POINT 1902 LOMA
NAZARENE UNIVERSITY

Department of Communication Studies
COM 4024 Scriptwriting Workshop, 3 units
WRI 5024/6024 Scriptwriting Workshop, 3 units
Fall 2025
BAC 104 Thursday 4:00-6:45pm
Final Exam: Thursday 12/18 Finals Week, 4:30-7pm

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Office Hours: See Canvas

WRI 5024/6024/COM 4024 Scriptwriting Workshop: Catalog Description

The exploration and production of forms, strategies, and narrative structures for film and television.

Required Texts

McKee, Robert. 1998. *Story : Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting*. New York: itbooks.

Trottier, David. 2019. *The Screenwriter's Bible, 7th Edition: A Complete Guide to Writing, Formatting, and Selling Your Script*. Silman-James Press.

Scriptwriting Software.

Additional reading assignments and *various handouts distributed by the professor*

Required films (see Course Schedule) -- pay for streaming fees as necessary

WRI 5024/6024 Scriptwriting Workshop Course Learning Outcomes

Students who complete WRI 5024/6024 will be able to:

1. identify advanced aspects of theory, style, and structure in screenplays;
2. analyze screenplays written by professionals and peers to determine authors' writing techniques in relationship to target audiences and genre conventions;
3. employ advanced research techniques as necessary to meet the demands of scriptwriting craft and content;
4. craft screenplays using advanced techniques specific to genre to create descriptive and evocative language;
5. apply advanced workshop techniques for constructive criticism of peers and in turn take criticism and use it to improve their own work;
6. format texts in a genre-appropriate and professional manner for submission to workshop and publication;
7. present written work to live audiences, demonstrating advanced strategies for audience engagement and oral communication.

Media Communication Program Learning Outcomes

1. Examine past and present media communication strategies across publishing modalities.
2. Demonstrate individual creativity in the process of designing, constructing, and producing media projects within a team dynamic.
3. Create film, media content, and multimedia projects according to industry-specific standards.
4. Apply critical thinking when interpreting and evaluating diverse media content.

PLNU Mission: To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send: Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

State Authorization: State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on State Authorization to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

Course Policies and Requirements

Scripts, Film, and TV Productions at PLNU: are required to be in accordance with the mission and values of the university.

Attendance: *Attendance is required. Missing class for other than medical emergencies or excused absences will affect your grade, as per the University Catalog.*

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy: Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive an "F" grade.

Class Preparation: All assignments must be completed prior to the assigned due date and time. Some assignments will be discussed in class while others will be completed individually but not discussed.

Class Participation: *Regular* contributions to class discussion are expected, including but not restricted to discussions of weekly readings, related experiential exercises, and open dialogue. Despite the size of the class, I want everyone to feel compelled to share their thoughts on assigned readings. Enthusiastic and responsible participation in assigned group projects (in-class and outside of class) is expected of all.

E-Mail: Please use e-mail (not Canvas email) for simple, logistical questions or clarifications. Write: "Scriptwriting Workshop" in the subject line. Allow 24 hours/ 1 business day for a reply.

Canvas Messages: Please use Canvas messages associated with a specific assignment (not Canvas email) for all communications regarding assignments submitted to Canvas.

Smart phones, laptops, and computers: may be used during class for classroom-related activities only.

Public Discourse: Much of the work we will do in this class is cooperative, by nature of the class discussions and general feedback given to written work and/projects; thus you should think of all your writing and speaking for and in class as public, not private, discourse. By continuing in this class, you acknowledge that your work will be viewed by others in the class.

PLNU Academic Honesty Policy: Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See Academic Policies for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See Academic Policies for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy: You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini Pro 1.5, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc.) in this course. Any work that utilizes AI-based tools must be clearly identified as such, including the specific tool(s) used. Please use the following sources to guide your citations when using AI.
Chicago Manual of Style: Citing Content Developed or Generated by AI

Spiritual Care: Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith.
If you have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain or have prayer requests you can contact your professor or the Office of Spiritual Life and Formation.

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy: PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. The EAC makes accommodations available to professors at the student's request. PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes. Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any special accommodations.

Language and Belonging: Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-

level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community. By working toward precision and clarity of language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality.
If you (or someone you know) have experienced a bias incident regarding language, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias.

Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination: In support of a safe learning environment, if you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that accommodations and resources are available through the Title IX Office at pointloma.edu/Title-IX. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty and staff are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.
If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at counselingservices@pointloma.edu or find a list of campus pastors at pointloma.edu/title-ix.
If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias

Final Examination Policy: Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the Traditional Undergraduate Records: Final Exam Schedules site. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

PLNU Copyright Policy: Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU Recording Notification: In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel. Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

Loma Writing Center
The Loma Writing Center exists to help all members of the PLNU community cultivate transferable writing skills to engage their academic, professional, personal, and spiritual communities. We work toward this goal by conducting one-on-one consultation sessions, supporting writing education across the PLNU community, and participating in ongoing writing center research.
Getting feedback from the Loma Writing Center while you're in the process of working on an assignment is a great way to improve the quality of your writing and develop as a writer. You are encouraged to talk with a trained writing consultant about getting started on an assignment, organizing your ideas, finding and citing sources, revising, editing for grammar and polishing final drafts, and more. For information about how to make in-person or online appointments, see Loma Writing Center webpage or visit the

Loma Writer Center on the first floor of the Ryan Library, room 221.

- Appointment Calendar: https://plnu.mywconline.com/
- Website: https://www.pointloma.edu/centers-institutes/loma-writing-center
- Email: writingcenter@pointloma.edu

Grading Scale

90-100	A
88-89	B+
84-87	B
80-83	B-
78-79	C+
74-77	C
70-73	C-
60-69	D
0-59	F

Grading, Assignments, and Evaluation

10% Professional Participation: arrive to class on time; work with peers in small groups; ask and respond to questions in class; pay attention to presentations, lectures, and films; take notes; attend the entire class; participate in peer reviews; use smart phones and laptops for classroom use (or receive a zero "0" for class participation).

20% Assignments and Presentations

15% Note: either Short Script #1 or Short Script #2 needs to be produceable on campus
Workshop 1: Submit Complete **Short Script #1** & Provide Critical Feedback
➔ COM 4024: 8-12 pages, WRI 5024/6024: 14-18 pages + 1/2 page synopsis or 1 page beat sheet
Submit your script prior to the week it will be discussed.
Bring one page (WRI 5024/6024, 300-375 words, COM 4024 150-200 words) of feedback in hardcopy format for each script being workshopped in bullet-point format. This feedback will be delivered to the scriptwriter at the end of the workshop.
The scriptwriter needs to 1) bring one hard copy of their script to class on the day it is due and 2) submit a .pdf copy of the script to Canvas.

15% Note: either Short Script #1 or Short Script #2 needs to be produceable on campus
Workshop 2: Submit Complete **Short Script #2** & Provide Critical Feedback
➔ COM 4024: 8-12 pages, WRI 5024/6024: 14-18 pages + 1/2 page synopsis or 1 page beat sheet
Submit your script prior to the week it will be discussed.
Bring one page (WRI 5024/6024, 300-375 words, COM 4024 150-200 words) of feedback in hardcopy format for each script being workshopped in bullet-point format. This feedback will be delivered to the scriptwriter at the end of the workshop.
The scriptwriter needs to 1) bring one hard copy of their script to class on the day it is due and 2) submit a .pdf copy of the script to Canvas.

15% **Workshop 3**: Submit the **First Act of a Screenplay** & Provide Critical Feedback
➔ COM 4024: 8-12 pages, WRI 5024/6024: 14-18 pages + 1/2 page synopsis or 1 page beat sheet
Submit your script prior to the week it will be discussed.

Bring one page (WRI 5024/6024, 300-375 words, COM 4024 150-200 words) of feedback in hardcopy format for each script being workshopped in bullet-point format. This feedback will be delivered to the scriptwriter at the end of the workshop.

The scriptwriter needs to 1) bring one hard copy of their script to class on the day it is due and 2) submit a .pdf copy of the script to Canvas.

25% **Final Portfolio**

All three (3) workshopped scripts in a) Rough Draft hard copy format and b) Final Draft hard copy format with a c) 1 page double-spaced description of revisions preceding each script. Evidence of changes to each workshopped script is required.

Late Paper Policy: Be sure to hand in your assignment on time, or make a prior arrangement to submit the assignment before the assigned due date. Otherwise, a late submission will be penalized by one letter grade if handed in after the due date and time, and by an additional letter grade for each day late following the assignment due date. Unless pre-arranged, assignments more than a week late will not be graded. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

Paper Format: Submit your work in each assignment's required script format.
Otherwise, assignments should be in.doc, .docx, or .pdf format in Chicago Style, typed and double-spaced. Submit assignments in black ink on 8.5"x11" white paper. Use a non-decorative 12-pt. font, such as Times New Roman. Please use the Chicago Style guide for style, grammar, format and citation issues.

