

CTPR 288 ORIGINATING AND DEVELOPING IDEAS FOR FILMS SPRING 2018 SYLLABUS

Class code 18467R

Overview of class: CTPR 288 gives you alternatives to ‘knee-jerk’ generic first story ideas by grounding you in actual details from life and observed reality.

Location & time: SCB 207; Tues 1-3:50pm

Instructor: Bita Shafipour, cell 424-542-4342
email: shafipou@usc.edu office: TBD

Office Hours: By appointment

REQUIRED READING:

“Creative Filmmaking From the Inside Out”, Dannenbaum, Hodge, Mayer, Fireside,

ISBN 0-7432-2319-5, 2003.

“Developing Story Ideas” by Michael Rabiger, second edition, ISBN 0-240-80398-1;

Focal Press, 2005

“The Artist’s Way,” Julia Cameron, ISBN 0-87477-694-5; Jeremy P. Tarcher/ Perigee Books; paperback, 2002

RECOMMENDED BUT NOT REQUIRED READING

“Writing Down the Bones,” Natalie Goldberg; ISBN 0-87773-375-9; Shambala Publications, Inc., paperback, 2005

“Fearless Creating,” Eric Maisel; ISBN 0-87477-805-0; Jeremy P. Tarcher/ Putnam Book, paperback, 1995

“Writing Your Life,” Deena Metzger; ISBN 0-06-250612-9; Harper San Francisco, paperback, 1992

Goals of this course:

1. **To strengthen your ability to conceive and develop ideas that will lead to compelling, authentic, personally meaningful films.**
2. **To facilitate the expression and development of your own unique artistic identity, cinematic voice and point of view through an exploration of personal experience, interests, concerns, values and inherent taste.**

3. **To motivate you to develop ideas for stories and characters through observation of, research into, and direct experience with real life.**
4. **To introduce connections between cinematic creativity and liberal arts education, drawing from a broad range of cultural sources.**
5. **To encourage awareness of the infinite possibilities for creative expression inherent in cinema, including documentary and experimental forms.**
6. **To enhance your collaborative skills through group discussion, giving and responding to feedback, and collective brainstorming.**
7. **To enable you to create a diverse portfolio of project ideas, outlines and treatments that you can draw on in future production classes.**

This is not a screenwriting class. The emphasis is on observation, visualization, developing intuition, self-exploration, emotional response, inspiration, aesthetics, meaning, impact, purpose, cultural context, what you want to express as a filmmaker and why, what you think film can and should be — all brought to bear through class discussion on the specific ideas you are developing. Additionally this is not a class where you get a great deal of critique of your work. Rather it is meant to be a safe environment to try many options and not be afraid to fail. Failure in this class will only have to do with not putting enough effort in and missing deadlines or too many classes.

Ongoing Assignments:

Observational Notebook — Awakening your senses. Keep a small notebook or sketchbook with you at all times. Write down notes and create word and/or image sketches. You are encouraged to also take still photographs of things you see around you that interest you. **Try to write at least a short paragraph every day in which you describe something you saw that day, and how you responded to it.**

Use the following 10 categories to stimulate what you seek out to observe, and to help you organize what you find:

- | | | |
|------------|---|---|
| Senses | — | sense impressions — smells, sounds, tactile sensations, tastes, visual images |
| Locations | — | places that are evocative |
| Objects | — | things that are suggestive of some deeper significance |
| Characters | — | people you find intriguing or complex |

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Dialogue	—	comments or exchanges you overhear that pique your interest
Situations	—	revealing circumstances and incidents
Acts	—	behavior that is emblematic or provocative
Titles	—	words or phrases you encounter that seem like intriguing titles
Themes	—	beliefs, ideas and values that seem basic to your understanding of life
Questions	—	questions you have about what you observe, about your response, and deeper questions evoked in the process

The goals of this exercise are for you to become a better watcher and listener; to develop sharper insights into human nature, behavior and relationships; to develop a habit of observing life and taking note of it; to become more attuned to your own distinctive interests and responses; and to have a storehouse of observations to draw on when creating stories, characters and dramatic or comic situations.

