



FILM 325.01

Screenwriting V: Script Analysis

Instructors:

Cihat ARINÇ (PhD), Assistant Professor in Film Studies

Eranda MAHAGAMAGE (MA, PhD Cand.), Instructor in Film Studies

Semester: Autumn 2025 / 2025–2026-1

Course Level: Undergraduate

Course Type: Unrestricted and HSS (Humanities and Social Sciences) Elective

Prerequisite: None

Course Credits: 3 credits (3+0+0)

ECTS Credits: 6 credits

Class Days and Hours: Friday, 09:00 – 11:50

Office Hours: Friday, 12:00 – 13:00 (by appointment), Mithat Alam Hall, South Campus

Building: Mithat Alam Hall (South Campus)

Classroom: Cinema Hall

Virtual Classroom: BU Courseware, FILM 325.01, 2025/2026-1

Online Learning Management System: <https://moodle.bogazici.edu.tr>

Student Information and Registration System: <https://registration.bogazici.edu.tr>

Instructor 1 Email: cihat.arinc@bogazici.edu.tr

Instructor 2 Email: erandamahagamage@gmail.com

Last Update: Monday, September 22, 2025



Instructors' Welcome Message:

Dear students,

We hope this message finds you well and welcomes you with enthusiasm at the start of the new academic semester. My name is **Cihat Arınç**, and together with **Eranda Mahagamage**, we will be your instructors for **FILM 325.01 – Screenwriting V: Script Analysis**, Fall 2025 semester. We would like to thank you for choosing this course and for giving us the opportunity to guide you in studying film scripts from page to screen, with a strong emphasis on the critical analysis of key storytelling elements.

In this course, we will explore screenwriting techniques, including the inciting incident, planting and pay-off, ellipsis, the point of no return, twists, moments of revelation and recognition, exposition, backstory, and strategies for fostering audience empathy toward the central character. We will also pay a particular attention to key storytelling elements, focusing on narrative structure, story patterns, thematic depth, tone, setting, character development, conflict, dramatic events, action/reaction cycles, beats, climax, denouement, dialogue, subtext, style, and genre conventions.

The course syllabus, available on Moodle, contains all the necessary information: description, objectives, schedule, assessment methods, assignments, criteria, policies, and more. We strongly encourage you to read it carefully.

Our goal is to create an engaging, interactive, and stimulating learning environment where each of you can actively participate. We encourage you to attend classes regularly, prepare by completing the readings and film viewing assignments, and contribute to classroom discussions with your insights and reflections. Your participation will be essential in making this learning journey meaningful and enriching for everyone.

For our part, we are committed to coming to class fully prepared, open-minded, and available, and to supporting you with constructive feedback and opportunities for discussion during office hours. Please do not hesitate to contact us by email or in person if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

We are confident that we will share an intense and stimulating semester together, discovering the principles of screenwriting through the analysis of award-winning screenplays from classic, modern, and contemporary cinema.

We look forward to seeing you in class every **Friday** from **09:00** to **11:50**.

Best regards,

Cihat ARINÇ (PhD), Assistant Professor in Film Studies

Eranda MAHAGAMAGE (MA, PhD Cand.), Instructor in Film Studies



01 Course Overview

Course Description:

This course offers an in-depth exploration of the art and craft of screenwriting, focusing on the close study and critical analysis of film scripts from page to screen. Building upon the foundations of screenwriting, the course emphasizes both the practice of writing and the interpretive analysis of scripts, allowing students to approach screenwriting not only as a technical craft but also as a mode of cinematic thinking. At the heart of the course lies a detailed engagement with the essential storytelling elements that shape effective screenplays. Students will examine narrative structure and story patterns; thematic depth and tonal consistency; the dynamics of setting; and the intricate processes of character development, conflict construction, dramatic turning points, cycles of action and reaction, narrative beats, climaxes, and denouements. Special attention will also be given to dialogue and subtext, stylistic choices, and the negotiation of genre conventions. In addition to these fundamentals, the course will explore advanced screenwriting techniques that enrich narrative design and heighten dramatic impact. These include the inciting incident, planting and payoff, ellipsis, the point of no return, plot twists, moments of revelation and recognition, and strategies for incorporating exposition and backstory seamlessly into the flow of the narrative. The cultivation of audience empathy—particularly in relation to the central character—will be treated as a key objective of scriptwriting practice. The preliminary sessions will introduce the building blocks of screenwriting: the parts of a script, the history and evolution of scriptwriting, the basic forms and conventions of screenwriting, and the fundamental objectives of the craft. Alongside these foundations, the course will highlight the “language of cinema” as the indispensable medium through which screenwriters articulate stories. Writing for the screen will thus be approached as an act of thinking cinematically — conceiving stories in visual, auditory, and performative terms. By the end of the course, students will have acquired both the analytical skills necessary to interpret screenplays critically and the creative tools required to craft their own scripts with a heightened awareness of cinematic form, narrative strategy, and audience engagement.

Prerequisites:

There are **no prerequisites** or **minimum requirements** for enrolling in this course, which serves as an introduction to the **first part** of world film history and provides the foundation for further studies in the field. A **university-level proficiency in English** (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) is required, as it is necessary for engaging with international texts and bibliographic materials, as well as for viewing films or excerpts in their original language with



English subtitles. No specific background in film studies is mandatory. The course is open exclusively to **undergraduate students**.

Enrolment and Consent Requests:

Prospective students are strongly encouraged to enrol in advance of the last day of the registration period as maximum enrolment is limited to **20 participants** to allow for class cohesion, effective small group activities, and vibrant interactive discussions. Unfortunately, exceptions to this capacity are extremely limited and can only be granted with the instructor's approval of students's "**consent**" requests.

Objectives:

The primary objective of this course is to develop students' skills in creative writing through the study, writing, and analysis of film scripts. By the end of the course, students are expected to achieve the following learning outcomes:

- Gain familiarity with the methods of writing film scripts.
- Understand the theoretical foundations of screenwriting.
- Analyze the technical aspects of film scripts.
- Examine and discuss examples of both feature-length and short film scripts.
- Cultivate the ability to think and write in cinematic images.

