



Mission Statement:

Our mission is to serve as a leading center of Christian thought and action providing an excellent education from a biblical perspective and global context in pivotal professions to equip Christian leaders to change the world.

COURSE SYLLABUS

**SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION & THE ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF CINEMA-TELEVISION**

**SSW 512 (MAD)
WRITING THE SHORT FILM
FALL 2009
DISTANCE COURSE (ONLINE)**

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

*Instructor: Kevin R. Crawford, B.A., M.Div., M.F.A.
Phone: (757) 647-9003
Fax: (757) 496-4628 (Call first)
E-mail: Kevicra@regent.edu
Office Hours: (By appointment)
Office Location: COM 250*

All students are required to read and have a thorough understanding of the syllabus. Any questions or concerns need to be addressed to the instructor.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Examination of the special circumstances of the short film (less than 45 minutes running time). Students learn the narrative conventions of this format and write two or more film scripts through multiple drafts.

RATIONALE/COURSE OVERVIEW

Screenwriters are the most important people when it comes to choosing how Hollywood reflects and informs contemporary popular culture. Sadly, we see carnality and materialism strongly reflected in much Hollywood output, but there are many exceptions to this generalization. As a screenwriter, you can be part of a team of Christian writers who are working to reverse this trend *without* becoming “preachy” in the process.

The short film form is a great place to begin your journey into filmmaking. Whether you are a writer, director, producer, editor or researcher, the more you know how a story is formed from beginning to middle to end the better you will be in becoming an effective storyteller.

In this class, we will explore ways in which narrative short film scripts are created at the script level. While this style of film is generally less than 30 minutes in length, we will be looking at 5 minute, ten minute, fifteen minute and one longer 30 minute screenplay, the maximum length for student short narrative films. You will write three scripts during the semester, starting with a very short single scene script and developing from that point. The best scripts will be forwarded to the production classes for students to make your work on video or film, if you so desire, and they of course have the right to select or reject your work.

We will examine why certain types of script are preferred as against others for student short films, but you are free to write in any genre we choose, and we will consider the whole question of genre from the wider feature film length perspective.

We will end with a discussion of marketing techniques and the ever-changing environment of writing for film and video.

This as all courses in the School of Communication and the Arts is ultimately concerned with how the committed Christian can blend his/her faith with what they learn here. Especially of concern is how the issues raised by this course are to be considered in comparison to your own *a priori* world view. You will be urged to consider all readings, screenings and discussions in light of your own Christian faith.

SCRIPTURE THEME

My heart is stirred by a **noble theme** as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a **skillful writer**. (Psalm 45:1)

DEPARTMENTAL (CINEMA-TELEVISION) PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- To reclaim the power of “Story” and to weave Christian values and enduring truths in infinitely fresh and relevant ways.
- To allow students to explore and refine their craft through observation, intense study and practice.
- To grow artists who can create media infused with the Light to those with eyes to see and ears to hear.

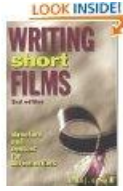
COURSE (WRITING THE SHORT FILM) OUTCOMES

- Students will work toward an early handle on Hollywood's changing genres.
 - By completing assigned readings in this category.
 - By creating their own short screenplays in the genre of their choice.
- Students will be able to highlight aspects of their faith in dramatic screenplay situations.
 - By completing the assigned writing exercises and discussing each other's work.
 - By being challenged to locate and contextualize redemptive and pro-social values within the narrative paradigm of short film media experiences.
- Students will understand the dramatic structure of the short film, the importance of dialogue, and the critical tools required to assess good screen writing.
 - By completing assigned readings in this category.
 - By creating and using the tips, tools, and techniques encountered in the course and receiving peer feedback on their work.
- Students will be able to research, structure and write short film treatments.
 - By utilizing the examples of narrative structure provided in both the literature and films encountered/discussed in the course.
 - By discovering the kind of discipline it takes to apply creative ideas and make them work "on the page".
- Students will write 3 screenplays, with approximate lengths of 5, 10 and 15 *plus* minutes.
 - By completing all written script work as assigned.
 - By practicing the disciplines of the writing craft, first-hand, including and especially the process of rewriting their own creative work.
- Students will have extensive practice is working in correct screenplay format using screenplay software.
 - By creating their own short screenplays with emphasis upon originality and execution of the idea "on the page," through first-hand experience using one or more of the industry software packages required for this course.
 - By demonstrating proper and imaginative use of the basic narrative and screenwriting techniques (i.e., act structure, character, dialogue and elements of proper formatting).