Weekly Journal — Every week on SUNDAY BEFORE MIDNIGHT – before Tuesday’s class, you will be required to email your class journal to the instructor. The journal is seen only by the instructor. It has two parts: **the first is a selection from your observational notebook above; the second is a discussion of whatever feels relevant that week to your experience in this class or to your creative development in general.**

A lot of your most important learning will happen experientially outside the classroom, and journals are a way to be more conscious of all aspects of this process, more mindful and more self-aware. Become interested in yourself. Become fascinated with your own emotional, spiritual and conceptual processes.

Surfing as a Source: a computer folder or clipping file — Begin tracking your habits when you surf the web: YouTube? Facebook? Twitter? Instagram? Now start considering the story ideas that you might find there.

Read a daily newsource – either on-line such as Huffington Post, or the old fashioned by - newspaper, and go on-line to find items in current events or human-interest stories. Create a folder on your laptop for images and articles. You should try to let material surprise you.

Dream Journal — Begin jotting down separate, private notes of dreams you have, for use in the Dream Sequence assignment. Do this first thing in the morning. Focus on the images and the emotions your dream evokes.

Reading Assignments — Chapters from “Creative Filmmaking”, Rabiger, and Cameron will be assigned as well as occasional handouts in class that will be required reading.

Written Assignments — Bring your laptop to class. All outside-of-class assignments must be computer-printed or typed. In addition, come to class prepared for in-class written exercises.

GRADING CRITERIA

In-class exercises	30%
Participation*	25%
Ongoing assignments (journal, notebook, clipping file, readings	45%
TOTAL	100%

Assignments - will be evaluated both on the quality of the work and the ability to meet deadlines.

***Class participation** - includes learning how to: workshop ideas in a group; provide constructive criticism; respond to critiques of your own work; sharing observations on assigned reading and classmates e-mailed assignments submitted prior to class.

Guidelines for this class:

This class will be conducted as a seminar, and so substantive student participation and regular attendance are required. **Attendance will be taken for each class and tardiness or absence will have significant bearing on your grade.** I expect you to complete assignments on time. If you have questions, please speak to me at least a week in advance of deadlines.

Two unexcused absences will result in a drop of your grade by one third (such as A- to B+).

Three unexcused absences will drop your grade by one full letter (such as B to C).

Four unexcused absences will lead to a failing grade.

Two lates equal one unexcused absence.

If you have to miss a class due to illness, please e-mail or call me before class.

Support Systems

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

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ALL STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO UNDERSTAND AND ABIDE BY THE USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS SAFETY GUIDELINES. VIOLATIONS OF ANY OF THE SAFETY GUIDELINES MAY RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION RANGING FROM CONFISCATION OF FOOTAGE TO EXPULSION FROM THE UNIVERSITY.

WEEK ONE IN-CLASS – 1.9.18

Self Portrait. Bring in construction paper, glue, markers, crayons and scissors. I will also bring in art supplies. You will be asked to create a collage-cut paper representation of yourself. Your uniqueness. Not a replica but a creative representation. Discussion to follow.

Write a brief essay (one to two pages) on whatever has tugged at your sleeve up to this point in your life. (DON'T TURN THIS IN, SAVE IT FOR THE LAST CLASS, AND BE READY TO COMMENT ON IT IN CLASS IF YOU CHOOSE.)

For example:

What has most worried you, pleased you, saddened you, outraged you, given you the greatest joy?

What have been your concerns, dreams, obsessions, demons?

What has made you pay attention?

What have you tried to ignore?

What have been your turning points?

What now feels most important, meaningful, fulfilling?

What do you value most?