Teaching Methods:

The course combines both theoretical and practical activities, designed to foster critical and participatory learning. **The main teaching methods include:**

- Lectures;
- Required and suggested readings;
- Individual film viewing and in-class screenings of excerpts;
- Individual and group discussions;



- Independent study;
- Virtual interactions;
- A written paper on a female director and a specific historical period.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, **students will be able to:**

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the fundamental principles, forms, and conventions of screenwriting;
- Identify and describe the essential elements of screenplay construction, including narrative structure, character development, conflict, theme, tone, dialogue, and genre conventions;
- Explain advanced screenwriting techniques such as the inciting incident, planting and payoff, ellipsis, point of no return, plot twists, revelation, recognition, exposition, and backstory integration;
- Critically analyze screenplays and film scenes, recognizing how script elements translate from page to screen in terms of cinematic language, visual storytelling, and dramatic effect;
- Interpret the relationship between story, plot, and cinematic temporality, and articulate how screenwriters shape narrative meaning through structural and stylistic choices;
- Apply the concept of “cinematic thinking” by conceiving and developing original ideas in visual, auditory, and performative terms;
- Evaluate award-winning screenplays across classical, modern, and contemporary cinema, situating them within broader cultural, industrial, and aesthetic frameworks;
- Formulate constructive feedback on peers’ writing, supporting judgments with reference to theoretical and practical principles of screenwriting;
- Develop and revise their own scripts, demonstrating an ability to combine creative storytelling with critical reflection and technical proficiency;
- Communicate effectively in written and oral forms through presentations, analyses, and discussions, employing the appropriate critical language of screenplay studies.



Class Meetings:

Class sessions will be conducted in a variety of formats—including lectures, discussions, screenings, oral presentations, and group activities—in order to stimulate critical reflection and foster active student engagement. Instructor-led lectures will build upon and synthesize the material presented in the assigned readings, and, where appropriate, will be supported by audiovisual resources. To encourage consistent attention and participation, lecture slides will generally be made available on the course Moodle site following each class. While many lectures will address the basic concepts and foundational principles of screenwriting, the overarching aim of the course is to enable students to apply these concepts and principles to the close examination of specific film scripts and individual scenes. In addition to film screenings, selected screenplays will also be studied and analyzed.

Virtual Classroom:

All course materials will be published on the Moodle homepage created for this course: <https://moodle.bogazici.edu.tr> (click on “**2025/2026-1, SCREENWRITING V: SCRIPT ANALYSIS**”). Moodle is the university’s Learning Management System (LMS), where students—using their own username and password—can access the syllabus, announcements, class cancellations, direct messages from the instructor, readings, lecture notes, slides, guides, handouts, exam results, and other documents. Students may also post questions and exchange ideas with the instructor and classmates through the discussion forum. They are expected to check their Moodle accounts and messages regularly. Final course grades will be made available through Boğaziçi University’s Student Information and Registration System at <https://registration.bogazici.edu.tr>.

Course Texts:

- Bang, J. (2022). *Script analysis: deconstructing screenplay fundamentals*. Routledge.
- Thomas, J. (2020). *Script analysis for actors, directors, and designers* (6th ed.). Routledge.
- Snyder, B. (2005). *Save the cat!: the last book on screenwriting that you’ll ever need*. Michael Wiese Productions.
- Field, S. (2005). *Screenplay: the foundations of screenwriting*. Delta Trade Paperbacks.
- Seger, L. (1994). *Making a good script great* (Rev. 3rd ed.). Samuel French Trade.



* *Additional readings are assigned when needed, thus students are required to check the course schedule for further texts.*

Important Dates and Deadlines:

Below are important dates and deadlines for add/drop and drop periods, midterm exam and final paper.

Exam / Assignment	Date / Deadline
Add/Drop Period	Monday, 29 September 2025 – Wednesday, 1 October 2025 (without a grade)
Course Withdrawal	Monday–Friday, 17–21 November 2025 (with a “W” grade)
Midterm Exam (In-class written exam)	6th week (Paper copy in the classroom)
Final Assignment (Essay on a chosen topic)	Last week (Online submission on Moodle)

Syllabus Disclaimer:

This syllabus is subject to occasional changes. It is students’ responsibility to keep track of those changes as we progress through the term.

Content Disclaimer:

During this course, students will be exposed to films and film excerpts created and produced by third parties not affiliated with the university. These works have been selected for their historical, cultural, and aesthetic significance and will be analyzed within the framework of critical, university-level study. Please note that some materials may include depictions of violence, drug use, suggestive or explicit sexuality, nudity, strong language, and cultural, religious, or political themes that may be considered controversial. Such content is presented solely for educational and critical analysis purposes. The views and perspectives expressed in the films are those of their creators and do not necessarily reflect those of the instructor, the institute, or the university. Enrollment in this course constitutes acknowledgment and



Boğaziçi University, Institute of Film and Media Studies Certificate Program in Film Studies

acceptance of the possibility of encountering such content, as well as a commitment to approach it with an open, critical, mature, and responsible mindset. Exemptions from class meetings, assignments, or assessments will not be granted on the basis of film content.

Important Reminder:

All lectures for FILM 325.01 will be delivered by **Mr. Eranda Mahagamage**, who will be responsible for presenting course content, leading class discussions, and guiding students through the assigned readings and screenings. **Asst. Prof. Cihat Arınç** will oversee the administrative coordination of the course, including matters related to registration, student records, attendance tracking, and overall program requirements. Students are expected to direct questions regarding lectures, readings, and assignments to **Mr. Mahagamage**, while administrative issues or concerns about course procedures should be addressed to **Asst. Prof. Arınç**. This division of responsibilities is designed to ensure that both the academic and administrative aspects of the course are managed effectively and that students receive clear and appropriate support in each area.

