Script Checkpoint Calendar

Week:	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1		• Brainstorm Ideas • Develop one idea thoroughly • Email/Meet with TA to get any questions you might have • Come to class with any concerns about your idea you might have					
2		• Idea Workshop in Class • Script Outline due at Class start	• **Write your script** • Email/Meet with TA to get any questions you might have				• **Script due by NOON**
3		• Script Workshop in Class • Revision Reflection Questions due at Class start	• Review TA and Class feedback and mine the ideas that help you tell your story • **Determine which areas of your script you'll focus your revision on** • Revise script looking first at big picture revisions (like character, structure, setting, etc.) • Then revise script for small elements (like dialogue, scene action/description, formatting, etc.) • Email/Meet with TA to get any questions you might have				
4		• Revision Game Plan due at Class start	• Continue to revise script looking first at big picture revisions (like character, structure, setting, etc.) • Then revise script for small elements (like dialogue, scene action/description, formatting, etc.) • Proofread and Polish • Email/Meet with TA to get any questions you might have				
5		• **Script Revision due by NOON**					

Major Assignment Due
Checkpoint Assignment Due
In-Class Presentation of Work

Script Outline Instructions, Examples & Checklist

Due: In-Class Idea Workshop Day
May be typed or handwritten but must provide me with my own hardcopy. The outline may be as simple or detailed as you'd like, but ideally you should illustrate the presence of the major components needed for a short film script. Examples are provided below with the Produced Example also including analysis questions that can help guide your thinking. You'll use your copy as reference when pitching your idea in your individual Idea Workshop. During each workshop round, you'll take notes on potential ideas for improving your idea, addressing the four major areas: character, beginning, middle, and end. After the Idea Workshops, the three writers will pitch their ideas to the rest of the class and myself. While you pitch, I will use a checklist rubric (also provided below) to make sure you're hitting the major points and heading in the right direction.

<u>Produced Example:</u>
In a Heartbeat (2017) by Esteban Bravo & Beth David (directors)
Sherwin, a shy ginger haired boy, arrives at school awaiting the arrival of the handsome Jonathan. Sherwin hides in a tree and watches as Jonathan walks by reading a book and eating an apple. Suddenly, Sherwin's heart begins to beat rapidly and becomes anthropomorphic, leaving his body and chasing after Jonathan. Sherwin attempts to grab and hide his heart resulting in various awkward encounters with Jonathan. Eventually, Sherwin chases his heart inside the school and grabs it. Then the heart grabs Jonathan's finger. The situation becomes uncomfortable as other students see the two and look on in disdain. The heart breaks in two and Sherwin runs away with one half. Outside the school, Sherwin sits solemnly when Jonathan walks up and sits next to him. They join the heart back together and it happily springs to life. The scene fades to black with Sherwin and Jonathan's hearts glowing and they form into one. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_a_Heartbeat_(film)]

Who's my protagonist? **Sherwin, a shy red-haired boy**
What's the main exposition my audience needs to know? **Sherwin has a crush on Jonathan.**
What's my protagonist's problem (inciting incident)?
Sherwin's heart becomes anthropomorphic, leaving his body and chasing after Jonathan; he needs to get it back before Jonathan notices
What's my protagonist's conscious want (external overarching desire)? **To get heart back/keep heart away from Jonathan**
What's my protagonist's unconscious need? **To not be embarrassed/shamed for liking Jonathan**
What's my antagonistic force (who has the opposing desire)? **The anthropomorphic heart; it wants to be with Jonathan**

What obstacles stand in the way of my protagonist's desire? Is there escalation? **Yes, the various awkward encounters with Jonathan get progressively more awkward; the heart gets closer and closer to Jonathan and revealing Sherwin's true feelings.**

What's at stake for my protagonist? Are they "life or death" for the character?
Public humiliation and scrutiny; yes, at that age in school those can feel like "life or death"

Does my problem from earlier get answered in the climax? **Yes, Sherwin can't stop his heart. The heart grabs Jonathan's finger. The situation becomes uncomfortable as other students see the two and look on in disdain. The heart breaks in two and Sherwin runs away.**

What's my resolution?
Sherwin sits solemnly when Jonathan walks up and sits next to him. They join the heart back together and it happily springs to life.

What's my deeper meaning (theme) that my climax/resolution clarify?
Love is love is love; it doesn't matter what people/society thinks, just follow your heart.

Student Example 1:

Trolleybus Love Story
Location: A trolleybus in Birmingham, Alabama; *Characters*: Lance (white college professor), Ruth (black factory worker)

The story begins with the first meet of Lance and Ruth on a local trolleybus in the town. Ruth is on the bus reading a book; Lance gets on the bus a stop after and sit with her face to face. Lance falls in love with her at the first sight.

The same scene happens every day after their first meet. From the uniform Ruth wears, Lance notices she takes the bus at the same time after work. But Lance's gaze makes her very uncomfortable and scared. She starts to take the bus with her colleague to avoid this. From the casual talk between Ruth and her colleague, Lance finds out that Ruth desires to read the English translation of Love in the Time of Cholera. The book hasn't been translated into English in 1985, as a Spanish teacher, Lance translates it and types it out by himself at school library every day after work. But it takes him a month and he has to miss the chance of taking bus with Ruth. Ruth starts to worry about if something happens to him.

The last meet of Lance and Ruth on the bus is when Lance gives the translation of the book to Ruth with dozens of papers. They never talk to each other. Lance leaves his phone number to Ruth. Ruth calls him at a phone booth right after she gets off the bus. The story ends with their first talk through the phone.