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Materials:

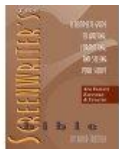
Textbooks (see "Course Schedule" below for list of required readings)



Cowgill, Linda. *Writing Short Films: Structure and Content for Screenwriters*. Los Angeles, CA: Lone Eagle Publishing 2005. ISBN-13: 978-1580650632.



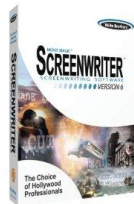
Johnson, Claudio Hunter. *Crafting Short Screenplays that Connect, 2nd Edition*. Focal Press, 2005. ISBN-13: 978-0240806419.



Trottier, Dave. *The Screenwriter's Bible: A Complete Guide To Writing, Formatting, and Selling Your Script, 4th Edition*. Los Angeles, CA: Silman-James Press, 2005r. ISBN-13: 978-1879505841.

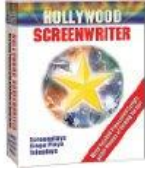
Software

It is *VERY important* that students obtain access to an “industry standard” screenwriting program in order to complete class requirements (writing of scripts). If you do not already own one of these programs, *BELOW* is a list of recommended software packages and options for you to choose from. **I expect you to have access to one of these programs by the time our course begins.**



MovieMagic Screenwriter 6.0

- Order from the Writer's Store online at:
- http://www.writersstore.com/product.php?products_id=1121
- **Low cost: \$169.95!** (Academic version.) Special pricing for film school students! The program normally retails for \$249.00!
- This is an academic version of Movie Magic Screenwriter. After you have purchased this product you must provide proof of current full time enrollment in a college or university before it will ship. Please email your proof of enrollment as a .jpg or .gif file to siteinquiry@writersstore.com or fax to 310.441.0944. To ensure quick processing include your complete name and contact information as it appears on your order.
- MovieMagic development suite is now the software of choice at Amblin, Carolco, Disney, Fox, HBO, MGM/UA, NBC, New World, Orion, Paramount, Tri-Star, and Warner Bros.



Hollywood Screenwriter

- Hollywood Screenwriter is the “beginner’s” version (*minus* all the “bells and whistles”) of *Movie Magic Screenwriter*. But it has everything you need to write “spec” scripts in a simple and easy-to-use program.
- **Low, low cost of only \$39.95!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**
- Order from the Writer’s Store online at:
- http://www.writersstore.com/product.php?products_id=3210



FinalDraft 7.1.3

- Another great industry standard program!
- **Cost to purchase: \$229.00**
- Order from the Writer’s Store online at:
- http://www.writersstore.com/product.php?products_id=2220

Recommended Resources:

Additional Materials

(e.g., PowerPoint lectures, links, multimedia resources, and the like) may be found on Blackboard in the form of e-Handouts. Students are responsible for the information and materials distributed through Blackboard. Please get in the habit of checking the “Course Materials,” “Course Information,” and “Course Documents” menus wherever they appear in Bb.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

BlackBoard Information

Blackboard (Bb) has five primary purposes in our courses: (1) to provide a means for students to receive timely information about the course in general, assignments, grades, and announcements from the instructor; (2) to promote thoughtful interaction between the instructor and students and among students themselves as they work through course materials; (3) to provide a means for students to complete quizzes, writing assignments, and other forms of evaluation; (4) to enhance the learning process by providing a variety of materials; and (5) to enable students to check their grades.

Students complete their weekly assignments as posted/directed in Blackboard. Students are expected to check the **Announcements** section of Blackboard each week beginning two weeks before the start of the course. Students must keep their e-mail address current in Blackboard. Further, all email boxes should be kept well under “quota” by regularly archiving or emptying unanswered mail, mail left in message folders, etc. Students are expected to check their Regent e-mail daily to ensure timely receipt of messages

from the professor. Please use your regent.edu address, as it appears in [GENISYS](#), when corresponding with your professor. (Outside email may become lost in my SPAM folder!)

