Prose is architecture, not interior design.
Ernest Hemingway

OBJECTIVES
The primary genre in the TFM program is the short film and this form will be our focus, though we will briefly explore the feature screenplay and the documentary treatment.

In 110 we will primarily explore the fundamental components of the craft that you will need to begin to master should you pursue study in the TFM department. However, these fundamentals of coherently structured and compellingly crafted prose will also apply to almost any career path you may choose.

Writing for the world’s various media outlets requires knowledge of the particular medium’s “standard conventions” – this simply means you need to do it their way or forget about anyone reading your submission. This expectation relates not just to your level of creative accomplishment, but to structure, the page format, the page count, and even the font. Stray from the norm and expect exasperated scowls and immediate rejection.

OUTCOMES
You will leave this course with a short story, an adaptation of this story as a short-film script, and coverage of a produced screenplay.

You will explore the landscape of the creative writing world, and come away from the class with a developing sense of how high the bar is set and how a writer’s outputs move about in the ecosystem. Without this perspective a writer will flap about in turmoil and waste years trying to decipher the code that will get their material read for consideration.

I try to create sympathy for my characters, then turn the monsters loose.
Stephen King

CREATIVE FEAR
Many students will be asked to read their work in class. Any creative endeavor is loaded with a fear of rejection. We all worry that we may potentially embarrass ourselves when we present our work. In entering any creative arena we must learn, first of all, to be
supportive and to present a reinforcing atmosphere in the class. Our comments and responses must always be honest, supportive, and free of belittling or dismissive behavior.

When someone reads in class, we applaud at the conclusion. We try to begin our critique on a positive note before discussing thoughtful and helpful suggestions.

Writing only happens when your butt is in the chair and your fingers are moving the keys.
Anonymous

THE PATH
Classes will consist of lectures, screenings, writing and reading assignments. The primary emphasis will be on writing.

TEXT

OTHER RECOMMENDED TEXTS
Snyder, Blake, *Save the Cat!*
Field, Syd. *Screenplay*
Field, Syd. *The Screenwriter’s Workbook*
Goldman, William. *Adventure in the Screentrade*
Seger, Linda. *Making a Good Script Great*

IMPORTANT SOURCES
simplyscripts.com

GRADING
Various writing assignments 20%
Eight-page short story 20%
Five-minute script adaptation of your short story 20%
Coverage of a produced screenplay 20%
Weekly Pages – 2 single-spaced pages per week 20%

DAILY PAGES
These are like a warm up for an athlete. They are sometimes stream of consciousness, sometimes crafted paragraphs, or rough notes about something that you may want to remember for a future project. Randomness is the key word.

ATTENDANCE
Class will begin promptly at 4 pm and on many days roll will be called immediately. If you are not in class when your name is called, it is an absence. If you arrive late it will not be an unexcused absence, but you must check with me at the end of class to avoid an unexcused absence. You must email me if you are going to miss a class. Put TFM110 in
the subject line. If you don’t email me before class it will be an unexcused absence and will be a one-point deduction from grade. More than four unexcused absences will result in an F in the class.

CLASS BEHAVIOR
No knives, no guns, no snakes, or parrots, or ferrets, no smoking, no vaping, no chewing, or dipping. No phones ever. Dogs okay if we don’t get caught. No food or drinks other than water. Civil language, civil discussion, compassionate and thoughtful critique, and a sense of humor are required.

MAKEUPS
No makeups on anything. The only possible acceptable excuse might be having a baby or an organ transplant.

Writing is the painting of the voice
Voltaire

FORMAT for ASSIGNMENTS
All writing assignments will be presented in a printed copy that is:
• In Courier 12pt font (this is the standard in the industry)
• With 1 inch margins top, bottom, and both sides
• Flush left, ragged right
• Stapled in the upper left corner (staple is the only acceptable fastener)
• Name, red ID, and date at the top on one line. One blank line, title, one blank line, to the start of body of assignment

Late assignments will be docked one letter grade per day that they are late.
Only hand in a COPY of your work. Retain the original and develop a system of backup to guarantee that you will not lose your projects.

STUDENTS with DISABILITIES
If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

DACA Students
The CSU has affirmed its commitment to ‘protecting access, affordability, intellectual freedom, inclusivity, and diversity for all students… including supporting DACA students.’ Discrimination, harassment, or retaliation against students, faculty, and staff on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexuality, disability, nationality, immigration status, and other categories of identity is prohibited. If you have concerns about your status at the university, please visit http://studentaffairs.sdsu.edu/EOP/ for information or contact the Dean of Students or the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs in your College.
PLAGIARISM
Plagiarism is stealing and we are required to report it to the Judicial Procedures Office.

*If I waited till I felt like writing, I’d never write at all.*
Anne Tyler