

Screenwriting: Syllabus

University of Jyväskylä
Prof. Paul Majkut, Ph.D.

September, 2009

All Lectures: Thursdays, 4:00-6:00 PM; and Fridays, 10 AM-12:00

Storyboard Sessions: Fridays, 12:00-2:00 PM

- *Students are encouraged (but not required) to attend the showings of eight films: Monday and Tuesday, 4:00-6:00 PM*

1. *Double Indemnity*, Directed by Billy Wilder, (1944)
2. *Confidential*, Directed by Curtis Hanson (1997)
3. *Out of the Past*, Directed by Jacques Tourneur (1947)
4. *Chinatown*, Directed by Roman Polanski (1974)
5. *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, Directed by Tay Garnett (1946)
6. *Kiss Me Deadly*, Directed by Robert Aldrich (1955)
7. *Touch of Evil*, Directed by Orson Welles (1958)
8. *Devil in a Blue Dress*, Directed by Denzel Washington (1995)

Required Texts:

The Bare Bones Book of Screenwriting, by J. T. Clark. WBC Publishing.
ISBN 978-0-9795102-0-5

Sunset Boulevard: The Complete Screenplay, Billy Wilder. University of California Press.
ISBN 0-520-21855-8

Required Film Viewing:

Sunset Boulevard, Directed by Billy Wilder, (1944)

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES, READINGS, AND FILMS:

Discussion sessions are seminars led by the professor. Students are expected to answer questions and make informed comments on the materials assigned (readings, film, storyboarding) for that day.

I. September 3, Thursday

Lecture: The General Attitude of the Writer,
 The Nature of Storytelling and Genres
Discussion: Introduction: Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard*

Required Reading:

The Bare Bones Book of Screenwriting, pages 7-14

Sunset Boulevard: The Complete Screenplay, pages vii-xvii, 3-20

Required Film Viewing:
Sunset Boulevard, Directed by Billy Wilder, (1950)

II. September 4, Friday

Lecture: Basic Terms and Structures
Discussion: Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard*.

Storyboard Session: Overview, Characters and Customization, Character and Object Manipulation, Props

DUE: Idea and rough treatment of Screenplay Project

Required Reading:
The Bare Bones Book of Screenwriting, pages 15-23

Sunset Boulevard: The Complete Screenplay, pages 21-45

Required Film Viewing:
Sunset Boulevard, Directed by Billy Wilder, (1950)

III. September 10, Thursday

Lecture: Characters and Characterization, Themes, Motifs, Moods
Discussion: *Sunset Boulevard*: Narrative Voice and Dub Over.

DUE: Rough Draft of Screenplay Dialogue

Required Reading:
The Bare Bones Book of Screenwriting, pages 24-35

Sunset Boulevard: The Complete Screenplay, pages 46-70

Required Film Viewing:
Sunset Boulevard, Directed by Billy Wilder, (1950)

IV. September 11, Friday

Lecture: The Mechanics of a Screenplay
Discussion: *Sunset Boulevard*: Plot Structure and the Flashback

Storyboard Session: 3-D Arrows, Light, Movement, Captions, Import Script

DUE: Second Draft of Screenplay Dialogue

Required Reading:
The Bare Bones Book of Screenwriting, pages 36-54

Sunset Boulevard: The Complete Screenplay, pages 70-95

Required Film Viewing:
Sunset Boulevard, Directed by Billy Wilder, (1950)

V. September 17, Thursday

Lecture: Visual Storytelling and Setting
Discussion: *Sunset Boulevard*: Conflict

DUE: Screenplay Dialogue Complete

Required Reading:
The Bare Bones Book of Screenwriting, 55-68

Sunset Boulevard: The Complete Screenplay, pages 96-126

Required Film Viewing:
Sunset Boulevard, Directed by Billy Wilder, (1950)

VI. September 18, Friday

Lecture: Critique of student work
Discussion: *Sunset Boulevard*: Characterization

Storyboard Session: Students introduce their own Characters, Props and Captions, Script., etc.

DUE: Screenplay Visual Narrative Complete

Required Film Viewing:
Sunset Boulevard, Directed by Billy Wilder, (1950)

VII. September 24, Thursday

Lecture: Critique of student work
Discussion: *Sunset Boulevard*: Empathy

DUE: Polished Screenplay Dialogue and Visual Narrative Complete

Required Film Viewing:
Sunset Boulevard, Directed by Billy Wilder, (1950)

VIII. September 25, Friday

Lecture: Critique of student work
Discussion: *Sunset Boulevard*:

Storyboard Session: Storyboard Session: Students complete their project.

DUE: Screenplay Project Complete; 5-page analysis of *Sunset Boulevard*

Required Film Viewing:
Sunset Boulevard, Directed by Billy Wilder, (1950)

General Considerations:

1. Students will complete one project:
 - a 25-30 page screenplay (fiction or documentary)
 - set the screenplay into Storyboard Quick
2. Students will write a 5-page analysis of *Sunset Boulevard*