

EMF 120

Concept and Story

Spring, 2012

Section 002	Professor: John R. Turner
3 credit hours	Office: MC 112E
MW 2:00 to 3:15 p.m.	Office Hours: MTWTR 10-11 and 1-2;
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Catalog Description:

Concept and Story is an introduction to concept development and storytelling methods through a variety of writing assignments. Students will generate ideas and stories for projects in electronic media and film (EMF 120 is one of the three EMF screening courses).

The formula for successful writing: "Tell me a story." (Don Hewitt, creator of *60 Minutes*)

Required Textbook:

Developing Story Ideas, Michael Rabiger. Focal Press, Second Edition. ISBN: 0-240-80736-7

Course Objectives:

1. To provide a foundation in story development, which is the genesis for all forms of media and for all genres within that media. Story development is also the basis for many of the production courses in the Electronic Media and Film Department.
2. To help each student learn the fundamentals of storytelling and conceptual development, and to cultivate her/his own individual voice as a storyteller by combining lecture, class discussion, and workshops.
3. To recognize that all people are individuals who have their own personal experience from which to draw. Students will engage in various methods and forms of personal storytelling. Each student will be expected to show consideration for the work of his/her peers.
4. To learn critical and analytical skills and to become skilled at engaging others in intellectual, analytical, and aesthetic discourse about their own work, as well as the work of others.
5. To enhance and encourage creativity and risk-taking.

Written and Oral Assignments:

Artistic Identity Presentation (3-1; 3-2; 3-3)—Make a four-minute oral presentation to the class about yourself and your storytelling goals. Be prepared to respond to classmates' presentations.

Volition and Point of View Essay (8-2) – Write about a memorable event that centers on a member of your family, whom you need not identify.

Childhood Story (11-1) – Write an essay about an event in your childhood that is still powerful in your memory.

Fairy Tale (13-1) – Find a myth, legend or folktale that you can adapt to a recognizable modern setting; must be submitted with a copy of the source material.

Dream Story (14-1) – Write a story treatment based on material from your dreams.

Adaptation of a Short Story (15-1) – Research a published short story for adaptation as a 30-minute film; must be submitted with a copy of the source material.

Photo Story Assignment (16-1) – Take or find a photo in a newspaper, magazine, or website and write a story about it; must be submitted with a copy of the photo.

Film Documentary Concept (Non-fiction) (17-1) – Pick a news story and write a treatment to show how it could serve as a possible film/television script.

Audio Documentary Concept (17-1) – Write a treatment about a non-fiction topic that will be solely conveyed by audio.

Two-Minute Film (18-1) – Write a 2-minute film treatment and script that uses only one location.

Four-Minute Film (19-1) – Write a four-minute film treatment and script.

Artistic Identity Revisited (20-3 and 20-4)—Answer the questions on page 204, “Ideas and Ambitions” and page 206, “Discussion and Retrospective” and devise a 3-5 year professional plan for yourself (see p. 205).

Story Paradigm Final (Movie Analysis)—Pick a feature length fictional film, watch it, and then answer questions regarding how it fits the typical three-act story paradigm structure.

Writing Requirements:

All papers are to be typed, double-spaced (in 12-point Times Roman font), and sources of information properly documented where necessary according to the APA style format. Submitted papers will be evaluated not only on content, but on how well the paper demonstrates university-level writing skills (correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar). See the full grading criteria for your written assignments posted on Blackboard. Furthermore, make sure you fully understand and adhere to the policy on plagiarism and cheating as described on the next pages.