Instructor's Short Biography:

Cihat Arınç is an Assistant Professor of Film Studies and the Director of the Institute of Film and Media Studies at Boğaziçi University. He teaches in the Institute's Certificate Programme in Film Studies and previously served as an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Western Languages and Literatures at Boğaziçi University and in the Department of Film and Television at Bahçeşehir University. He earned his PhD in Visual Cultures from Goldsmiths College, University of London. Prior to his doctoral studies, he completed an MA in Philosophy at Boğaziçi University and a BA in Film and Television at Istanbul University. Arınç's research explores the intersections of film, history, and memory. He has taught undergraduate and graduate courses on subjects including the representation of history and memory in cinema, urban space in film, adaptation studies, and film analysis. His publications include articles and book chapters in *Directory of World Cinema: Turkey* (London: Intellect Books, 2013), *World Film Locations: Istanbul* (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2011), and *The Curatorial: A Philosophy of Curating* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

Eranda Mahagamage is a multi-faceted Sri Lankan artist whose work spans cinema, writing, research, blogging, and the criticism of cinema and visual arts. Renowned for his deep engagement with both cinema and philosophy, Mahagamage has significantly contributed to the enrichment of cinematic narratives and intellectual discourse in Sri Lanka and Türkiye. A



Boğaziçi University, Institute of Film and Media Studies Certificate Program in Film Studies

recipient of the prestigious Türkiye Scholarships, he is currently pursuing doctoral studies in cinema at Istanbul Medeniyet University, where his thesis explores the philosophical paradox between contingency and determinism in the context of transcendental cinema. Alongside his research, he teaches courses on cinema and aesthetics at various universities, combining academic rigor with creative insight. Mahagamage's academic journey reflects his interdisciplinary approach. His undergraduate dissertation, "A Study of Cinema and Philosophy Based on Jacques Rancière's French Philosophical Tradition" (University of Colombo, Sri Palee Campus, 2015), was followed by two master's dissertations: "Film Phenomenology: A Special Study on Dharmasena Pathiraja's Cinema" (Savitribai Phule Pune University, India, 2019) and "Making, Dwelling and Documentary Cinema: Historical Dialogues on the Documentary *Life Beyond the Embers*" (University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, 2020). In 2017, he co-authored the book *Transcendental Cinema* with award-winning filmmaker Vimukthi Jayasundara, published in Sri Lanka. He further honed his craft at the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune, and attended a winter course at Maynooth University, Ireland. As a director, Mahagamage is known for socially engaged, visually striking narratives. His short films *Once Upon a Time with Cowboys* (2015) and *Living Without Life* (2015) garnered critical acclaim, with the latter receiving a Special Jury Mention at the SAARC Film Festival. His other notable works include *Digital Womb* (2015), *Uncertain Breath* (2024) — a moving reflection on the Hatay earthquake in Türkiye — and *Her, Him and Other* (2018), for which he served as executive producer; the latter was selected for the Locarno International Film Festival. Mahagamage's documentary work spans diverse themes, from cultural heritage to social resilience. His projects include *A Rapid Story* (2015), *Koralawella* (2015), *Anuradhapura Heritage* (2016), *3 Notes: A Dance and Community Project in Sri Lanka* (2020), and *Life Beyond the Embers: Kilinochchi* (2021), produced in partnership with GIZ. His 2023 documentary *Song from the Black Sea* focuses on the lives of women in Türkiye. His creative achievements have been recognized internationally, earning awards from festivals such as the Peace Film Festival (Las Vegas) and REAL TO REEL (Los Angeles). His Turkish short film *Belirsiz Nefes* won the Best Actress Jury Award at the Ahmedabad International Film Festival (India). He has served as a jury member for the Jaffna International Film Festival (Sri Lanka, 2023) and the International Hill Film Festival (Bangladesh, 2025), and worked for two years as an event coordinator for the Istanbul International Students Short Film Festival.

Instructor's Office Hours:

Weekly office hours are a dedicated time when the course instructor is available to answer students' questions, discuss course content, and provide academic support. For this course, office hours will be held by **Mr. Eranda Mahagamage** on **Fridays** from **12:00** to **13:00** at **Mithat**



Boğaziçi University, Institute of Film and Media Studies Certificate Program in Film Studies

Alam Hall. Students are kindly asked to make an appointment via email before attending office hours. If students have scheduling conflicts that prevent them from attending at the designated time, they may arrange an alternative meeting day or time with the instructor by email.

Instructors' Contact Information:

All course-related communication will be conducted primarily via email. Students may contact erandamahagamage@gmail.com regarding course content, and cihat.arinc@bogazici.edu.tr for administrative matters. When sending an email, students must include the course code (**FILM 325.01**) in the subject line to avoid confusion. The instructors will make every effort to respond to student inquiries within 24 hours on weekdays or 48 hours on weekends. In any case, all emails will receive a reply within 48 hours, Monday through Friday.



02 Schedule

WEEK 1 — Introduction to Screenwriting and Script Analysis

The **opening session** will introduce the fundamentals of screenwriting and script analysis, beginning with a discussion of what a film script is and how it functions as a blueprint for cinematic storytelling. Several short films and selected clips will be screened, followed by class discussions to familiarize students with the basic elements of script analysis. The session will also address the concept of cinematic thinking — writing with images — through examples drawn from film scenes. Students' own reflections will be incorporated to explore how cinematic ideas take shape in practice and how visual thinking informs the craft of screenwriting.

Required Reading:

- Bang, J. (2022). **Introduction**. In *Script analysis: deconstructing screenplay fundamentals* (pp. 1–7). Routledge.
- Field, S. (2005). **Introduction**. In *Screenplay: the foundations of screenwriting* (pp. 1–14). Delta Trade Paperbacks.
- Seger, L. (1994). **Introduction**. In *Making a good script great* (Rev. 3rd ed., pp. xv–xix). Samuel French Trade.

WEEK 2 — Basic Elements of a Film Script

The **second session** will introduce the basic elements of a film script, encouraging students to read and compare screenplays in order to identify their distinctive features and to recognize the differences between screenwriting and other forms of creative writing. The session will also present Syd Field's influential theory of screenwriting alongside a brief overview of the history of the discipline. Core concepts such as the tripartite structure of beginning, middle, and end, as well as the narrative logic underpinning cinematic storytelling, will be discussed as foundational principles of the craft.

Required Reading:

- Field, S. (2005). **What is a screenplay?** In *Screenplay: the foundations of screenwriting* (pp. 15–30). Delta Trade Paperbacks.

