

Master of Fine Arts in Writing for the Screen & Stage Course Descriptions

MWSS 500 Dramatic Storytelling (3) – During this residency, students will be introduced the foundational elements of all dramatic stories as well as will start short writing projects. Topics will include archetype characters, hero's journey, story purpose, and building blocks of storytelling - theme, want, need and traditional structure. Guest lecturers, seminars, screening and exercises will further encompass this residency. Lastly, students will map out their writing goals for the program.

MWSS 515 Genre, Form, and Style (3) – Part history, part genre and part form, this course will engage in the history, form and style of writing for the screen and stage. Students will engage in classical and contemporary screen and stage works to look at the spectrum of genres, styles, approaches and forms of works created throughout history. Prerequisite MWSS 500.

MWSS 520 Dramatic & Cinematic Theory (3) – Throughout history, the human race has been drawn to and lived through its stories. Cultural and societal norms are played out in stories for the screen and stage. And people just love stories. Students in this course will address these commonly regarded statements and will research and create theories that can be used to explain the phenomena of story.

MWSS 530 Writing for Screen & Stage I (4) – Students will develop and rewrite a short script and a short play. Students will focus on the creation of shorter dramatic stories in order to understand the tenants of telling successful brief narratives. A study of 1-minute and 10-minutes plays, webisodes, and short films will accompany the course. The art of pitching, story concepts, loglines, etc. will be introduced. Students will also start the rewrite process based on comments from advisors and fellow students. Prerequisite MWSS 500.

MWSS 545 Engaging the Audience (3) – An in-depth analysis of dramatic and cinematic structure, formulas, principles and storytelling will be the focus of the course. Students will study a wide range of successful films, shows and theatrical works and discover the common elements that they share as well as the different approaches each can take. Students will employ narrative devices to further develop scenes, sequences, acts and stories. Prerequisite MWSS 515.

MWSS 550 Writing for Screen & Stage II (5) – Students will develop and complete a full-length feature screenplay or stage play. Students will be expected to formulate and execute a draft with feedback from their advisor and selected classmates. Student will meet creative milestones throughout the semester. Prerequisite MWSS 530.

MWSS 600 Exploring Creativity (3) – During this residency, students will engage in activities to develop skills, disciplines and a plan for ensuring creativity in stories and in life. Course will introduce the habits of creative historical figures and current artists and writers as well as allow students to develop roadmaps to ensure their productive creativity. Students will also workshop stories, attend seminars and work with a number of guest lecturers. Lastly, students will work closely with advisors and fellow students to assess, pitch and develop stories for their thesis projects.

MWSS 620 Thesis I – Writing for the Screen & Stage (6) – Students in conjunction with their thesis advisor will develop and complete a first draft of a feature, a stage play or other collection of other

works. Students will be expected to employ the devices and materials introduced in the program to start work on drafting professional ready writing sample(s). Prerequisite MWSS 550.

MWSS 630 Writing Landscapes (3) – An overview of a variety of forms including situation comedies, hour dramas, non-fiction films, theatre, blogging, interactive media, gaming, vlogs, documentaries, etc. This course outlines the fundamentals of style, content and format specific to each and looks to provide information on avenues for careers and employment in the field. Student will engage with a number of writers working professional in specific areas.

MWSS 650 Thesis II – Writing for the Screen & Stage (6) – In this course, students will take one of the previous completed projects and take that project through and extensive outlining and rewrite process to ensure final projects are developed to their highest quality professional level. Prerequisite MWSS 620.

MWSS 660 Elective in Media Writing (3) – In this course, students will take the knowledge acquired in Writing Landscapes and will work on a project in a medium outside of their thesis subject(s). Students will appraise the media writing landscape and originate material to further diversify their writing portfolios. Prerequisite MWSS 630.

MWSS 665 Thesis Presentation (1) - This course will serve as the capstone presentation of the portfolio of work students have created throughout the program. Material will be presented in a public forum by professional actors and open to the public. Lastly, students will hone their polishing skills and will receive final critiques of their thesis projects. Prerequisite MWSS 650.

MWSS 670 Past, Present and Future (1) – Students will take assessment of their work in the program, provide a response to the notes provided from the readings as well as be required to pitch projects for future work on once the MFA program is completed. Prerequisite MWSS 650

MWSS 695 Internship or Teaching Practicum (3) – This optional course provides students to opportunity to intern with a production company, theater or similar or the ability to gain credit for teaching experience.

MWSS 698 Independent Study (3) – This optional course provides students the opportunity to develop an independent study with program mentors in a specialized area of writing for the screen and stage.