Course Grading Policy: Evaluation is based upon attendance, class participation, presentations, assignments and the final project. The final grade is based on the following:

Artistic Identity Presentation	10 points
Volition and Point of View Essay	10 points
Childhood Story	10 points
Myth/Folk Tale/Fairy Tale	20 points
Dream Story	10 points
Short Story Quiz	10 points
Adapting a Short Story	20 points
Photo Story	10 points
Film Documentary Story	20 points
Audio Documentary Story	20 points
2-Minute Film Project	20 points
4-Minute Film Project	20 points
Artistic Identity (Revisited)	10 points
<u>Story Paradigm Final (Movie Analysis)</u>	<u>10 points</u>
Total Possible Points	200 points

Grading: Final grades will be based upon the achievement of the following totals:

A	186-200 points,
A-	180-185 points,
B+	174-179 points,
B	166-173 points,
B-	160-165 points,
C+	154-159 points,
C	140-153 points,
D+	134-139 points,
D	120-133 points,
F	0-119 points

Course Policies:

1. Attendance/Absence Policy: Your instructor will take attendance at the beginning of every class session. Lateness or leaving early will also be noted. After three excused absences, ten points will be deducted from your grade for each further absence. For further information see the section on “Class Attendance/Absence Policy” on page 14 of the current [TU Undergraduate Catalog](#).

Because meeting deadlines is critical in the electronic media and film professions, the importance of meeting deadlines is stressed in this course. That means **an assignment handed in after a deadline set by your instructor receives zero points.**

Make-ups for any missed assignments or exams will be considered only if the following conditions have been met. You called (410-704-3604) or e-mailed (jturner@towson.edu) the instructor before the time of the assignment or exam due date, and you have submitted to the instructor in writing a valid, legitimate, and substantiated excuse for your absence, phone numbers for verification, and a proposal for when you will make-up the missed work.

This syllabus contains ample ways for informing me about any absences you plan to have or to explain those that you didn't plan on happening. Regardless of the reason for your absence, it is your responsibility to know what assignments, lecture notes, and class announcements you missed.

2. Incomplete: A grade of Incomplete is not given unless you are unable to complete the work required in the course because of verifiable medical reasons or documented circumstances beyond your control as stated on page 15 of the current [TU Undergraduate Catalog](#).
3. Disability Statement: Any student who may need an accommodation because of a disability, please make an appointment to see me during my office hours the first week of class. A memo from Disability Support Services (<http://www.towson.edu/dss/>) authorizing your accommodations will be needed.
4. Repeating the Course: A student may not attempt this course for a third time without prior permission from the Academic Standards Committee. See the TU policy on “Repeating Courses” on page 15 of the current [TU Undergraduate Catalog](#) for further explanation.
5. Academic Conduct/Plagiarism: As responsible members of the academic community, students are obligated not to violate the basic standards of the Towson University Student Academic Integrity Policy found at <http://www.towson.edu/provost/resources/studentacademic.asp>

In addition, All EMF students, staff, and faculty are committed to collegial and academic citizenship demonstrating high standards of humane, ethical, professional, and civil behavior in all interactions.

We need to be aware of the relationship between our personal conduct and the quality of campus life. What we do and say always has an effect on others, whether we see it or not. Civility means more than respecting campus facilities and grounds. Civility means consistently treating people with consideration and respect. It means being courteous, polite, and fair. It means recognizing diversity and honoring differing points of view. When our behavior is guided by concern for others in our community, we are being civil. Practicing civility requires thoughtful behavior and checking our assumptions and perceptions of others' race, gender, culture, and belief systems.

Civility Code

EMF places a priority on learning. We value the inherent worth and dignity of every person, thereby fostering a community of mutual respect. Students have the right to a learning environment free of disruptive behaviors. Faculty have the right to define appropriate behavioral expectations in the classroom and expect students to abide by them. Faculty have the responsibility to manage and address classroom disruption. Staff have the right and responsibility to define appropriate behaviors necessary to conduct any university activity free of disruption or obstruction.

We believe that in order to achieve these ideals, all EMF students, staff, and faculty are expected to exhibit and practice civil behaviors that exemplify: (1) respecting faculty, staff, fellow students, guests, and all university property, policies, rules and regulations; (2) taking responsibility for one's choices and actions; (3) delivering correspondence – whether verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic – with respectful language and in complete sentences; and (4) accepting consequences of one's inappropriate choices and actions.