If you have problems and/or are not able to login, send an e-mail to helpdesk@regent.edu. Describe the problem in detail and include your full name, your Blackboard User Name, Password, Regent e-mail address, and telephone number(s). Or, for faster service, you can contact the [Help Desk/IT department at 757.352.4076](#) if you are experiencing computer related problems.

Assignments

A. One Screenplay under 5 Minutes (10%) –

Students will write a short screenplay under 5 minutes with emphasis upon originality and execution of the idea “on the page,” demonstrating proper and imaginative use of basic narrative and screenwriting techniques (i.e., structure, character, dialog, and formatting).

B. Re-write of Screenplay under 5 Minutes (10%) -

Students will re-write their short screenplay under 5 minutes with emphasis upon originality and IMPROVED execution of the idea “on the page,” based upon feedback from the Instructor and their peers.

C. One Screenplay under 10 Minutes (10%) -

Students will write a short screenplay under 10 minutes with emphasis upon originality and execution of the idea “on the page” (i.e., form and content), including the demonstration of all proper and imaginative use of basic narrative and screenwriting techniques (i.e., structure, character, dialog, and formatting).

D. Re-write Screenplay under 10 Minutes (10%) -

Students will re-write their short screenplay under 10 minutes with emphasis upon originality and IMPROVED execution of the idea “on the page,” based upon feedback gleaned from the Instructor and their peers.

E. One Short Screenplay between 15 to 25 Minutes (20%) -

Students will write a short screenplay between 15 and 25 minutes with emphasis upon originality and execution of the idea “on the page” (i.e., form and content) including the demonstration of all proper and imaginative use of basic narrative and screenwriting techniques (i.e., structure, character, dialog, and formatting).

F. Re-write Screenplay between 15 to 25 Minutes (20%) -

Students will re-write their short screenplay between 15 and 25 minutes with emphasis upon originality and IMPROVED execution of the idea “on the page,” based upon feedback gleaned from the Instructor and their peers.

G. Originality (10%) -

As a reflection of the *overall* quality, dedication to craft and degree of seriousness of the student’s approach to *each* script – including and especially the way meaning is structured and perceived in the

screen image. Emphasis will be upon development of the **Premise**: A) Is it clear early-on where each story is going? B) Is it coming into focus or does it wander about? Can we “hear” the logline? C) Does the writer give us a reason to care about what’s going in each piece attempted? Hook us? **Story**: A) Has the writer presented a conflict and does it build to a dramatic climax? B) Is it interesting? Too slow? Are there enough twists and turns? Over-use of flashback, gimmicks, or other devices? C) Is the action focused? Does it move the story forward? If it’s a genre piece, does the writer appear to understand the conventions of the particular genre s/he is working within? **Theme**: A) Does there appear potential for larger connection with the audience? B) Does the script offer Christian or pro-social commentary, including any unique perspective on the issues? C) Human interest/value? **Production Value**: A) Is there commercial value, marketability associated with the piece, or potential to go forward as a “classy” student film project? Can we “see” the poster? B) If used, are FX appropriately “seeded” as integral part of the story? Do they help to drive the narrative forward, or do they feel clichéd like they are simply throw-in? C) Would we pay money to see this film shown at the *NARO*? Would others (student producers and directors) likely want to make this film?

H. Class Participation (10%) –

In the form of class discussions, insightful and regular comments about student film screenings and the work of others, in addition to regular and timely posting of online materials and assignments – including and especially weekly peer feedback (student responds to a minimum of 2 classmates each week) via “Threaded” Discussion in Bb.

NOTE: [Since this is an online education course, you must log into Bb a minimum of twice per week in order to meet State Education Requirements.](#) Discussion and debate are crucial for the successful integration of scholarly & artistic materials. Other students depend on your participation in the form of online dialogue, as well.

SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments (*unless otherwise instructed*) for this course should **ALWAYS** be submitted via Assignment Manager as an attachment. (See the “Tools” menu in Bb) Directions how to use the Assignment Manager can be found under “Help” tab and “Tutorials.” (See also the “Assignments” section of Blackboard for more detailed instructions.)