Required Viewing:

- *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941)
- *Two & Two* (Babak Anvari, 2011)



WEEK 3 — Creating a Myth: Idea Development, Theme, and Premise – The “Why” of Cinematic Storytelling

The **third session** will explore the craft of generating and shaping “cinematic ideas” as the basis for a cohesive film script. Students will consider how ideas originate, develop, and can be transformed into screenplays through practical creative methods. The concept of “creating a myth” will provide a guiding framework, encouraging students to reflect on their own understanding of cinema and to contribute personal ideas to class discussions. In doing so, the session highlights both the imaginative and methodological dimensions of idea development in screenwriting. The discussion will also introduce two core concepts: theme and premise. The “theme” represents the screenplay’s central subject or governing idea — the underlying truth that unifies the narrative. While some scripts make their themes explicit, others embed them more subtly beneath the surface. The “premise,” by contrast, defines how that theme is given dramatic shape within the story: it establishes the specific situation, conflict, or framework through which the theme unfolds on screen. Put simply, the theme expresses what the story is about, while the premise determines how it is told.

Required Reading:

- Thomas, J. (2020). **Idea**. In *Script analysis for actors, directors, and designers* (6th ed., pp. 134–157). Routledge.
- Seger, L. (1994). **Gathering ideas**. In *Making a good script great* (Rev. 3rd ed., pp. 1–18). Samuel French Trade.
- Bang, J. (2022). **Theme and premise**. In *Script analysis: deconstructing screenplay fundamentals* (pp. 11–16). Routledge.
- Field, S. (2005). **The subject**. In *Screenplay: the foundations of screenwriting* (pp. 31–42). Delta Trade Paperbacks.

Required Viewing:

- *Joker* (Todd Phillips, 2019)

Suggested Further Viewing:

- *The Seventh Seal* (*Det sjunde inseglet*, Ingmar Bergman, 1957)
- *Seven* (*Se7en*, David Fincher, 1995)
- *Taste of Cherry* (*Ta'm e guilass*, Abbas Kiarostami, 1997)
- *The Truman Show* (Peter Weir, 1998)



WEEK 4 — Story: Narrative Content – The “What” of Cinematic Storytelling

The **fourth session** will examine “story” as the narrative core of film. A story represents the complete narrative of a screenplay and serves as the foundation of cinematic storytelling. It provides the broader framework of what happens, why it matters, and how it transforms the characters. Students will learn to analyze a film’s story by asking key questions: Where is it set? What event initiates the action? Who are the central characters, and what conflicts do they encounter? What is at stake, and how do the events unfold? How is the conflict resolved, and what ultimate impact does it leave on the characters? Through this framework, the session equips students with the fundamental tools for identifying and articulating the narrative content of film.

Required Reading:

- Bang, J. (2022). **Story**. In *Script analysis: deconstructing screenplay fundamentals* (pp. 37–57). Routledge.

Required Viewing:

- **Parasite** (*Gisaengchung*, Bong Joon Ho, 2019)

Suggested Further Viewing:

- **Ali: Fear Eats the Soul** (*Angst essen Seele auf*, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1974)

WEEK 5 — Plot: Narrative Structure – The “How” of Cinematic Storytelling

The **fifth session** will explore “plot” as the structural dimension of cinematic storytelling — the deliberate selection, organization, and arrangement of events that shape how a story is told. Unlike story, which concerns the narrative content, plot addresses the “how” of storytelling: the structure, order, and pacing of events that generate tension, drive conflict, and sustain audience engagement. Students will examine the three-act structure as a foundational model of narrative design, with particular attention to the function of subplots and strategies for maintaining dramatic momentum, especially in the second act. The discussion will also address the hierarchy of plot events, distinguishing between major turning points that compel characters to make crucial choices and minor events that enrich the narrative without being decisive. Finally, students will explore how filmmakers use linear and non-linear plotting to shape meaning and guide audience expectations. Peter Weir’s *Witness* (1985) will be examined to provide a practical example for analysis. To analyze the film’s plot, students will be encouraged to ask: How and when is the central conflict introduced? How are the main



characters brought into the narrative? How does the plot force characters to confront conflict? How is the story propelled toward resolution? And how are the initial conflicts ultimately resolved?

Required Reading:

- Bang, J. (2022). **Structure**. In *Script analysis: deconstructing screenplay fundamentals* (pp. 58–77). Routledge.
- Seger, L. (1994). **The three-act structure: why you need it and what to do with it**. In *Making a good script great* (pp. 19–49). Samuel French Trade.
- Seger, L. (1994). **What do subplots do?** In *Making a good script great* (pp. 50–64). Samuel French Trade.
- Seger, L. (1994). **Act two — how to keep it moving**. In *Making a good script great* (pp. 65–85). Samuel French Trade.

Suggested Further Reading:

- Thomas, J. (2020). **Foundations of the plot: given circumstances**. In *Script analysis for actors, directors, and designers* (6th ed., pp. 22–44). Routledge.
- Thomas, J. (2020). **Foundations of the plot: background story**. In *Script analysis for actors, directors, and designers* (6th ed., pp. 45–65). Routledge.
- Thomas, J. (2020). **Plot: external and internal action in the dialogue**. In *Script analysis for actors, directors, and designers* (6th ed., pp. 66–84). Routledge.
- Thomas, J. (2020). **Plot: progressions and structure**. In *Script analysis for actors, directors, and designers* (6th ed., pp. 85–113). Routledge.
- Field, S. (2005). **Endings and beginnings**. In *Screenplay: the foundations of screenwriting* (pp. 89–105). Delta Trade Paperbacks.

Required Viewing:

- **Witness** (Peter Weir, 1985)

Suggested Further Viewing:

- **Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind** (Michel Gondry, 2004)
- **Memento** (Christopher Nolan, 2000)



WEEK 6 — Character: Narrative Agent – The “Who” of Cinematic Storytelling

The **sixth session** will explore the development of “characters” in film scripts, focusing on the creative strategies through which characters are shaped and defined. Attention will be given to the nature of characters, their personal circumstances, and their overall significance within a film’s narrative. A central theme will be the concept of the character’s spine — the underlying motivation and goal that drives cinematic action — and how this framework can guide the objectives of storytelling. Workshops will allow students to engage directly with the process of character creation, drawing on their own experiences to analyze scripts and to discuss how characters acquire depth, coherence, and dramatic impact.