Try to write in specifics rather than generalities. Search for vivid images and telling details, but don't get bogged down in how well this is written. Write it quickly, spontaneously and without self-judgment. This essay will be handed in, but read only by the instructor, and is not in any way judged or graded.

The writer should never be ashamed of staring. There is nothing that does not require his attention.

— Flannery O'Connor

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK TWO – 1.16.18

1) Add to your journal, a short comment on the experience of making your self-portrait and your reaction to your classmates response to it.

2) Bring in a small found object that you know nothing about but find intriguing, resonant, provocative, mysterious, soulful, etc. Good places to look might be thrift shops, junk yards, etc. For this assignment, don't choose a photograph, but if you come across a found photograph you like, keep it for a future assignment.

3) Bring in a list of three “worlds” - sub-cultures - that interest you but that you know little or nothing about.

4) Suggested Reading p1-46 pages of “Creative Filmmaking” – Introduction & Introspection

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...I need observation as a point of departure. My father [Auguste Renoir], who distrusted imagination, said "If you paint the leaf of a tree without using a model you risk becoming stereotyped, because your imagination will only supply you with a few leaves whereas Nature offers you millions, all on the same tree. No two leaves are exactly the same. The artist who paints only what is in his mind must very soon repeat himself."

—Jean Renoir

Nobody sees a flower really — it is so small it takes time — we haven't time — and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time.

— Georgia O'Keef

WEEK TWO IN-CLASS – 1.16.18**Found Objects & the Associative Cluster/Spider**

Look closely at the objects you and the rest of the class brought. Notice what first grabs your attention, then what you see after spending some time looking.

Also pay attention to your emotional response and sense of connection.

Take your object, or arrange a trade, and spend five minutes doing an **associative cluster**. Then, in ten minutes, **write the life history of the object**.

Share list of three "worlds or subcultures**Screen examples of Narrative and Documentary Films:**

"A Day's Work" – Rajeev Dassani

"Ready for Love" – Amy Adler

The problem with screenwriters today is that they don't write from experience. They write from having watched 25 years of television.

— David Colden

Experience is not what happens to you; it is what you do with what happens to you.

— Aldous Huxley

Music is your own experience, your thoughts, your wisdom. If you don't live it, it won't come out your horn.

— Charlie Parker

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK THREE – 1.23.18**Required Reading:**

***The Artist's Way* "Recovering a Sense of Connection" on Listening – pp 117 to top of 122**

"Creative Filmmaking" on Inquiry pp 47-70

“Developing Story Ideas” – Chaps 2-3, pp 15-28, Chaps 2-3

1) On one day this week, make **an hourly observational “sketch”** of what you see around you from the time you wake up to the time you go to sleep. Pick a day when you have a variety of activities happening, rather than a day of back-to-back classes.

Notice people’s expressions, gestures, body language and all the other nuances of their behavior and interactions. Think about how they have chosen to present themselves to the world through their clothes, hairstyle and makeup. Look for clues to the kind of work they do, and the life they lead. Try to guess “their story.”

2) Begin to make plans to experience one of the “worlds” you brought in this week (you can pick a different one if you’ve been struck with a new, more engaging idea). Plan to spend enough time (a couple of hours at least) so that you **get a sense of the texture, detail and characters of this world.** For **Week Seven, 2.20.18**, you will come to class with a set of observations (as in the observational notebook) drawn specifically from this experience.

This is going to be the beginning of your preparing your own documentary.

Examples:

“His shoes were spit polished. One sole was worn through so I could see his sock.”

“She tugged at her dress as he approached, uncomfortable in her own skin.”

“Rosary beads hung from his shopping cart.”

WEEK THREE IN-CLASS - 1.23.18**Check-in – Hour by Hour exercise****Observational Scavenger Hunt at USC Campus Center -**
(from information sheet)

Using each of the 10 categories of observations: senses, locations, objects, characters, dialogue, situations, acts, titles, themes and questions:

Go to USC’s Campus Center.

