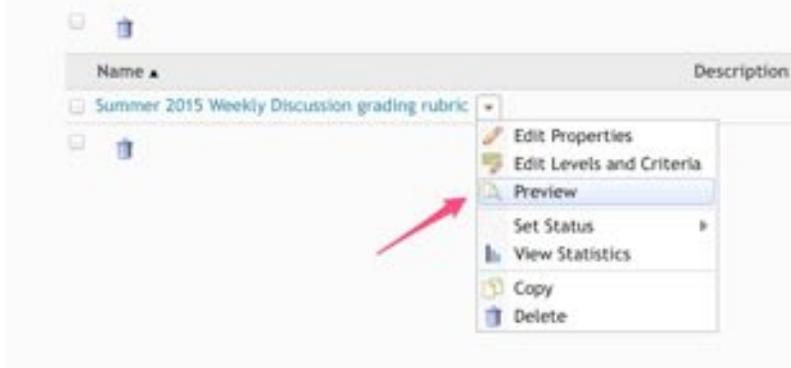
Fully Online.

Course Assignments/Assessments

Please check D2I for a complete list of assignments and assessments for the course. In general, students can expect the following:

-Weekly Quizzes over the reading/lecture due each Sunday night by 11:59p.m. **The first quiz will be due this coming Sunday by 11:59p.m. so let's get started! :-)** Don't worry, the first quiz is over the syllabus, not the material for the course. You're already doing your homework for the quiz, great job!

-Thorough responses in Discussion group to weekly discussion questions. [Please see the Discussion Guidelines](#), posted in Georgia View and [view the discussion grading rubric here](#) or under the Rubrics menu at the top of our course page. **Be sure to click the black down arrow next to the rubric name and click PREVIEW to view it.** Thanks!



-Periodic timed online exams including a midterm and final exam. All exams will be open notes, open book, but will require not only the recall of information, but the ability to think critically and synthesize information in short essay form. Please keep up with the readings and lectures as well as the discussions so you are prepared for the exams! They will require you to know specific films, vocabulary, and to reference scenes from the film clips or scripts each week so try not to fall behind if at all possible! :-)

Grade breakdown

Screenplays (I 10%, II 10%, III 10%, IV 10%)	40%
Midterm (15%) and Final (15%) examination	30%
Discussion Posts	15%
Online weekly quizzes	15%
TOTAL	100%

Grading Scale:

A	90-100%
B	80%-89%
C	70%-79%
D	60-69%
F	Below 60%

Mid-term Progress Report:

The mid-term grade in this course, which will be issued on October 6th, reflects approximately 30% of the entire course grade. Based on this grade, students may choose to withdraw from the course and receive a grade of "W." Students pursuing this option must fill out an official withdrawal form, available in the Office of the Registrar, or withdraw on-line using the Swan by mid-term, which occurs on October 9h. [Instructions for withdrawing are provided at this link.](#)

The last day to withdraw without academic accountability is October 9th, 2015.

Late Work

Late assignments will be penalized with point deductions determined by the instructor but will not exceed a 10% penalty per day. Please communicate with the instructor regarding delays in turning assignments in on time.

Grades and turnaround time for assignments

Please be patient. I know you will work hard on the assignments in this course. Please know that I will be diligent in returning graded assignments (such as screenplays or exams with long answer or essay questions) as quickly as possible. This usually translates into a week after the deadline date. It may be quicker sometimes and at times it may take a bit longer. Quizzes without short answer or long answer questions will be auto-graded by D2L so that you have feedback more quickly on how you're doing. **I will release the grades for the quizzes each week AFTER the due date has passed.**

Computer/Technology/Materials Requirements

You are required to have ready access throughout the semester to a notebook computer that meets faculty-approved hardware and software requirements for your academic program. For further information on CSU's Official Notebook Computer Policy, please go to <http://itpchoice.clayton.edu/policy.htm> You must have a stable internet connection which is available to you frequently in order to access the course and keep up with assignments. Please see an exhaustive list of [technology requirements here](#).

