

Summer Short Script Incubator Program Proposal

By

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Rationale for the Program:

The Scottsdale School of Film+Theater offers the necessary technical training for students in its certification programs that can practically translate to production jobs. Because of the condensed and job-ready nature of the course plans, a short script writing course no longer fits into the curriculum; however, the need for strong short film storytelling persists as the department invests in its students' short films for capstone projects. This Short Script Incubator Program serves to bridge this gap by offering dedicated students the opportunity to learn short script writing and workshop a short script amongst peers with faculty support. In doing so, students will have thoughtfully polished scripts they can take into productions, and ultimately they will have a greater chance for successful film festival submissions.

Program Description:

The Short Script Incubator will start as an 8-week program. Leading into the program in Week 0, students will be given initial guidance for things they should be looking for when in their short scripts and start brainstorming their initial ideas. In Week One, students will dive into short script storytelling concepts, analyze short film examples, and workshop their final ideas. In Week Two, students will continue their dive into short film storytelling concepts and workshop their short script outlines. Students will be split into even groups that will workshop their scripts on the same day. In Weeks 3, 4, and 5, students will have a table read of their scripts in a workshop environment with peer and faculty feedback. After each student's script is workshopped, they will digest the feedback and apply it to new drafts. In Weeks 6, 7, and 8, students will have another table read and workshop of their scripts. After the completion of the incubator students can still submit their scripts to faculty and peers for additional written or one-on-one feedback as desired or recommended.

Major Considerations: The most malleable parts of the incubator are the meeting lengths and the group size. Ideally incubator meetings would be once per week and no longer than 2-3 hours of live workshopping to be conducted over Zoom (or similar). The ideal group size for an incubator with this duration of time is 9 students. Splitting the 9 students into groups of 3 means 3 workshops per meeting during Weeks 3-8, allowing for 45 minutes to an hour to table read and workshop each student's script. Should the duration of the incubator meetings be made longer or shorter, more or fewer students would be able to workshop, but to alleviate students from having to spend more than 3 hours in session, I recommend lengthening the incubator's duration to accommodate up to 3 more students per week extension. With fewer than 9 students, incubator meetings can be shorter in duration or more revision scripts can be workshopped; for instance, with 6 students, you could either do 2 students per meeting for 2 total workshops or you could do 3 students per meeting for 3 total workshops.

Program Activities & Assignments:

While the bulk of this incubator will entail generating script pages, other activities of the incubator would include drafting at least two outlines/treatments (the first one for Week 2 outline workshopping and the second one to be created by the writers within a week of their initial workshop to ensure they're on the right track). Additionally, students will take part in short film analysis by answering guided discussion questions as well as small-group activities in Week 1 and 2 to learn concepts and build group rapport. Throughout, students may be referred to excerpts from chosen textbooks for additional concept clarification as needed.

Program Goals:

The goal of the incubator is to support students in generating stronger stories fit for capstone production. By the end of the incubator, students should not only have a late-stage short script approximately 15 pages in length but also an understanding of short film storytelling that they can apply to future projects.

Bibliography:

Cowgill, Linda J. *Writing Short Films: Structure and Content for Screenwriters*. Lone Eagle Pub., 2005.

Johnson, Claudia. *Crafting Short Screenplays That Connect*. Focal Press, 2015.