There you will find the following establishments/ locations:

Bookstore, Pharmacy, various eateries, Outdoor eating court, Ticket Purchase Office, Credit Union, Career Center, Annenberg Café (best Illy coffee), and

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Health & Human Services Datafest on the lower level of the building facing you as you enter the courtyard (?Ronald Tutor Hall).

Explore the area, collect your observations.

Note how many restaurants are there, which is your favorite & why?

Where might you film a scene or a short film - & why?

HAVE FUN, BE SPECIFIC, BE OUTRAGEOUS – i.e. step out of your comfort zone.

(spend 1.25 hrs on this, then return to class)

Reading - Autobiographical Survey, Rabiger, p. 40

Screen: “Arc of the Diver” – David Freedman

When I'm trying to control the story and make it do something, it doesn't work. When I quit trying, when I let the story tell me what it is, I get to a whole deeper level in my writing. Letting your work do itself this way requires, of course, an extremely intense, alert attitude. It's not passive; it's actively passive, passively active. One of those great Chinese ideas you chase all your life. — Ursula K. LeGuin

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK FOUR - 1.30.18

Reading pp 47-92, “Creative Filmmaking” on Intuition

Reread the essay you wrote in class the first week, trying to view it as if it were written by someone else. Ask yourself, “What themes would be particularly important to this filmmaker?”

Select a theme, and create an assemblage * which reifies** that theme. Make minimal or no use of representations of characters, and do not use text. Try out your assemblage on a friend before bringing it to class to see if the theme is being evoked in the way you intend.

*Assemblage: a sculpture consisting of an arrangement of miscellaneous objects, such as scraps of metal, cloth and string

**Reify: to embody, to make concrete

WEEK FOUR IN-CLASS - 1.30.18**Presentation of assemblages**

Write spontaneously and non-stop as you listen to the surprise music pieces. Don't seek plot or story — let what you write flow associatively from the music, emphasizing emotion and image.

Buena Vista Club #10; Yo La Tengo #10; Mozart Symphony #40, Shpongole – Music of Consciousness

A Feast of Photographic Images – choose one

Choose a color or shape in photograph you have chosen. **Create an associative cluster - "spider"** - around the word (two minutes). Then write for five minutes. Try to let the writing "do itself."

Screen: "Silver Baron" – David Beier

In school, I was always best in science and art. Actually, I wanted to be a painter.... Eventually, I realized that science and art are the same anyway. The artist has a paintbrush, and I have a tunneling microscope and a computer, but the creativity is the same.

— James Gimzewski

The fairest thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of art and true science.

— Albert Einstein

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK FIVE 2.6.18

What other fields of study and areas of culture speak to you? Bring to class next week **something from an area other than film that feels mysterious, provocative, emotionally resonant and exciting to you.** It should not be text-based, as least not in a linear, narrative manner. This thing, for example, might be a photograph, painting, drawing (from art, architecture, science, anthropology), a poem or set of song lyrics that is evocative without having an obvious literal meaning or narrative, an object with specific significance in a field (a fossil, a model of a molecule, a geometric shape), and so forth. Be prepared to describe for us the thoughts and emotions this thing calls up in you.

Also bring in twenty items (on separate 3x5 index cards) from your observational notebook, two from each of the categories listed in the syllabus. Write the category on one side of the card, and the observation (no more than brief one sentence long) on the other side.

Reading pp 93-116 Interaction, "Creative Filmmaking" & pp. 43-49, Observing From Life, Rabiger.

Plan ahead to have chosen by Week Eight, 2.28.17 a myth (or fairy-tale, fable, legend, etc.) that you are interested in adapting to a contemporary setting.

The first sign that a baby is going to be a human being and not a noisy pet comes when he begins naming the world and demanding the stories that connect its parts.... Nothing passes but the mind grabs it and looks for a way to fit it into a story, or into a variety of possible scripts....

