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SCREENPLAYS 101 - PART 1: BASIC STRUCTURE

Instructor

NICHOLAS PAPPAS

Materials

Video modules, Handouts, Transcripts, MP3 Files, PDF of Powerpoint Slides, Completion Certificate

Course length

8 modules

1 hours, 22 minutes of video

3 credit hours

Course Description

Screenwriter Nick Pappas leads a two-part course on screenplays 101. Great scriptwriting is not something that can be covered in a single course: so we're going to start with the basics. Those basics are going to be split up into a Part 1 and a Part 2. Part 1, this course, will concentrate on basic film structure. Part 2 will concentrate on screenplay formatting.

By the end of this course, students should have a basic understanding of history, terminology, and are able to identify the barest bones of the three-act structure, all with an eye toward developing their own screenplay.

About the Instructor

Nicholas C. Pappas is a director, playwright, and dramaturge. His plays include *The Ballad of 423 and 424* (Heideman Award; Actors Theatre of Louisville), *Fatty* (Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor), *Including Shooter* (called "best play of the season" by critic Peter Filichia), and *The Dreams in Which I'm Dying* (Deb Aquila reading series with the American Theater Group). He has been published by *Dramatics Magazine* and *Playscripts*. Nicholas has done dramaturgical work at The Center Theatre Group, San Francisco Playhouse, Berkeley Rep, South Coast Rep, TheatreFolk, and for several college programs. He has directed for San Francisco Playhouse, Moorpark College, San Francisco State University, and others. A graduate of San Francisco State University's MFA program, he teaches at Moorpark College and is currently in development on several television and film projects. Keep up to date at nicholascpappas.com.

Course Curriculum

Module 0: Introduction 5:35

This module introduces the course, and outlines what will be covered in each section.

Module 1: What is a Screenplay? 10:53

In this module we're going to look at the history of the screenplay, identify what a screenplay is, how it's different than other forms of writing, and set up expectations for what's to come in future modules.

Module 2: Theater vs. Film from a Writer's Point of View 15:31

In this module we're going to look at playwrights and screenwriters, how the jobs differ and how they overlap.

Module 3A: The Three-Act Structure 16:18

In this module we're going to discuss the basics of the way we tell stories and how that influences the structure of a screenplay.

Module 3B: A Case Study 7:46

This is Module 3B - Structure: Pee-wee's Big Adventure - A Case Study where we'll take all of the theory that we discussed in Module 3A and apply it to Pee-wee's Big Adventure.

Module 4A: Protagonists: Goals, Obstacles, and Tactics 15:05

In this module, we'll examine how a protagonist is shaped by their goals, the obstacles against them, and how they use different tactics to get around those obstacles.

Module 4B: A Case Study 7:26

In this module we'll look at what we learned in module 4A and apply it to Pee-wee's Big Adventure.

Module 5: Wrap-Up 3:55

In this module we're going to wrap up Screenplays 101 - Part 1: Basic Structure and get ourselves ready for Screenplays 101 - Part 2: Basic Formatting.

Standards Connections

Virginia Standards Of Learning (2020)

Theatre Arts III: Intermediate Acting & Playwriting

TIII.10 - The student will investigate tools and techniques for contemporary media production, including camera techniques, film terminology, acting for the camera, creating screenplays, and the editing process.