

Emily Thomas

SUMMARY

Writer, Producer, and Narrative Professional with 15 years of experience in storytelling, media, education, and advocacy. Proven track record of writing and producing nationally recognized scripted and documentary content that encourages and advances meaningful public discourse around consequential issues, including for the Netflix Original Series *Longmire*, which “paved the way for Native representation in entertainment” (*United Press International*), and Kartemquin Documentary Films, which was “founded to make democratic documentaries [and] be an actor in a democracy” (*Current*).

Commitment to the mentorship of young creatives, the demystification of film and television as both artistic practice and commercial pursuit, and storytelling education as a gateway for self-development and community engagement. Experience spearheading and managing media education programs and developing dynamic, progressive film and television curriculum aligned with the current landscape of professional media creation. Wide-ranging relationships within the film and television industry, and continued participation in artistic practice.

Demonstrated ability to responsibly and effectively reframe historically misunderstood social and cultural conceptions, and particularly skilled with the interpretation and translation of complex and nuanced topics. Driven by the belief that we can’t affect a problem we don’t understand, and extremely passionate about story as a powerful vehicle for education and impact. Dedicated to reshaping our collective consciousness through strategic narrative action.

EDUCATION

Columbia College Chicago | School of Film & Television

Bachelor of the Arts, Writing & Producing for the Screen

2010

Chicago, IL

- Graduated Summa Cum Laude
- Recipient of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences scholarship, a merit-based award
- Senior Thesis Advisor: Kristin Pichaske, Ph.D., Associate Chair Cinema & Television Arts
- Senior Thesis: an interdisciplinary documentary investigation regarding the impact of Renaissance 2010, the Chicago Public Schools “open enrollment” plan, on special education student populations

AFFILIATIONS

- Producers Guild of America, West
- Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh, Local 38061 (Point Park University faculty union)

PEER REVIEW

Peer Reviewer

“Understanding Screenwriting” by John Vourlis | Kendall Hunt Publishing Company

10/2023

Remote

LECTURE

Guest Lecturer

Columbia College Chicago | School of Film & Television | *Film & Television*

9/2024

Remote

Guest Lecturer

Robert Morris University | School of Communication & Media | *Cinema & Photography*

4/2019

Pittsburgh, PA

INSTRUCTION

Distinguished Artist in Residence

Point Park University | Conservatory of Performing Arts | *Cinema Arts*

8/2022 to Present

Pittsburgh, PA

- Distinguished Artist in Residence for 100-400 level courses and MFA workshops focused on film and television curriculum, including screenwriting, narrative structure, story analysis, creative producing, and logistical producing
- Nominated by faculty and students for the 2022-2023 Point Park Distinguished Teaching Award as a first-year instructor, and consistently set department standard for anonymous instructional performance evaluation by students
- Collaborate with faculty peers to assess current curriculum and evolve class offerings
- Regularly incorporate film and television guest speakers into class plans for education and networking purposes
- Design and facilitate Independent Study experiences unique to students' specific interests and educational goals
- Mentor and advise students one-on-one regarding course selections and their educational trajectories
- Engage students in collaborative, conversational, and involved discussions around the craft of film and television
- Liaise with the Office of Accessibility to strategize specific accommodations for students with neurodivergence, and implement appropriate amendments within the classroom to support success

Teaching Artist

La Roche University | Department of Communication, Media & Technology | *Film*

8/2019 to 6/2021

Pittsburgh, PA

- Teaching Artist for 300-400 level courses focused on film and television curriculum, including creative producing, logistical producing, screenwriting, television best practices, and visual storytelling
- Conceived and developed the course offering *Writing the Television Pilot*, fully designed class curriculum to complement existing offerings, executed inaugural run of class, and suggested adaptations for future use
- Tailored educational strategies to support the unique realities of a predominantly internationally-born and first-generation-college-student population, inclusive of many students for whom English is a second language

ADVOCACY

Media Consultant

Pittsburgh Action Against Rape

6/2024 to 8/2024

Pittsburgh, PA

- Contracted by the oldest assault-response nonprofit center in America to provide feedback to moderators of trauma groups regarding their selection and use of media materials as a tool for narrative reclamation for survivors of interpersonal assault and violence during their therapeutic relationship
- Outlined narrative reclamation processes related to survivor impact statements for court settings and personal use
- Utilized existing narrative reclamation examples to guide and inspire participants to challenge false narratives related to their victimization, and demonstrated the power of language to reframe and recontextualize personal history

PROFESSIONAL

Creative & Logistical Producer

***Brashear: Opening an American High School* | Malhari Media**

1/2023 to 1/2025

Pittsburgh, PA

- Primary strategic force guiding story construction for the documentary film *Brashear: Opening an American High School*, an examination of inequitable and inaccessible education practices in 1970s Pittsburgh, when the city's school system was the most segregated in the nation
- Fiscal sponsorship / 501c3 status with American Film Foundation, an Oscar, Emmy, and Sundance-winning film lab
- Crafted a thematically-driven pre-production story plan informed by preliminary interviews and research to support a dynamic, compelling feature-length story arc with a clear introduction, investigation, and conclusion
- Designed a production schedule inclusive of field shoots, sit-down interviews, on-the-fly interactions, and drone establishing material, and identified and sourced complementary archival footage
- Collaborate with director and logistical producers to plan and execute all footage capture, reacting in real-time to make necessary adjustments to accommodate the realities of the nonfiction filmmaking process
- Work directly with editing team to reconcile original story intentions with captured footage, while simultaneously preserving thematic intentions and critical story arcs