— Kathryn Morton

WEEK FIVE IN-CLASS - 2.6.18

Pop Quiz – based on readings - open book

Instant Story: shuffle and spread out the index cards category-side up. Create three piles by selecting one card at random from each of the following categories:

Pile A: Senses, Characters, Questions

Pile B: Locations, Dialogue, Situations, Titles

Pile C: Objects, Acts, Themes

Game: pair up; pick a feature film; describe its theme/concept; in 3 sentences describe its story development

Screen: “My Dad’s a Rocker” – Zuxin Hou

Look at the observations in Pile A. As spontaneously as possible, write a one-sentence description of **a short documentary film** (5-10 minutes) inspired by these observations (you don’t have to use all three, and the inspiration can be oblique). Then write a one-sentence description of **a pilot for a web series** (5-10 minutes) based on the same observations. Finally, write a one-sentence description of **a short narrative film** (5-10 minutes). The entire process with Pile A should take no longer than ten minutes. Repeat with Piles B and C.

Select one of the three sets of ideas (A, B, or C) you generated with Instant Story. In 20 minutes, **rewrite your descriptions** for the documentary, web series pilot and narrative short films **as three three-sentence treatments** (beginning, middle, end).

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK SIX – 2.13.18

1) Locate a “found” candid photograph (one that is not posed, and about which you know as little as possible)

2) Reading pp 117-147 Impact “Creative Filmmaking”

3) Finding Intellectual Inspiration – what areas of study other than film have you particularly enjoyed and felt enriched by? Do any of these areas surprise you?

4) Artistic Nurturing – what visual or performance arts do you enjoy and experience now or in the past? Go on an artist date.

Remember that by **Week Eight, 2.27.18** you need to have chosen the myth (or fairy-tale, fable, legend, etc.) that you plan to adapt.

WEEK SIX IN CLASS - 2.13.18**YOUR FOUND PHOTOGRAPH**

Imagine that the “found” photograph you have selected is a single frame from somewhere within a short or very short film (1-10 minutes in length).

Pair up & discuss your photographs. Then, each of you In 10 minutes, write a brief two-paragraph treatment for that film.

I think there are two primal responses to the image. One is to find identification, and the other is to find narrative. And it's incredible how both those needs will always outweigh one's attempt to resist them.

— Atom Egoyan

Next, start a cluster writing based on a word or phrase suggested by the photograph. Then write 2 paragraphs as follows: the first paragraph should focus on potential images, motifs and themes in the film, perhaps discovered or clarified during the cluster writing. The second paragraph should be three sentences — one each for the beginning, the middle and the end of your story. Don't include plot or character details.

Pass your photograph to the left, and repeat the writing process with the photograph you receive from the right.

Screen: “Into the Arms of Strangers” – Mark Harris

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK SEVEN – 2.20.18

Develop your experience and understanding of one of the “worlds” you have chosen (you can pick a different one if you've been struck with a new, more engaging idea). Plan to spend enough time (a couple of hours at least) so that you **get a sense of the texture, detail and characters of this world**. Come to class with a set of observations (as in the observational notebook) drawn

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specifically from this experience. You should be thinking about: who would you want to interview for this project; How would you be able to do that...

WEEK SEVEN IN CLASS – 2.20.18

Bring your set of written observations of your “world experience” (be prepared to describe your experience to the class as well)

Discuss Elements of a documentary and a documentary treatment –

Screen: “Second Chance” – David Aristizabal, pitch tape & final; “Present Trauma” - Mark Manalo; “Say Aah” – Wendy Lee; “Back to Life” – Samantha Reynolds;

The documentarist makes endless choices. He selects topics, people, vistas, angles, lenses, juxtaposition, sounds, words. Each selection is an expression of his point of view, whether he is aware of it or not, whether he acknowledges it or not. - Eric Barnouw

I prefer to have people look at [the film “Mr. Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter Jr.”] and see what they make of it, in the way I did it thinking: “What am I doing? What am I really doing?”— Errol Morris

ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEK EIGHT – 2.27.18**PREPARE FOR PRESENTATION YOUR MYTH AND ADAPTATION**

- **Write a concise one-paragraph synopsis of the myth** or the part of a myth that you plan to adapt to a contemporary setting;
- **Write a three-sentence treatment of your adaptation;**
- **Write a concise paragraph on what, at this point, you feel about the story’s spine** (or theme, or idea, or “what the story is really about;”);
- **Describe its central conflict or dramatic tension;**
- **Describe the emotions you want the audience to experience** at the end (be careful to describe this in terms of what you want them to feel, not what you want them to think). The entire assignment should be no more than one page total, and should be **emailed to the rest of the class no later than midnight on SUNDAY.**

Read everyone else’s myth adaptation treatments before class

Read pp. 163-172, Chap. 17, Rabiger

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Plan ahead – WORK ON YOUR DOCUMENTARY TREATMENT (one-two pages) and presentation (five-minute oral presentation with still photos, three-minute excerpt from your interview) are **due Week 11, 3.27.18**. Starting either from the “world” you explored, or with a new topic discovered from or inspired by your clippings file, interview on audiotape for at least 30 minutes a potential character for a documentary film, and take still photographs of real-life situations relevant to your topic.

As you get further into the research, continue to focus and refine your approach. You should explore such questions as: 1) What will the film be about? 2) What will the film *really* be about? (thematic subtext, your point of view); 3) What will be up on the screen? What will the audience actually see and hear?; 4) What will the structure of the film be (e.g., chronological, topical, by character, etc.); 5) What will the style of the film be? What will make it cinematic?; 6) Why did you choose this topic? Why should this film be made? Why are you the person to make it?

WEEK EIGHT IN-CLASS - 2.27.18**MIDSEMESTER REVIEW -****PRESENT YOUR MYTH AND ADAPTATION IN CLASS**

Choose a character from your observations that interests you, one that is perhaps somewhat unfamiliar and yet not a total enigma. Spend a few moments recalling that character as vividly and as distinctly as possible.

Screen: “West Bank Story” – Ari Sandel;

I believe first memories have an enormous impact, and what I think is so beautiful about them is that they are definitely yours, there's nothing derivative about them. They're perhaps the only thing that you will ever know as your own. — Jane Campion

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK NINE - 3.6.18

Think of an early memory, perhaps just a fleeting moment, that you can say is “definitely yours,” and one that you haven’t told often as a story. Try first to remember the specific senses, and then your emotions. Write out what you remember as vividly and as specifically as possible, without editing and without trying to impose meaning or narrative.

Try this a few times, then **choose a specific memory** and **use it as the catalyst for an idea for a short film**. Feel free to fictionalize the idea, but keep at least an image or moment that comes from the memory. Write a one-paragraph

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treatment, which should be **emailed to the rest of the class no later than midnight Sunday 3.4.18** **Read everyone else's treatments before class on the 7th.**

WEEK NINE IN-CLASS - 3.6.18

GROUP COLLABORATION – REVISION & CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT –
Divide into groups. Each person describes his/her your short memory film idea and together the group works are strengthening the ideas.

PRESENT SHORT MEMORY FILM IDEA – Discuss elements of cinematic expression: performance, production design, camera, lighting, editing, sound design, music

Screen: Curtis Hansen's PITCH from "L.A. Confidential"

I write shortly after I wake up because one is closest to the dream world that one has just left. — Gore Vidal

— *Well, although 'day-to-day' reality appears to be continuous, there is that other world in which we spend perhaps a third of our lives: the 'night-to-night' reality of dreams. And the images in dreams are much more fragmented, intersecting in much stranger and more abrupt ways than the images of waking reality—ways that approximate, at least, the interaction produced by cutting. Perhaps the explanation is as simple as that: We accept the cut because it resembles the way images are juxtaposed in our dreams. - Walter Murch*

SPRING BREAK – MARCH 11 - 18**ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK TEN - 3.20.18****DREAM AS BASIS FOR FILM IDEA –**

Reread your dream journal from the beginning of the term until now. Think about what you learn from reading all the entries as a group. What are you struck by when you consider them together? Next, **choose one dream** that intrigues you, and that you wouldn't mind others hearing, and bring it to class (max length 5 mins.). Finally, think of what movies you've seen with dream sequences or that you know were inspired by or based on dreams.

