FILM & MEDIA STUDIES

Essence of Character Workshop

With Television Writer and Producer Jeff Strauss

APRIL 5 - 7, 2019
3-DAY INTENSIVE 1 SHU COURSE

The Essence of Character: Analyzing and Creating Characters for the Screen

The hands-on class will be taught by veteran screenwriter and television producer (and Tufts Alum, A84) Jeff Strauss. Mr. Strauss has taught undergraduate and graduate-level screenwriting workshops at Tufts, NYU and the Film University at Babelsberg (Germany) and draws on his nearly 30-year career in TV and movies, including shows like Friends, Dream On, Reba, All of Us, and Shake it Up and developing new series at ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX, the CW, HBO, Amazon, Freeform, The Disney Channel and others.
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What makes a great character in Film or TV? For that matter, what even makes a character a character? During this hands-on intensive 1 SHU workshop, students will develop both a critical as well as creative understanding of the components of character in Film, TV and other visual storytelling media.

The course will consider:

- Traditional as well as non-traditional characters from TV and film using examples from present-day, Hollywood movies and TV as well as foreign, “classic” and alternative media.
- The concept of “voice” and the difference between the voice of a character and that of the writer/director/author/narrator.
- The differences in the narrative properties of written prose – novels, short stories, etc. -- and visual media, and how character is developed/expressed in each.

Building on this foundation, we’ll examine the essential relationship in scripted story – the symbiosis of character, plot and theme and students will have the opportunity to try their hand at creating meaningful characters of their own.

Coursework will combine screenings, discussions and in-class, analytical and creative writing exercises exploring the relationships between characters, types, archetypes and the “truth” of the human experience.

Participants receive 1 SHU. This class is offered Pass/Fail. Students will be expected to screen or “re-screen” several films and TV episodes in preparation for the weekend-intensive. Homework will be assigned and a final project consisting of a research paper or script must be submitted 2 weeks after the course.

Please pre-register to hold your spot
Future registration in SIS will be required.
Workshop is limited to 16 students.

Tentative Schedule

Friday 4/5: 5:30-7:30 pm
Saturday 4/6: 10:00 am-5:00 pm
Sunday 4/7: 10:00 am-5:00 pm