NOTE: *if* *Bb is down on the day your assignment comes due, email as an attachment direct to: Kevicra@regent.edu clearly labeling your assignment.

Except for your script work, all submitted assignments should be in Microsoft WORD (.doc and .docx) or Rich Text File (.rtf). **No other file types will be accepted.** If you send me a file that I *cannot* read, I will automatically enter a grade of “0” for that assignment. Plus, any assignment will be returned in like kind (that is, I will return an attached Word file that is marked up with the Word Comment function). You will post these by email attachment via the “**View and Complete Assignment**” link in Bb. (See “Course Schedule” below for details.)

Every assignment must have your name on it, and, if it is more than one page, each page must have your last name and the page number in the upper right-hand corner; **for example**: “Smith 2, Smith 3,” etc. To do that, you will need to know how to use the “Header and Footer” option under the “View” menu button in Microsoft Word, or your particular screenwriting program of choice. (**Note:** Email “tagging” is not a guarantee that the assignment received will be easily identifiable, especially if pages become separated during reading, so please get into the habit of writing your name on **every page of every assignment!**) If you fail to do this, I may be forced to enter a “0” in the grade book, for that particular assignment.

Further, in posting material, each student should label their assignments with something that includes their last name and the type of assignment. For example, Jim Smith would submit his 10 minute short script as JSmith-10minute.doc (or JSmith-10minute.rtf), etc. A file called “script.doc” will get lost when I copy it to my class files for reading/grading.

All submitted scripts/screenplays should be created and sent to me in *MovieMagic* (.scw and .mmsw), *Hollywood Screenwriter* (.scr), or *FinalDraft* (.fdr) file format, as specified above under required course software. Please *do not* send me files in Adobe Reader (.pdf), as these cannot be marked/edited on screen.

INSTRUCTOR’S POSTED POLICY FOR RECEIVING LATE OR MISSED WORK

Work not submitted *within* four (4) days of the assignment due date will normally be given a grade of “0.” Unless *prior* arrangements have been made with the Professor, there is a grade reduction of 10% points per day through the fourth day. At the Professor’s discretion, late work may be received for full credit only under extenuating circumstances. Timely communication with me is of paramount importance, if you are experiencing setback or difficulty.

NOTE: The Department of Cinema-Television is holding its Fall Film shoot during the first half of our course (i.e., Modular Week). While on campus and local area students are encouraged to participate, please be advised that involvement with the fall film project *will not excuse* you from regular *and* timely participation in our course.

CLASS ATTENDANCE & LATE ASSIGNMENTS

It is important that you “attend” each online class in a given week and come prepared to discuss the readings, screenings, and assignments given. **Since this is an online education course, you must log into Bb a minimum of *twice* per week in order to meet State Education Requirements.** All class assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. If an emergency arises, please let me know in advance. If God has called you to be a student, that “calling” is a reflection upon Him. For the School of Communication and the Arts major, this includes both regular attendance and punctuality. There are no “cuts.” Consequently, **four (4), or more, unexcused absences may result in failure of the course.** I also reserve the right to deduct up to 10% from your final grade for late attendance/habitual absence from class.

When handing in an assignment, always be sure to retain one copy just in case the material should “mysteriously” disappear *enroute* from you to me. Late assignments will be assessed a ten percent (**10%**) **grade reduction per calendar day** from the date the assignment is due, unless the instructor explicitly grants an extension due to unusual circumstances. Meeting assignment deadlines and class participation is a substantial portion of your total grade and is important to your personal and professional development.

NOTE: As tragic as it may be, on many levels, losing computer access – a crashed computer hard drive, or “thumb drive” – will not excuse lack of participation in the course. All monetary burden and responsibility for computer equipment, maintenance, and viable online access are borne by the student.