<http://www.shortlist.com/entertainment/films/films-greatest-dream-sequences>
i.e. - WILD STRAWBERRIES, SOUNDER, LIVING IN OBLIVION, FISHER KING

Begin with a dream or part of a dream you've had. **Write a one-paragraph treatment for a short (2-10 minute) film or sequence in a film based on or inspired by the dream.**

Write as you might write in a dream journal (settings, characters, events, details, emotions, etc. Feel free to deviate from the actual dream but keep in mind how you actually experience dreams — try to maintain the “dream-like” quality and resist imposing narrative conventions. Instead, attempt to create coherence and structure through juxtaposition, association, archetype, motif, theme, etc.

WEEK TEN IN CLASS – 3.20.18

PICK IDEA MOMENTS FROM YOUR BREAK –

Reflect back on your experiences during the Break. What kernels of story ideas might you develop from your experiences? Write for 15 minutes.

More Group Collaboration - Develop your SHORT MEMORY or DREAM AS BASIS FOR FILM idea further. Rewrite and refine the paragraph you wrote (you can expand in terms of specific details, but don't add plot). Then describe how you might use the elements of cinematic expression (in terms of performance, production design, camera, lighting, editing, sound design, music, etc.) to create on film the “feel,” the dream-like quality of the sequence and its images.

Screen: “Bean Cake” – David Greenspan; “Paulie” – Andrew Nachman; “A Different Tree” – Steven Caple Jr.

Review Elements of a Documentary Treatment –

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK 11 – 3.27.18

Read pp. 163-172, Chap. 17, Rabiger on the documentary subject

Prepare Documentary Assignment, due week 11 – 3.27.18 (this coming week)

Your 5-minute Documentary Assignment, still photos, and three-minute excerpt from your interview will be due in class. Remember to consider such questions as 1) What will the film be about?; 2) What will the film *really* be about? (thematic subtext, your point of view); 3) What will be up on the screen? What will the audience actually see and hear?; 4) What will the structure of the film be (e.g., chronological, topical, by character, etc.); 5) What will the style of the film be? What will make it cinematic?; 6) Why did you choose this topic? Why should this film be made? Why are you the person to make it?

WEEK ELEVEN IN CLASS – 3.27.18**Present Documentary Assignment****ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEK TWELVE – 4.3.18****Continue Doc Assignments****WEEK TWELVE IN CLASS – 4.3.18**

Guest(s) – selected alumni or other guests whose work epitomizes creative contribution; in-class writing in response to issues raised by guests

Complete Doc Presentations**ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEK 13 – 4.10.18**

Creative Group presentations – creating a short film idea from a news story

Co-creating a story from a news article

1. Working with your partner(s), identify a news article that you both agree has potential as the basis for a short fiction film.
2. Create a story from its basic elements – describe in one sentence
3. Who are the characters (probably no more than 3)
4. In one sentence – as you would to your actor – each character
5. Now – how will you structure the story? Beginning? Middle – include 3 scenes? End? You get 2 sentences for each of these parts—
6. What are the obstacles – one sentence
7. Where was the conflict – one sentence

I ASSIGN PARTNERSHIPS OF 2

You will need to talk with each other before class and e-mail at least back and forth – the object of this is to continue to develop your co-creating 'chops'
I want you to have the skeleton of what you are going to present together BEFORE class – and send it to me by Monday night late:) –

NOTE THAT I HAVE LIMITED YOUR DESCRIPTIONS OF THE ELEMENTS OF YOUR STORY TO SINGLE SENTENCES, mostly. THIS IS BECAUSE YOU ARE STILL TOO LONG-WINDED AND NOT SUFFICIENTLY FOCUSED AS YOU DESCRIBE YOUR FILM IDEAS.