Supplemental

The book, [The Writer's Journey, has a companion website](#) with additional materials including many of the helpful images and outlines from the book! It also has an outline of Maureen Murdock's work on the Heroine's Journey.

Required Skills

Students enrolled in this course should possess the following technology skills:

- The ability to access information via the Internet
- The ability to use GeorgiaView (WebCT/LMS) and associated tools, including discussion boards, chat rooms, online testing and assignment submission features
- The ability to use word processing software and to save in alternate formats
- The ability to send, receive and include attachments using email
- The ability to demonstrate netiquette (appropriate online conduct)

Software

The following software is required in order to view course content and to participate in planned course activities. If you do not have this software currently loaded on your computer or are unsure, you can download the software for free by clicking on the following links:

Adobe Reader	
Flash Player	

Technical Support

HUB URL (http://thehub.clayton.edu/index.php?nav=hub_services)

Participation Requirements

Students are expected to participate in online discussions in a timely manner and to comment on at least one other student post each week. Please see the [Discussion Guidelines](#), posted on GeorgiaView, for additional information.

- Each week on Monday morning by 8a.m., students will have access to the next module in D2L and will work through the requirements for that week. This will include clips for film viewing, links to scripts, discussion postings, and quizzes and exams.
- The course week runs from Monday morning until Sunday at 11:59:59 p.m. EST. Please make sure that you have posted to all discussions and submitted all weekly assignments by this deadline. **No late discussion posts will be accepted for any reason. If you know something will delay your post, get the post in early.**

Working your way through the Course

Course modules will be assigned on a weekly basis according to the Course Schedule and include objectives, a lesson guide and expectations for completing homework

assignments. You are expected to actively participate in all aspects of the course. This includes completion of assigned readings, homework assignments, and tests or quizzes and participation in online discussions. Course weeks run Monday through Sunday, with Sunday at 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time as the deadline for making posts and submitting the week's assignments. All work assigned during the weekly course module(s) must be turned in by this deadline. It is suggested that you read through all course content in the week's assigned module(s) to get a feel for what is expected during the course week and to help you plan your time wisely.

You must post at least twice to the discussion boards as required by the weekly course modules. You are also expected to read all postings for the week's discussions.

Online Etiquette (Netiquette)

Discussion, chat, and e-mail spaces within this course are for class purposes only, unless otherwise stated. Please remember to conduct yourself collegially and professionally. Unlike in the classroom setting, what you say in the online environment is documented and not easily erased or forgotten.

The following guidelines apply:

- Avoid using ALL CAPS, sarcasm, and language that could come across as strong or offensive.

- Use proper punctuation, grammar and be sure to edit your contribution before posting.
- Read all postings before posting your responses to discussion topics so as to not unnecessarily repeat information.
- Keep chat comments brief and to the point.
- Focus on one topic at a time when chatting or posting to discussions.
- Remember that unlike in face-to-face learning environments what you say in discussions and chats is documented and available to be revisited. Choose your words and discussion topics carefully.
- E-mail should only be used for messages pertaining to the course. Please refrain from sending forwards, jokes, etc. within e-mail.

General Policy

Students must abide by policies in the Clayton State University Student Handbook, and the Basic Undergraduate Student Responsibilities.

University Attendance Policy

Students are expected to log in and participate as part of their learning in the course. Instructors establish specific policies relating to absences in their courses and communicate these policies to the

students through the course syllabi. Individual instructors, based upon the nature of the course, determine what effect excused and unexcused absences have in determining grades and upon students' ability to remain enrolled in their courses. The university reserves the right to determine that excessive absences, whether justified or not, are sufficient cause for institutional withdrawals or failing grades.

Course Attendance Policy

Students are expected to access the online course materials and participate in the required discussions, activities and assignments.

Course tracking can be used to assess the amount of "attendance" in an online course. Any student who fails to complete a scheduled assignment during the first two weeks of class will be reported to as a "No Show". To avoid this, be sure to take the first week's quiz which is over the syllabus. Thanks!

Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations need to register with Disability Services in order to obtain their accommodations. You can contact them at 678-466-5445 or disabilityservices@clayton.edu. If you are already registered with Disability Services and are seeking accommodations for this course, please make an appointment with me to discuss your specific accommodation needs and give me your accommodations letter.

Academic Dishonesty

Any type of activity that is considered dishonest by reasonable standards may constitute academic misconduct. The most common forms of academic misconduct are cheating and plagiarism. All instances of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of zero for the work involved. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Student Life/Judicial Affairs which will adjudicate each instance and may result in additional penalties to students outside of the course.

Student Code of Conduct

Behavior that disrupts the teaching–learning process during class activities will not be tolerated. While a variety of behaviors can be disruptive in a classroom setting, more serious examples include belligerent, abusive, profane, and/or threatening behavior. A student who fails to respond to reasonable faculty direction regarding online behavior and/or behavior while participating in online course activities may be dismissed from class. A more detailed description the Student Code of Conduct can be found at <http://adminservices.clayton.edu/studentconduct/>

Operation Study

At Clayton State University, we expect and support high motivation and academic achievement. Look for Operation Study activities and programs this semester that are designed to enhance your academic success such as study sessions, study breaks, workshops, and

opportunities to earn Study Bucks (for use in the University Bookstore) and other items.

Date	DESCRIPTION OF CONTENT	READING AND ASSIGNMENTS
Week 1	Introduction to Screenwriting and storytelling - an overview	Read: Vogler, Preface and Introduction and Trottier, Introduction and Book III, pp. 129-140.
Week 2	Screenwriting - the basics of format and structure part one.	Read: Vogler, "Mapping the Journey," "A practical guide" and Trottier "How stories work" and "Situation, conflict, and resolution" and Book III, pp. 140-151
Week 3	Format and structure, part 2	Read: Vogler, "The Archetypes," "Hero," "Mentor" and Trottier, "The lowdown on high concept" and "Story-layering, plot and genre." and Book III 150-160
Week 4	Archetypes	Read: Vogler, "Threshold Guardian," "Herald," "Shapeshifter," "Shadow," "Ally," "Trickster" and Trottier, "Ten keys to creating captivating characters." Due: Screenplay #1
Week 5	Where to start - the ordinary world	Read: Vogler, "Stages of the Journey," "Ordinary World" and Trottier: "Theme", "Dialogue, subtext, and exposition"

Week 6	Character development	Read: Vogler, “Call to adventure”, “Refusal of the call” and Trottier, “How to make a scene”
Week 7	Midterm Exam	Read: Vogler, “Meeting with the mentor,” “Crossing the first threshold” and Trottier, “Summon your muse”
Week 8	Dialogue, part one and writing action	Read: Vogler, “Tests, Allies, Enemies,” “Approach to the Inmost Cave” and Trottier, “Dream up your movie idea” and Book III 164-68. Due: Screenplay #2
Week 9	Dialogue, part two and writing action	Read: Vogler, “The Ordeal” and Trottier, “Develop your core story” and pp.186-201
Week 10	Maintaining momentum	Read: Vogler, Reward, “The Road Back” and Trottier, “Develop your movie people”
Week 11	Conclusions - ending your screenplay effectively	Read: Vogler, The Resurrection, Return with the Elixir and Trottier, “Step-out your story”. Due: Screenplay #3
Week 12	Keeping your story in tune with your audience’s expectations	Read: Vogler, “The Writer’s Journey,” “Stories are Alive” and Trottier, “Write your first draft” Due: Idea for screenplay #4
Week 13	Working with polarity	Read: Vogler, “Polarity” and Trottier, “Make the necessary revisions” Due: Outline screenplay #4h

Week 14 Working towards catharsis in your story

Read: Vogler, "Catharsis"

Week 15 Final script due

Read: Vogler, "The Wisdom of the Body"
Due: Screenplay #4

Week 16 Reflecting on the path

Read: Vogler, "Trust the Path"

Final Exam Due by Sunday, December 13th, 11:59p.m.