Evaluation of Assignments

GRADING AND POLICIES: Students are evaluated on their level of class/workshop participation (i.e., the frequency and quality of their participation in class discussions and workshops); student professionalism (i.e., their ability to meet the requirements of all assignments, exercises, and workshop scripts by deadline); the overall quality/thoughtfulness of their work; and their growth/consistency as a writer over the course of the semester (i.e., the arc of their improvement and/or their ability to consistently deliver thoughtful, compelling work). All assignments you submit to and receive back from me will be compiled in a final portfolio (see below). The general breakdown of how I calculate grades is as follows:

As stated in PLNU colleague Professor Maakestad's syllabus as well, scriptwriting is both an art and a craft. This course will enter into the debate about whether or not art can be graded, but the craft will be graded. Be sure to pay attention to:

- conventions
- structure and form
- narrative voice and point of view
- engaging and sophisticated use of language
- excellent sentence mechanics
- improvement through revision
- creativity and innovation within genre conventions

With this in mind, the following questions will be considered when assignments are evaluated and graded. All questions may not be relevant to each assignment.

• Does the assignment fulfill the assignment objective?

- If a claim/argument/thesis is required, is it clear and plausible? Is it stated and contextualized effectively? Is there sufficient and relevant evidence to ground the claim?
- Does the assignment demonstrate an understanding of course reading materials and examples presented during class? Does it ignore material that should be taken into account?
- Does the assignment work through the complexities of the material (as opposed to oversimplifying or overgeneralizing)?
- Is the assignment well organized?
- Does it cite material from sources using Chicago Style?
- Are there sentence structure problems or grammatical errors that interfere with the meaning?

Evaluation Standards

• An "A" assignment demonstrates excellent work. It has something to say and says it well. It develops its point of view clearly and consistently, demonstrating a complex understanding of the assignment, and does so using a variety of perspectives. It often rises above other assignments with particular instances of creative or analytical sophistication. There may be only minor and/or occasional structural errors.

• A "B" assignment demonstrates good work. It establishes a clear point of view and pursues it consistently, demonstrating a good understanding of the assignment. There may be some mechanical difficulties, but not so many as to impair the clear development of the main idea. While a "B" assignment is in many ways successful, it lacks the originality and/or sophistication of an "A" assignment.

• A "C" assignment demonstrates adequate work. It establishes an adequate grasp of the assignment and contains a point of view. In addition, the assignment may rely on unsupported generalizations or insufficiently developed ideas. It may also contain structural errors.

• Work that earns a grade of "D" or "F" is often characterized by the following problems: it fails to demonstrate an adequate understanding of the assignment; it fails to articulate an adequate point of view; and/or it contains significant structural problems.

Course Schedule (subject to change)

Note: bring the assigned readings with you to class.

Class	***Assignments***
Week 1 9/3	**<u>Formatting</u> & Storytelling** Course Introduction and Cinematic Essence
Week 2 9/10	**Formatting & <u>Storytelling</u>** Read: 1) *Screenwriter's Bible* 244-260; 291-297, 2) "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," 3) *Lady Bird* Script (first half); recommended: skim read *Screenwriter's Bible* Book III
Week 3 9/17	**Transitions** Write: Topic Assignment for Script #1 Read: McKee: Ch. 18-19, and *Lady Bird* script (2nd half)
Week 4 *9/24*	**Character Details** Write: Screenwriting Exercise A, and "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" short script Read: McKee: Ch. 1-6

Class	*Assignments*
Week 5 10/1	**Narrative Components** Write: Character Details for Script #1, and Screenwriting Exercise B Read: McKee: Ch. 7-8 and Ch. 17
Week 6 10/8	**Scene Design** Write: Script Synopsis for Script #1, and Screenwriting Exercise C Read: McKee: Ch. 9-11: Act Design; Scene Design/Analysis
Week 7 10/15	**From Crisis to Resolution** Write: Scene Breakdown for Script #1, Screenwriting Exercise D Read: McKee: Ch. 12-13
Week 8	**Openings & Exposition – Fall Break Day** Write: Screenwriting Exercise E, 4 (four) full pages of Script #1 Read: McKee: Ch. 14-15
Week 9 10/29	**Dialogue** Read: McKee: Ch. 18, and Screenwriter's Bible: Dialogue
Week 10 11/5	**Workshop 1A** Write: Scripts for workshop 1a Read: Scripts for workshop 1a
Week 11 11/12	**Workshop 1B** Write: Scripts for workshop 2a Read: Scripts for workshop 2a
Week 12 11/19	**Workshop 2A** Write: Scripts for workshop 1b Read: Read Scripts for workshop 1b
Week 13 11/26	**Workshop 2B – Thanksgiving** Write: Scripts for workshop 2b Read: Scripts for workshop 2b
Week 14 *12/3*	**Workshop 3A** Write: Scripts for workshop 3a Read: Scripts for workshop 3a
Week 15 12/10	**Workshop 3B** Write: Scripts for workshop 3b Read: Scripts for workshop 3b
Final Exam: Submit Portfolios	