EMAILING YOUR INSTRUCTOR

The subject line of all **e-mail messages** related to this course should include the course number (e.g., SSW 512) and the name of the student (**Example**, SSW 512_JohnSmith). Following these directions enables the professor to quickly identify the student and course, facilitating a timely response. Students

should always include (“sign”) their first and last name at the end of all e-mail messages. Because instructors often need to reach students, all students are required to keep their mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone numbers up-to-date in [GENISYS](#). Do not correspond with me or send attachments through .hotmail, .gmail, yahoo or other outside email systems. Always use the regent.edu and/or Bb “Communication” platform.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

A. Assignments will be graded as follows:

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Weight</i>
One Screenplay under 5 minutes Due: Friday, September 11	10%
Rewrite of One Screenplay under 5 minutes Due: Friday, September 18 *I will record the higher of the two grades as both the first draft grade and revision grade	10%
One Short Screenplay under 10 minutes Due: Friday, October 30	10%
Rewrite of One Screenplay under 10 minutes Due: Friday, November 13 *I will record the higher of the two grades as both the first draft grade and revision grade	10%
One Short Screenplay between 15 to 25 minutes Due: Friday, December 4	20%
Rewrite of One Screenplay between 15 and 25 minutes Due: Friday, December 18 *I will record the higher of the two grades as both the first draft grade and revision grade	20%
Originality	10%
Course Participation	10%
TOTAL:	100%

B. The grading scale:

GRADE	PERCENT AGE SCORE	QUALITY POINTS
A	96-100	4.0
A-	93-95	3.67
B+	90-92	3.33
B	85-89	3.00
B-	81-84	2.67
C+	76-80	2.33
C	74-77	2.00
C-	71-73	1.67

D+	67-70	1.33
D	64-66	1.00
D-	60-63	0.67
F	00-59	0.00

COURSE SCHEDULE (WEEK-BY-WEEK)

PRINT A COPY OF THIS SCHEDULE AND KEEP IT NEAR YOUR WORKSPACE/DESK, ENTER IT INTO YOUR BLACKBERRY, PDA, OR OTHER ELECTRONIC CALENDAR DEVICE.

LEGEND:

WSF = Writing Short Films, Cowgill
 CSS = Crafting Short Screenplay, Johnson
 SB = The Screenwriter’s Bible, Trottier
 HAND = Handout from professor
 OR = On Reserve in the Library (check at main desk)

NB (nota bene): all exercises must be posted to the Instructor using the “View and Complete Assignment” link provides in Bb and also attached for student peer review within the appropriate “Threaded” Discussion Board link created during the week the script is due.

ONLINE SESSIONS	TOPICS	ASSIGNMENTS
Week 1: Aug. 24 – 30, 2009	<i>Storytelling in General & Telling a Story in Images</i> Film/s: TBA <i>Connecting to Purpose (p.9)</i>	Readings: Read: Johnson chapter 1- Connecting to Purpose Cowgill chapter 1- Before We Start - The Principles of Drama Assignment: Assignment: Exercise at the end of Cowgill Chapter 1 - due September 4 Do not go over 3 pages.
Week 2: Aug. 31 – Sept. 6, 2009	<i>Connecting to Process (p.23) Discovering and Exploring a Main Character</i> Film/s: TBA	Readings: Read: Johnson chapter 2- Connecting to Self Cowgill chapter 2- Starting out - What’s it About? Read: Johnson chapter 3- Connecting to Process Cowgill chapter 3- Character & Emotion - Who does what and why? Assignment: Assignment Exercise: Write a 5 page

		screenplay about a character making a decision that makes a difference to the character - due September 11
Week 3: Sept. 7 - 13, 2009	<i>Connecting to Screenplays</i> Film/s: TBA	Readings: Read: Johnson chapter 4- Connecting to Screenplays Chapter 8- The Boxing Match Assignment: Assignment: revise and resubmit exercise 2 - due September 18