Script Consultant

Film Independent

3/2022 to 5/2022

Remote

- Assessed script submissions for the 2022 Episodic Lab with regard for urgency of idea, concept originality, thematic intention, structural integrity, character development, use of dialogue, merit of execution, and feasibility of production

Media Curriculum Coordinator

Pittsburgh Center for Arts & Media

12/2018 to 8/2020

Pittsburgh, PA

- Developed and implemented media curriculum during the merger of two nonprofit arts centers, Pittsburgh Center for the Arts and Pittsburgh Filmmakers, reimagining educational goals and strategically positioning department programming within the newly-formed Pittsburgh Center for Arts & Media
- Conceived and implemented a dynamic film and television curriculum, including classes in story development, character development, structure and plotting, pitching, creative producing, and the television writer room experience
- Mentored and guided instructors representing varied media and communications disciplines, including photography, cinematography, video production, screenwriting, and podcasting
- Built industry partnerships to strengthen department offerings and community engagement

Creative & Logistical Producer

Longmire on Netflix | Warner Horizon Television

8/2015 to 8/2017

Los Angeles & Santa Fe, NM

- Served as de facto Showrunner on set to guide translation of page-to-screen for acclaimed Netflix Original Series "Longmire," peaking at 6 million viewers per episode, and maintaining vast popularity across viewer demographics
- Ensured serialized tonal moments and episode-specific story beats were effectively captured on camera, collaborated with directors to troubleshoot continuity and clarity issues on set, and served as the primary point of creative contact for series regulars and recurring guest cast during rehearsals and filming
- Coordinated directly with the Assistant Directors Department to support the demanding realities of shooting 62 pages of material in seven days on a "5 out / 2 in" schedule, filming outdoors at 10k feet in inclement weather, navigating remote locations without cell service, and orchestrating up to three company moves per day
- Worked closely with Unit Production Manager and Line Producers to plan and track logistical and budgeting considerations prior to and during filming, balancing the priorities of creative requirements with available resources
- Contributed to early project development, story formulation, and script development, including plotting episode and season-specific narrative arcs and designating accompanying themes
- Participated in all meetings and processes throughout pre-production, production, and post-production, including notes sessions, casting sessions, table reads, departmental show-and-tells, director meetings, tone meetings, dailies review, edit reviews, and mix sessions
- Collaborated with Indigenous Peoples Technical Advisors to interpret and translate technical material, including the intricacies of sweat ceremonies, naming ceremonies, pow-wows, and daily rituals, and ensured the respectful and accurate depiction of Native storylines, characters, traditions, and themes

Producer, Script Coordinator, Writer Assistant

Longmire on A&E, Netflix | Warner Horizon Television

3/2012 to 7/2015

Los Angeles & Santa Fe, NM

- Produced content specific to Indigenous storylines, including planning and executing the depiction of an all-female Native American talent competition, which required extensive research, talent sourcing, and logistical navigation
- Served as the primary liaison between Indigenous Peoples Technical Advisors and producers and writing staff to support the accurate depiction and sensitive handling of Indigenous content
- Contributed to story formulation in the writer room and created comprehensive writer room notes for posterity
- Functioned as first-eyes on script material and proofed drafts for comprehension and clarity
- Scheduled and participated in all meetings and note sessions throughout pre-production, production, and post-production, including calls with A&E, Netflix, and Warner Horizon executives

Scripted Television Agent Assistant

WME Entertainment

3/2011 to 3/2012

Beverly Hills, CA

- Assisted two agents within Hollywood's oldest, largest, and most profitable packaging department
- Responsible for all department scheduling with Sony Pictures Television, NBC Universal (NBC, SyFy), MTV Studios (MTV, Comedy Central), and HBO Studios (HBO, Cinemax)
- Worked closely with individual clients and production companies, including Conaco Productions (Conan O'Brien), Carousel Productions (Steve Carell) and Olive Productions (Steve Buscemi) for development, pitch, and sale

Creative Associate

Kartemquin Documentary Films

1/2010 to 2/2011

Chicago, IL

- Assisted with all areas of production management and provided support for a variety of ongoing projects including the official 2011 Sundance selection *The Interrupters* and the Peabody Award-winning *No Crossover: The Trial of Allen Iverson*, both from Emmy-winning director Steve James
- Co-wrote NEH grant which earned \$75k in production funding for *Encounters With the Other*, a feature length documentary about the Tsimane people of Bolivia, from Peabody Award-winning director Maria Finitzo
- Planned and executed a fundraising event for 200 guests in support of the film *American Arab*