Required Reading:

- Thomas, J. (2020). **Character**. In *Script analysis for actors, directors, and designers* (6th ed., pp. 114–133). Routledge.
- Field, S. (2005). **The creation of character**. In *Screenplay: the foundations of screenwriting* (pp. 43–58). Delta Trade Paperbacks.
- Field, S. (2005). **Building a character**. In *Screenplay: the foundations of screenwriting* (pp. 59–73). Delta Trade Paperbacks.
- Seger, L. (1994). **From motivation to goal: finding your character’s spine**. In *Making a good script great* (pp. 177–185). Samuel French Trade.
- Seger, L. (1994). **Character functions**. In *Making a good script great* (pp. 212–228). Samuel French Trade.

Suggested Further Reading:

- Field, S. (2005). **Story and character**. In *Screenplay: the foundations of screenwriting* (pp. 74–88). Delta Trade Paperbacks.
- Seger, L. (1994). **Creating multidimensional and transformational characters**. In *Making a good script great* (pp. 197–211). Samuel French Trade.

Required Viewing:

- ***Tout est pardonné*** (*All Is Forgiven*, Mia Hansen-Løve, 2007)

Suggested Further Viewing:

- ***Pain and Glory*** (*Dolor y gloria*, Pedro Almodóvar, 2019)
- ***Phantom Thread*** (Paul Thomas Anderson, 2017)
- ***Winter Sleep*** (*Kış Uykusu*, Nuri Bilge Ceylan, 2014)
- ***Black Swan*** (Darren Aronofsky, 2010)



- **Whiplash** (Damien Chazelle, 2014)
- **Another Round** (Thomas Vinterberg, 2020)

WEEK 7 — Conflict: Action and the Causal Chain of Events – The “Dramatic Tension” in Cinematic Storytelling

The **seventh session** will examine “conflict” as the driving force of cinematic storytelling. Conflict provides purpose and direction to a narrative, propelling the plot forward through challenges and obstacles faced by characters. Students will explore how dramatic tension emerges from the causal chain of events, where each moment is connected by probability and necessity. While classical narrative structure often relies on characters as causal agents, the session will also consider how natural forces, social circumstances, artistic influences, and intertextual dynamics shape narrative progression.

Required Reading:

- Seger, L. (1994). **Finding the conflict**. In *Making a good script great* (pp. 186–196). Samuel French Trade.

Required Viewing:

- **Oppenheimer** (Christopher Nolan, 2023)

Suggested Further Viewing:

- **Dear Comrades!** (*Dorogie tovarishchi!*, Andrey Konchalovskiy, 2020)
- **Conclave** (Edward Berger, 2024)
- **Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri** (Martin McDonagh, 2017)

WEEK 8 — Setting: Narrative Space and Time – The “Where” and “When” of Cinematic Storytelling

The **eighth session** will explore the role of setting as both the spatial and temporal framework of cinematic storytelling. Beyond physical locations, setting encompasses the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which characters are placed, shaping how the story is perceived and understood. Students will examine how directors construct narrative space through camera placement, framing, and angles, as well as how these choices influence meaning. The session will also highlight the metaphorical power of setting, showing how images of places,



characters, and objects contribute to tone, atmosphere, and thematic depth on both conscious and subconscious levels.

Required Reading:

- Bang, J. (2022). **Setting**. In *Script analysis: deconstructing screenplay fundamentals* (pp. 78–83). Routledge.

Required Viewing:

- ***The Shining*** (Stanley Kubrick, 1980)

Suggested Further Viewing:

- ***The Zone of Interest*** (Jonathan Glazer, 2023)
- ***Farha*** (Darin J. Sallam, 2021)

WEEK 9 — Tempo, Rhythm, and Mood: Narrative Temporality and Tone in Cinematic Storytelling

The **ninth session** offers a rigorous inquiry into how tempo, rhythm, and mood shape a screenplay’s emotional arc and guide audience engagement. Tempo is treated as the density and distribution of dramatic information on the page — where, how often, and how much plot, character, or idea is introduced — thereby governing the speed of the viewer’s cognitive processing. Rhythm is examined as the patterned rise and fall of tension across beats, units, scenes, and acts: a calibrated sequence of pressures and releases that builds interest, sustains suspense, and channels energy toward climactic moments. We further distinguish mood — the felt, situational state embodied by characters — from atmosphere — the overarching emotional ambience of a scene or film—and trace how both arise from the interplay of given circumstances, action, and ideas. Through scene work and close reading, students will discriminate between major and minor beats, chart tension curves to visualize rhythmic design, and analyze how dialogue, action, silence, blocking, and shot/framing choices modulate tempo–rhythm to produce mood and meaning.

Required Reading:

- Thomas, J. (2020). **Tempo, rhythm, and mood**. In *Script analysis for actors, directors, and designers* (6th ed., pp. 187–207). Routledge.

Required Viewing:

- ***Roma*** (Alfonso Cuarón, 2018)



Suggested Further Viewing:

- *In the Mood for Love* (*Fa yeung nin wah*, Wong Kar-Wai, 2000)
- *Dog Day Afternoon* (Sidney Lumet, 1975)

WEEK 10 — Point of View: Narrative Perspective – The “Focalization” in Cinematic Storytelling

In the **ninth session**, we will examine “point of view” as a central element in cinematic storytelling, shaping how audiences perceive characters, events, and emotions. Students will explore a range of narrative perspectives, from first-person point of view and interior monologue to third-person limited and omniscient approaches, as well as multiple point-of-view structures that present events from different characters’ perspectives. Special attention will be given to how these choices influence audience identification, emotional engagement, and the overall interpretation of a film.

Required Reading:

- Seger, L. (1994). **Establishing a point of view**. In *Making a good script great* (Rev. 3rd ed., pp. 86–107). Samuel French Trade.

Required Viewing:

- *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (*Le Scaphandre et le Papillon*, Julian Schnabel, 2007)

Suggested Further Viewing:

- *The Handmaiden* (*Ah-ga-ssi*, Park Chan-wook, 2016)

WEEK 11 — Dialogue: Conversational Exchange between Characters – The “Verbal Interactions” in Cinematic Storytelling

The **tenth session** will focus on “dialogue” as one of the most vital tools of screenwriting. Dialogue not only conveys information but also reveals character, develops relationships, builds tension, and drives the story forward. Students will examine how dialogue operates on multiple levels — both explicit and implicit — through tone, rhythm, pauses, subtext, and silence. By studying examples from various screenplays, the session will explore strategies for writing dialogue that sounds natural while serving dramatic purpose. Attention will also be



given to the balance between spoken words and visual storytelling, highlighting the importance of what is left unsaid as much as what is spoken.