What works well in this outline: It's visual and gives a good overview of beginning, middle, and end.
What's missing in this idea: This idea needs to narrow its focus and abide by the one location rule (can't have bus and library) and also needs to narrow the scope of time, needs to focus on why this moment. The theme of interracial dating is presented with the time and location setting but with no follow through; we don't see it as part of the conflict, so tying those together would make it stronger.

Student Example 2:

Marina, about 13, enters an aquarium with her backpack. She cheerfully waves to the man at the front desk and slips under the turnstile to enter. ~~She parades around and waving to the animals (penguins, starfish, stingrays, groupers), and settles in front of the shark tank. She lays around working on homework for a few hours, aquarium visitors stepping around her as if she were part of the exhibit. When an aquarium staff member announces that they are 15 minutes from closing, Marina packs up her things and walks to an unmarked white door at the end of a hallway.~~ She enters the aquarium lab, a big white room with tanks and chemicals and mazes of plastic pipes. A woman in a lab coat, marine biologist Andrea Poplawski, greets Marina with a warm hug. The two walk through the seemingly endless room of marine life and tank equipment to a large rectangular tank, dark and gloomy.

Inside, hidden inside a rock formation surrounded by plants lay a giant Pacific octopus. Marina presses her hands against the glass and squints to see Gem, dark red and brooding. Andrea and Marina chat about how well Marina's mother used to handle Gem. While they talk, Gem starts to swim out of her rock hole, but when Andrea dips a hand in the water, Gem retreats. Andrea's phone rings and she darts off to answer, leaving Marina with the octopus.

Grabbing a step stool for height, Marina tosses in a few crab arms as a snack, and watches the long curly arms reach out for them. Tentatively, Marina touches the top of the water, looking back to make sure Andrea was still out of the room. Next Marina sticks her whole hand into the water, waiting for the octopus to react, but instead Gem sticks an arm up to greet her. Marina talks to the octopus, asking if she misses Marina's mother as two more of Gem's arms reach up. Suddenly, Gem's suckers latch onto Marina's arm and begin to pull her down into the tank. Marina loses her footing, her arms fully submerged and struggling to keep her head up, and Gem's grip is too strong to pull off. Andrea, walking back into the room with a toy for Gem, sees the two and pulls them apart. Now on the floor in shock, Marina cries to Andrea that she thought Gem would recognize her as the daughter of the octopus's favorite scientist.

What works well in this outline: The writing is very visual. We can see the action take place in our minds as it might come across on screen.

What's missing in this idea: This idea needs a stronger, clearer theme of what the short would be about. The characterization of Marina needs more consistency (her mother has recently passed away and this comes up in the very end, but she doesn't seem torn up about it before). The conflict could be ramped up more, and we could get to it a lot sooner by trimming down on the aquarium setting.

Script Outline Pitching Checklist

After your Idea Workshops, you will pitch your idea to the class. Nothing to stress about. Just tell me your story as it would unfold on screen. Imagine you just saw a movie in theatres and now you're telling your friends about the plot.

C=Character; A=Antagonistic Forces; B=Beginning; M=Middle; E=Ending

☐ (C) Single protagonist Notes: _____

☐ (C/B) Established status quo Notes: _____

☐ (B) Inciting incident/catalyst Notes: _____

☐ (C/B) Overarching want/desire driving story Notes: _____

☐ (A/M) Obstacles/Antagonistic forces Notes: _____

☐ (M) Escalation of obstacles Notes: _____

☐ (C/B) High stakes Notes: _____

☐ (E) Climax Notes: _____

☐ (E) Resolution Notes: _____

☐ (E) Deeper Meaning/Theme Notes: _____

Revision Reflection Questions & Instructions

Due: In-Class Script Workshop Day

After at least 24 hours from when you submitted your workshop script for grading, **reread your script** with fresh eyes and answer the following questions. May be typed or handwritten. Submission will be in the form of brief oral presentation of answers to class at the end of your script's workshop.

1. What is one thing you're particularly proud of having done or executed in your script?

2. What are 2 or 3 areas you see that need additional development? (You <u>don't</u> need to discuss "how" you'll address them at this time, just think about "what" needs work.)

3. How might you improve your writing process for the next draft?

4. How does how you see the theme upon re-reading your script compare with your intended theme? (Does it need more clarity or to be taken off the nose at all? Again, think in terms of "what" and not "how" at this point.)

Revision Game Plan Instructions

Due: Start of class 1 Week after Script Workshop

Now that you've received written comments from me and oral comments from your peers, you must mine through the feedback, determine the key areas you wish to focus your revision on, and implement a strategy for addressing those.

Where your revision reflection focused on the "what" (what areas might need revising), you're now going to think about the "how." How will you tackle the rewrite?

A true rewrite looks at the big macro-level changes that can make the biggest improvements to the script's story. Start big—character and structure—then work your way down—scene action and dialogue. Fixing typos and formatting is great and necessary but doing just that and micro-revisions does not constitute a true rewrite.

1. What's one major area of concern I need to address?

    a. How will I attempt to address it?

    b. How might this revision create a ripple effect in the script of additional changes that I will need to make?

    c. And how will I address those ripples as well?

2. What's a second major area of concern I need to address?

    a. How will I attempt to address it?

    b. How might this revision create a ripple effect in the script of additional changes that I will need to make?

    c. And how will I address those ripples as well?

3. What are some micro-edits I need to be mindful of when proofread? (I.e. consistent grammar problem with comma splices, repeated formatting issue with scene headers, too dense scene action)