Week 4: Sept. 14 - 20, 2009	<i>Connecting to Screenplays: Telling the Dramatic Story</i> Film/s: TBA	Readings: Read: Cowgill chapter 4- The Three-Part Nature of Film Structure chapter 5- Plotting - the Twists and Turns Assignment: Assignment: <i>Boxing Match</i> exercise part one
Week 5: Sept. 21 - 27, 2009	<i>Connecting to Collaboration: Telling the Dramatic Story (part 2)</i> Film/s: TBA	Readings: Read: Johnson chapter 5- Connecting to Collaboration Cowgill chapter 6- Openings & the Main Exposition chapter 7- The Middle - Keeping the Story Alive chapter 8- The End - Revelation, Climax & Resolution Assignment: Assignment: <i>Boxing Match</i> revision
Week 6: Sept. 28 – Oct. 4, 2009	<i>The Discovery</i> (p.63) Film/s: TBA	Readings: Read: Johnson chapter 6- The Discovery Assignment: Assignments: write <i>Discovery</i> per instructions on discussion board
Week 7: Oct. 5 – 11, 2009	<i>The Discovery</i> (part 2) (revised) Film/s: TBA	Readings: Read: Cowgill chapter 9- Constructing the Scene Chapter 10- Dialogue - The Search for the Perfect Line

		<p>Chapter 11- The Subtext of Meaning Watch the film <i>Life Lessons</i> (from the anthology film <i>New York Stories</i>)</p> <p>Assignment: Assignment: revise <i>Discovery</i> per instructions</p>
<p>Week 8: Oct. 12 - 18, 2009</p>	<p><i>The Decision.</i> (p.78)</p> <p>Film/s: TBA</p>	<p>Readings: Read: Johnson chapter 7- The Decision</p> <p>Assignment: Assignment: <i>The Boxing Match</i> - due October 30</p>

<p>FALL BREAK/ MODULAR WEEK: (Oct. 19-25, 2009)</p>	<p>NO CLASSES THIS WEEK</p>	<p>NOTHING DUE -- Use this time to catch up on readings, work ahead on your scripts, etc.</p>
<p>Week 9: Oct. 26 – Nov. 1, 2009</p>	<p><i>The Improbable Connection.</i> (p.102)</p> <p>Film/s: TBA</p>	<p>Readings: Read: Johnson chapter 9- The Improbable Connection</p> <p>Assignment: <i>The Boxing Match</i> : final revision - due November 13</p>
<p>Week 10: Nov. 2 – 8, 2009</p>	<p>The Long-Short Screenplay (p.112)</p> <p>Film/s: TBA</p>	<p>Readings: Read: Cowgill chapter 12- Keeping Focused: What Does My Protagonist Really Want?</p> <p>Assignment: <i>The Improbable Connection. Part one</i></p>
<p>Week 11: Nov. 9 – 15, 2009</p>	<p><i>On Revision: substance and Style ...</i></p> <p>Film/s: TBA</p>	<p>Readings: Read: Johnson chapter 11-<i>Kosher</i> by Aimee Barth</p> <p>Assignment: Assignment: the Improbable Connection part two; Watch the movie <i>Kosher</i> (YouTube.com)</p>

Week 12: Nov. 16 – 22, 2009	<i>Characterization Strategies & Dialogue Strategies</i> Film/s: TBA	Readings: Read: Johnson chapter 10- The Long/Short Screenplay Chapter 12- <i>My Josephine</i> by Barry Jenkins Assignment: Assignment: The Long/Short Screenplay part one - due December 4 Watch the movie <i>My Josephine</i> (YouTube.com)
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THANKSGIVING BREAK: (Nov. 23 – 29, 2009)	NO CLASS THIS WEEK	NOTHING DUE -- Use this time to catch up on readings, work ahead on your scripts, etc.
Week 13: Nov. 30 – Dec. 6, 2009	Genres: <i>A Work in Progress</i> Film/s: TBA	Readings: Read: Johnson chapter 13- <i>A Work in Progress</i> by Wes Ball Assignment: Reminder: 15-25 Minute Screenplay revision - due December 18
Week 14: Dec. 7 – 13, 2009	Genres: The Hyperdrama & Experimental Narrative Film/s: TBA	Readings: Opportunities for renewal p.159 <i>Lena' spaghetti</i> Johnson chapter 14- <i>Lena's Spaghetti</i> by Rachel A. Witenstein
Week 15: Dec. 14 - 20, 2009 FINAL WEEK OF CLASS <u>FINAL re-writes DUE on/before 5:00 pm, Friday, December 18th!</u>	General discussion and conclusion of the course Marketing the Short Screenplay: <i>American GEM</i>, Short Screenplay Contest, etc.	Readings: "Breeze & Buzz" (p.188) <u>FINAL re-writes DUE on/before 5:00 pm, Friday, December 18th!</u> (No extensions: worked graded on what is completed by this date)