Required Reading:

- Thomas, J. (2020). **Dialogue**. In *Script analysis for actors, directors, and designers* (6th ed., pp. 158–186). Routledge.
- Seger, L. (1994). **Balancing images and dialogue**. In *Making a good script great* (Rev. 3rd ed., pp. 158–176). Samuel French Trade.

Required Viewing:

- ***Before Midnight*** (Richard Linklater, 2013)

Suggested Further Viewing:

- ***Before Sunrise*** (Richard Linklater, 1995)
- ***Before Sunset*** (Richard Linklater, 2004)
- ***303*** (Hans Weingartner, 2018)
- ***Marriage Story*** (Noah Baumbach, 2019)
- ***The Guilty*** (*Den skyldige*, Gustav Möller, 2018)

WEEK 12 — Genre: Narrative Conventions in Cinematic Storytelling

The **twelfth session** will examine the role of genre in shaping cinematic storytelling, both as a creative framework and as an industrial tool. Genres classify films according to shared conventions, iconography, settings, narrative patterns, character types, and even recurring actors. Beyond classification, genre deeply influences filmmaking practices, from directing styles and editing techniques to music scoring, advertising, and audience targeting. Students will be introduced to methods of genre analysis, including the identification of recurring motifs, plot structures, character archetypes, and stylistic devices. Special emphasis will be placed on understanding how audience expectations and cultural contexts shape genre conventions and, in turn, how films respond to shifting social values by adapting or reinventing their genres.

Required Reading:

- Snyder, B. (2005). **Give me the same thing... only different!** In *Save the cat!: the last book on screenwriting that you'll ever need* (pp. 21–45). Michael Wiese Productions.

Required Viewing:



- ***Mother!*** (Darren Aronofsky, 2017)

Suggested Further Viewing:

- ***The Matrix*** (Lilly Wachowski & Lana Wachowski, 1999)

WEEK 13 — Adaptation: Intermediality in Cinematic Storytelling

The **concluding** session will explore the dynamic relationship between literature and cinema, focusing on the processes and challenges of adaptation. Students will examine how stories migrate across mediums—novels into films, plays into screenplays—and how each medium’s unique affordances shape narrative form, style, and meaning. Special attention will be given to the concept of intermediality, highlighting the creative negotiations involved in transforming literary texts into cinematic language. Through comparative study, students will analyse films alongside their literary sources and screenplays, identifying what is altered, omitted, or reimagined in the process of adaptation. The session will encourage discussion of fidelity versus transformation, thematic continuity, and the aesthetic strategies filmmakers use to reinterpret written narratives for the screen. By engaging with both theory and case studies, students will gain a deeper appreciation of adaptation as both a mode of storytelling and a dialogue between artistic forms.

Required Reading:

- Marquez, G. G. (2007 [1985]). *Love in the Time of Cholera*. Vintage.

Suggested Further Reading:

- Kafka, F. (2020 [1925]). *The Trial (Der Prozess)*. Pan Macmillan.

Required Viewing:

- ***Love in the Time of Cholera*** (Mike Newell, 2007)

Suggested Further Viewing:

- ***The Trial (Le procès)***, Orson Welles, 1962)



03 Requirements

Attendance and Tardiness:

Students are expected to attend classes regularly, arrive on time, and remain until the end of each session. **Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of class**, and students who arrive late without signing the attendance sheet will be marked absent. Each student is allowed **three (3) absences** for illness or unforeseen circumstances without direct penalty to the final grade. These should be used wisely and planned in advance. For every absence beyond the three allowed, the overall course grade will be lowered by one step (e.g., from AA to BA, from BB to CB, etc.). Students who accumulate **more than five (5) absences** will automatically receive a grade of F, regardless of whether assignments have been submitted. Only absences communicated in advance to the instructor or supported by official documentation (e.g., medical certificate, accident report, family bereavement, police report, court notice, etc.) will be considered excused. Even in the case of excused absences, students remain fully responsible for all course materials, including lectures, readings, assigned screenings, in-class film excerpts, handouts, announcements, and any changes to the schedule or assignments. In short, it is the student's responsibility to stay up to date with everything that occurs in class.

Preparation and Participation:

Each class meeting is designed as a moment of active dialogue and exchange between students and the instructor. Participation should not be passive: the quality of learning depends largely on each student's contribution to collective discussion.

Preparation for class requires:

- Completing all assigned readings in advance;
- Viewing the assigned films carefully;
- Taking notes on key themes, techniques, and questions raised by the materials;
- Writing responses to the study questions provided by the instructor;
- Preparing a list of additional questions or observations to bring to class.

Active participation involves:

- Voluntarily responding to the instructor's questions;



- Asking relevant and timely questions about class content;
- Contributing to debate with informed observations, ideas, or critical connections;
- Following discussions attentively and showing respect to all participants.

Through these practices, the class will develop as a collaborative learning community where every student's voice contributes to a deeper understanding of cinema and screenwriting.

Reading Assignments:

A list of required readings is included in the course syllabus. Students should be aware that required readings may be adjusted according to the needs of the class, and additional materials may be assigned when necessary. Alongside required readings, optional suggested readings will also be provided for those who wish to pursue a more in-depth and specialized understanding of the topics discussed. All students are responsible for completing the required readings before each class session, as these form the basis for in-class discussions as well as for preparing written assignments and the final exam. All required and suggested materials will be made available in **PDF format** on the **Moodle platform** dedicated to this course. In compliance with copyright regulations, these materials will be password-protected and accessible only to enrolled students.