WEEK THIRTEEN IN CLASS – 4.10.18

GUEST –TBA

CREATIVE PARTNERSHIP PRESENTATIONS – creating a short film idea from a news story

ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEK FOURTEEN – 4.17.18

- 1) **Start conceptualizing your photo presentation.** Choose an idea for a film — either one you thought of as part of this class or one you were already considering, but haven't written out in any detail — and begin to develop the idea by compiling a photo presentation for it, as in Curtis Hanson's *L. A. Confidential* presentation. Don't write out the story. Just let the idea gestate in your mind as a **sequence of visual images** associated with character, mood, tone, setting and emotional content, while trying to keep your ideas as image-based and non-verbal as possible. Look for images you can photograph yourself or select from Google images or Flickr. **The photo presentation is due in class Week 15, 5.1.18**
- 2) **Make a list of five key emotional moments in your life.** Choose one, then try to bring back the visceral sense of the emotion(s) involved (perhaps an object, journal, letter, photograph, song, etc., will help). **Then imagine and visualize an entirely fictional film scene in your mind that captures and conveys that emotion as fully as possible.**
- 3) Think in terms of images, sounds, and character behavior, but don't worry about plot or how the scene fits into a larger story.
- 4) Write this scene out, focusing on emotion as expressed in cinematic language — setting, light, body language, dialogue, behavior, etc. Don't explain, just tell us what would we see and hear. **E-mail to the class as usual by midnight Sunday, 4.8.18.**

WEEK FOURTEEN IN CLASS – 4.17.18

Guest: in-class writing in response to issues raised by the guest.

Present Key Emotional Moments in Your Life Assignment

WEEK FOURTEEN IN CLASS – 4.17.18

TALENT WEEK – NO CLASS.

Instead go to at least 3 of the seminars presented during the five days; report in your journal which sessions you attended and what your 'take away' was.

<http://cinema.usc.edu/talent week>

this is an amazing opportunity for you to identify key people who you may want to work for in the future and to develop an up-to-date understanding of our field.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK FIFTEEN –4.24.18

1) Your photo presentations are due **Week 15, 4.24.18**. Plan for about five minutes of conveying to us your vision of character, mood, tone, setting and emotional content, without getting into plot except perhaps in the most basic way.

2) Finally, please go back and **reread the essay you wrote at the beginning of the term** (“whatever has tugged at your sleeve up to this point in your life...”). **Prepare to write in class a brief essay** on the extent to which your work in this class has reflected, illuminated, clarified, and/or altered these deeper concerns in your life. If you were asked to rewrite the essay now, would you revise any aspect of it?

WEEK FIFTEEN IN CLASS 4.24.18 LAST CLASS – “SUMMATIVE EXPERIENCE”

Complete course evals as sent to you on your computers

Photo presentations due

Re-read your initial essay, write brief essay reflecting on your work over the semester in the class.

STUDY DAYS – April 28-May 1 (no assignment)

FINAL EXAM on 5.2.18 – to be sent via e-mail to instructor by the end of the day.

Write brief notes on all the assignments including the ongoing ones — what you did or didn't do, what worked for you, what you'd like to go back to at some point, what you'd like to continue to do as a regular practice.

FINAL SPLENDID QUOTE FROM OUTSTANDING FILMMAKER

We haven't even reached by far 10% of what film language can offer, so why do we think it's coming to an end? We're still at the beginning. We can still discover so many possibilities. If we stick to the idea that strong films are always personal, then there's 5.8 billion possibilities for films, 'cause there's that many people whose views we can share.

— Tom Tykwer

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Any student requesting accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the directing instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301, and is open 8:30 am – 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.