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Please review the following links and summaries for important information on University policies:

- [Academic Calendar/Registrar Information](#)
- [Bookstore](#)

- [Honor/Plagiarism Policy](#)
- [Regent Library](#)
- [Student Services](#) (includes links to student handbook, disability services, University calendar, University Writing Center, etc.)
- [Technical Support – University Helpdesk](#)

Extensions

Unless stated by the instructor in class, all assignments are due on the date stated in the syllabus at the beginning of that class period. **Late assignments will be graded down as indicated above without an approved extension.** Except in cases of extreme emergency, requests for extensions must be made to the instructor, at least (24) twenty-four hours *before* the assignment is due. Be prepared to defend your reason why you need the extension. Remember, deadlines in the film business are taken very seriously. This class, in preparing students to work professionally, will take the same attitude.

Incomplete Grades

Students desiring an incomplete must submit their request to the course instructor and academic dean prior to the end of the term. An incomplete grade will be given in a regular course only for legitimate deficiencies due to illness, emergencies or extraordinary reasons acceptable to the professor, including equipment breakdown and shortages, and not because of neglect on the student's part. Incompletes require the final approval of the school dean or his/her authorized representative. A regular grade will be given by the instructor if all requirements for the course are submitted by the end of the following academic term. The instructor will submit the new grade to the Registrar's Office no later than two weeks after the beginning of the subsequent term. If all work is not submitted by the end of the term following the granting of the incomplete, a grade of FX (NP on pass/fail courses) will be posted automatically unless a Request for Extension of Incomplete has been approved and submitted to the Registrar's Office. The FX shall be counted as an F in the computation of the GPA. Any student desiring reinstatement to the course after an FX or NP has been posted must register for the course in a subsequent term and pay the full current tuition for the course. In progress grades can only be given for independent studies, internships, practica, portfolios, theses and dissertations.

No incompletes for "lack of time" will be offered for SSW 512. Part of the discipline of obtaining a college or university education is the ability to plan deadlines for required work and to meet them.

Student Course Evaluations

Students will be given opportunity to provide the instructor, as well as the college administration with written feedback and evaluation of the course structure and its conduct. However, students should feel free to bring any concerns to the attention of the instructor at any time during the semester.

Screenings

We are all adults in this school. Any film or video I encourage you to study is purely for educational and instructive purposes to develop critical abilities – rather than for entertainment. In the case that the film or video recommended is at the R-rated level, and you politely indicate to me that you are having problem, I will offer a substitute at the PG-13 or lighter rating.

That said, as Christians we must be careful to remember: 1) not even the Bible, itself, "pulls the shades" on the blemishes of its characters – in other words, realism is there for an apparent purpose, and not to

gloss over the radical depravity of the human heart (Jer. 17:9); 2) if we “whitewash” human sin and try to “sentimentalize” the gospel, people in the world will challenge our dishonesty and may even make light of the “answers” we offer. Sin is serious business – it cost the sinless Son of God His life on a cross.

For these reasons, truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it emotionally. Indeed, the Bible is filled with PG-13, R, and even (what some might call) X-rated material (i.e., rape, incest, murder, adultery, dismembered concubines, etc.).

Of course our purpose as Christian writers is not to “glamorize” human sin, or to dwell upon it. But as Catholic novelist Flannery O'Connor was fond of saying: “the message of redemption is of no effect in a world without any memory of the violence of human sin” (*Mystery and Manners*). In other words, for O'Connor the gospel must become bad news before it is good news, etc.

Christian writer and film critic Ken Gire hears God speak in the most unlikely places in his millennial offering, *Reflections On The Movies*, where he proposes there is often far more at stake than our offended sensibilities when it comes to film and art, “... I would rather be told an R-rated truth than a G-rated lie” (35). In other words, for Gire, it is not a G-rated world that we live in and yet our God is present to speak in/through everything.

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Regent University
1000 Regent University Drive, Virginia Beach, VA, 23464
Phone (888) 718-1222
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