Viewing Assignments:

There will be no weekly collective screening sessions during the semester. Students are therefore responsible for watching the assigned films before the beginning of each new class session, which takes place on **Fridays** from **09:00** to **11:50** in the **Cinema Hall** of the **Mithat Alam Hall (South Campus)**. To organize film viewings, students may use the **Film Viewing Room** at the **Mithat Alam Hall** on **weekdays** between **10:00** and **21:00**, individually or in groups, by booking in advance at **+90 212 359 7381 / +90 212 359 7382**. Early planning is strongly recommended to ensure access to the required screenings. The films are also available through public libraries, local video rental collections, and streaming platforms such as **MUBI, Criterion Channel, Kanopy, Hoopla, Fandor, YouTube TV, Internet Archive**, and in some cases on **Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, HBO Max, Disney Plus, Paramount Plus, Apple TV Plus, Hulu**, and **Peacock**. Availability may vary by region. Several of these platforms also offer free trial periods that students may use strategically. Assigned films should be treated as primary texts for study, not as mere entertainment. Active viewing is required: students should



take notes during their screenings, as these will be essential for class discussions. Students are expected to come to class prepared to share their observations, questions, and interpretations. In addition, selected excerpts and scenes from various films may be screened during lectures and will be discussed collectively under the instructor's guidance, depending on the available time.

Midterm Exam and Final Assignment:

This course includes **two major assessments** that replace traditional exams. Their purpose is to evaluate both the students' historical and theoretical knowledge and their ability to apply critical analysis and academic writing skills.

Midterm Exam:

- The midterm will be a **written exam** consisting of **multiple questions**.

Final Paper:

- The final assignment will be an **analysis paper** (minimum **2,500 words** / 5–6 pages) examining a specific film's screenplay, to be agreed upon in advance with the instructor.

Formal Writing Requirements:

- The paper must be written in **standard academic English**, grammatically correct and free of spelling errors.
- Formatting: **Times New Roman, 12 pt, single-spaced, 2.5 cm margins**.
- Citation style: **APA 7th edition** is required. See APA guidelines: <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples>.
- Bibliography: A minimum of **two academic sources** (books, book chapters, or peer-reviewed articles) is required, either in print or through university databases. Non-academic websites may only be used as contextual support.
- Each paper must include: student's full name, student ID, departmental affiliation, course code and title, instructor's name, submission date, and the paper title.



Submission:

- Papers must be submitted digitally via **Moodle**.
- Deadlines are indicated in the course schedule and must be respected.
- Late submissions will incur penalties unless exceptional circumstances are communicated and properly documented in advance.

Evaluation Criteria:

Written papers and course presentations will be evaluated based on the following criteria.

Focus:

- Clear and coherent main idea;
- Relevance of supporting points to the main idea;
- Well-formulated and effective thesis statement.

Content:

- Development, clarification, and depth of ideas;
- Validity, coherence, and sufficiency of the argument;
- Ability to present and analyze textual, visual, and auditory evidence from films studied;
- Appropriate and accurate use of film studies concepts and terminology.

Organization:

- Clear structure (introduction, main body, conclusion);
- Well-constructed and purposeful paragraphs;
- Logical and smooth sequence of ideas and arguments.

Style:

- Academic tone appropriate to the subject;
- Clarity and effectiveness of expression;



Boğaziçi University, Institute of Film and Media Studies
Certificate Program in Film Studies

- Precision and variety in vocabulary.

Conventions:

- Grammatical and syntactical accuracy;
- Attention to technical aspects of writing (punctuation, spelling, formatting);
- Proper use of APA 7th edition for citations and references.



04 Policies:

Evaluation and Grade Breakdown:

Student grades will be determined based on their performance in written exams, presentations, and active participation in class discussions. Each component of the evaluation is designed to measure different skills: critical analysis, research and academic writing, communication abilities, and engagement in collaborative work.

The grading distribution is as follows:

Activity	Percentage of Final Grade
Midterm Exam (Written exam with multiple-choice and open-ended questions)	35%
Final Assignment (Research paper on a woman director, 2,500 words, APA format)	45%
Active Class Participation	20%
Total	100%

Grading system:

The following table illustrates the grading system adopted in this course, showing the correspondence between numerical scores, letter grades, and GPA values. The second letters (e.g., BA, CB) indicate the student's standing within the corresponding performance range.

Score (Number/Letter)	GPA Value	Definition
90–100 / AA	4.00	Excellent — Demonstrates thorough knowledge of the subject; strong capacity for critical evaluation and original (creative, logical, analytical) thinking; excellent ability to organize, synthesize, and integrate ideas and to express them clearly and fluently.
85–89 / BA 80–84 / BB	3.50–3.00	Good — Shows solid knowledge of the subject; sound understanding of relevant issues; good familiarity with literature and methodologies; ability to organize and analyze material critically and constructively, with some elements of originality.
75–79 / CB 70–74 / CC	2.50–2.00	Satisfactory — Provides acceptable basic knowledge; fair understanding of relevant issues; general familiarity with the literature; ability to handle



		moderately complex problems and develop limited critical analysis.
60–69 / DC 50–59 / DD	1.50–1.00	Marginal Pass — Performance at the minimum acceptable level; demonstrates essential but limited knowledge; weak yet present analytical skills; partial success in applying concepts and addressing course-related problems.
0–49 / F	0.00	Fail — Unacceptable performance; failure to meet minimum course requirements; inadequate understanding of course content.

Academic Honesty and Integrity:

Students are strictly prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act of academic dishonesty. The guiding principle of this policy is that all submitted work—whether written assignments, final papers, presentations, or any other form of coursework—must be completed independently by the student and must reflect their own ideas and personal efforts. All textual, visual, or audiovisual materials taken from external sources must be properly cited using APA style (7th edition). In cases of uncertainty regarding proper citation, it is the student’s responsibility to seek clarification from the instructor.

Acts of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to):

- Plagiarism (presenting the work, ideas, or texts of others as one’s own);
- Copying from another student’s assignment or exam (identical or nearly identical answers will be considered suspicious);
- Obtaining or sharing exam questions or answers in advance;
- Cheating or communicating with others during an in-class exam;
- Altering or falsifying previously graded work;
- Submitting the same work in multiple courses without prior authorization from instructors;
- Providing false or misleading information.

Such behaviors will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic failure of the course, in addition to other possible disciplinary sanctions as established by university regulations. For more information, students are encouraged to consult Boğaziçi University’s Academic Honesty



Policy and Student Code of Conduct: <https://bogazici.edu.tr/en/pages/student-rights-and-responsibilities/769>

Generative AI Tools Policy:

This course places a strong emphasis on the development of critical thinking skills and requires students to demonstrate their own independent understanding and application of the course content. Students may use basic word-processing tools (e.g., spell checkers and grammar checkers) to improve the readability of their work. However, the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools—such as large language models, chatbots, text generators, paraphrasers, summarizers, or problem-solvers (e.g., ChatGPT, Bing AI, Quillbot, DALL-E, etc.)—is strictly prohibited for completing, in whole or in part, any assigned coursework, even if the generated text is subsequently edited, revised, or paraphrased by the student. The use of generative AI tools in assignments is considered a violation of academic honesty and will result in a grade of “**0 (zero)**” for the assignment, in addition to possible further disciplinary measures in accordance with university regulations. All written work submitted in this course will be checked via **Turnitin** in order to identify potential use of AI tools or other unauthorized textual similarities.

Student Conduct and Classroom Etiquette:

Participation in an academic community requires respect for standards of conduct, collaboration, and shared responsibility. Every student enrolled in this course is part of the Boğaziçi University learning community and, as such, has specific rights and responsibilities.

Respect and Learning Environment:

Students are expected to contribute to the creation of a safe, open, inclusive, and productive environment. They must treat the instructor and classmates with respect and dignity, recognizing and accepting the diversity of opinions, cultures, experiences, and learning styles. Any form of aggressive behavior or disrespect toward the instructor or fellow students may result in removal from the classroom and/or referral to the Dean’s Office.

Prohibited Language and Discriminatory Behavior:

Racist, xenophobic, Islamophobic, antisemitic, sexist, misogynistic, ableist, classist, homophobic, or otherwise discriminatory and offensive language or behavior will not be



tolerated. Written assignments, oral presentations, or in-class comments that include such language will automatically receive a grade of “**0 (zero)**.”

Course Language:

This course is conducted entirely in English. The use of other languages during lectures, exams, presentations, or written assignments is not permitted.

Classroom Etiquette:

Distracting or disrespectful behaviors that may negatively affect evaluation or lead to disciplinary action include:

- Chronic absenteeism or missing multiple classes;
- Repeated tardiness or leaving the classroom before the end of the session;
- Eating, sleeping, reading unrelated material, or using phones/devices for non-academic purposes (calls, texting, videos, music, games, social media);
- Talking or disturbing classmates during lectures;
- Monopolizing class discussions without allowing space for others to contribute.

Respecting these rules is essential to ensuring a positive and productive learning experience for all participants.

Late Assignment Submission:

Students are expected to act professionally and submit all assignments by the stated deadlines in order to receive full credit. **Penalty for late submissions:** Assignments submitted after the deadline will incur a penalty of **10% of the total grade per day of delay**, up to a maximum of **7 (seven) days** (including weekends and holidays). **After 7 days:** The assignment will no longer be accepted and will automatically receive a grade of **0 (zero)**. Each 24-hour block will be calculated starting from the exact deadline time provided. Technical problems such as computer malfunctions or internet connectivity issues will not be accepted as valid excuses. It is the student’s responsibility to plan ahead for both the preparation and submission of assignments. All written assignments must be uploaded to Moodle by the specified deadline: <https://moodle.bogazici.edu.tr>.



Make-Up Assignments:

No make-up assignments or exams will be offered for the midterm exam or the final paper. Students who fail to submit their required assessments by the deadlines specified during the semester will automatically receive a grade of **F** for the course.

Extra Credit:

No specific extra credit opportunities are planned for this course. Any additional assignments or supplementary activities may be introduced at the instructor's discretion and will be announced during the semester.

Course Drop and Withdrawal:

Students may drop the course without a grade appearing on their transcript during the official add/drop period established by the university.

Drop during add/drop period: No grade will appear on the student's transcript.

Withdrawal after the add/drop period: Students who wish to withdraw must:

- Discuss the decision with the course instructor;
- Respect the official university deadline for withdrawal without penalty;
- Submit a withdrawal request through the Student Information and Registration System (ÖBİKAS);
- Obtain approval from their academic advisor.

After completing the withdrawal procedure, students are responsible for verifying their updated course list on ÖBİKAS and, in case of discrepancies, contacting the Coordinator of the Certificate Program in Film Studies. Withdrawals completed within the official deadlines will result in a grade of "**W**", which will appear on the transcript but will not affect the GPA. Students who fail to complete the withdrawal procedure by the official deadline will receive a regular letter grade for the course, which may include an F if the coursework is incomplete or if attendance is discontinued. Official deadlines for add/drop and withdrawal are published each year in the Boğaziçi University Academic Calendar and are binding.



Class Cancellation:

In the event that a class must be canceled due to severe weather conditions, illness, unforeseen circumstances, or other reasons, the instructor will notify students by posting an announcement on Moodle as early as possible, prior to the scheduled class time. Students are therefore expected to check Moodle regularly, as well as their university email and official messages, to remain promptly informed of any changes to the class schedule.

Electronic Devices:

The use of **laptops, notebooks, tablets, and other electronic devices** is permitted **only for course-related activities** (e.g., reading assigned texts, consulting dictionaries, taking notes). Any other use will not be tolerated.

In particular, the following are not allowed during class:

- Making or receiving phone calls;
- Sending text messages or instant messages;
- Watching online videos or using multimedia platforms;
- Listening to music or podcasts;
- Browsing the internet for non-academic purposes;
- Recording audio/video or taking photographs during class.

Students are required to turn off their cell phones or switch them to silent/vibration mode during class time. In case of urgent calls, students must leave the classroom without disturbing the instructor or classmates.

Students with Disabilities:

Access to education requires the availability of tools, services, and accommodations designed to ensure equal educational opportunities for all students, regardless of disability status. Any student enrolled in this course who believes they may require accommodations due to a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, and/or learning disability, or in cases of deafness or hearing impairment, must register with the **Students with Disabilities Unit at Boğaziçi University**.



Boğaziçi University, Institute of Film and Media Studies Certificate Program in Film Studies

● The unit operates as a service affiliated with the Rector's Office and is located at the **North Campus (Park Building, 1st floor)**.

● Contact: **+90 212 359 7538 / 359 7659** (phone) | **+90 539 308 9577** (WhatsApp Line, messages only) | getem@bogazici.edu.tr (email).

Students are also encouraged to inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester of any specific needs, in order to allow sufficient time to coordinate accommodations.

For more information:

● <https://www.getem.bogazici.edu.tr>

● <https://advising.bogazici.edu.tr/en/content/students-disabilities-unit>