The use of offensive, threatening or abusive language, writing, or behavior will not be tolerated and can lead to academic dismissal. Further information about civility can be found in Appendix F of the university catalog.

Examples demonstrating civility in the classroom as a student include:

- Being respectful of the professor and other students.
- Not texting or using cellular phones and other electronic devices (but devices can be left on, under your desk, in order to receive emergency text alerts).
- Not using your laptop for activities other than class work.
- Not eating or drinking in class.
- Not reading newspapers or listening to music during the class.
- Not sleeping in class.

Course Evaluation:

A single course evaluation instrument has been developed and is being used by all academic departments. Using the *Campuslabs* course evaluation tool, students complete a single course evaluation instrument online for each course in which they are enrolled. Access to the evaluation instrument continues via the *Campuslabs* website. Students will receive emails announcing the availability of the completion “window” and will be given instructions regarding access. Students are allowed to complete only one evaluation per course. A “window” for completing the evaluation of a specific course will occur during the last two weeks of each term and session.

Weapons Policy:

To promote a safe and secure campus, Towson University prohibits the possession or control of any weapon while on University property. The term weapon includes any potentially dangerous object or substance or replica thereof. The full policy can be found at this link:

<http://inside.towson.edu/generalcampus/tupolicies/documents/06-01.11%20Weapons%20Prohibited.pdf>

Emergency Text Alerts:

All students must sign up for the Campus Emergency Alert Text Message Notification System. Go to following link for instructions to do so:

<http://www.towson.edu/adminfinance/facilities/police/campusemergency/> and watch the emergency preparedness video and print out the pocket guide by clicking on this link: <http://www.towson.edu/adminfinance/facilities/police/campussafety/emergencyprep.asp>

EMF Google Group List Serve:

All EMF students are required to join the EMF Google Group List Serve at <http://groups.google.com/group/TowsonEMF> (Copy and paste this URL into your Web Browser). This will guarantee that you receive daily postings regarding digital media, video, film, and audio production topics including festivals, special screening, guest speakers, film/video crew needs, internships, and jobs.

Use this email address (TowsonEMF@googlegroups.com) to post your own messages to the group. The main page will also archive all posts. Instructions:

1. Create a user account and password, and be sure to use the email to which you prefer receiving mail. (You only need to sign up once and you’ll continue to receive EMF Google group emails.)
2. Select one of the three Email options for reading the group messages:
 - a. Abridged Email (No more than 1 email per day) --Summary of new activity each day.
 - b. Digest Email (About 1 email per day) --Up to 25 full new messages bundled into a single email.
 - c. Email (About 1 email per day) --Best way not to miss important info as you get every message sent as it arrives.

Spring 2012 Class Schedule of Topics/Assignments: (*Note: All work subject to change.)

Week 1: January 30th

Course Overview

What is Story? Why is Story important? Why are *your* Stories important?

In-Class Workshop: Discuss Chapter 3 on Artistic Identity.

Review Assignments 3-1, 3-2, 3-3.

DUE NEXT WEEK:

- 1- Read Chapter 3 and do Assignments 3-1 and 3-2 (Rabiger pages 25-26)
- 2- Rehearse “Presenting Yourself and Your Storytelling Goals.” Be ready to make a 4-minute oral presentation. **NOTE: Save this Artistic Identity work. You will need it later in the semester!*

Week 2: February 6th

Give your Artistic Identity presentations. (10 points)

Class provides feedback per Assignment 3-3.

Discuss Chapter 5. If time, start Assignment 5-1 (autobiography) in class (Rabiger pg. 40-41)

Lecture: The Story Paradigm

Discuss upcoming Volition and Point of View Essay. Read “The Empty House of My Brokenhearted Father” by Poe Ballentine, and “Babylon Sisters” by Pearl Cleague.

DUE NEXT WEEK:

- 1- Read Introduction, Chapters 1 (minus pg. 11-13), 2, and 7
- 2- Start your Writer’s Notebook and Dream Journal.
- 3- Write Rabiger Assignment 8-2, pg. 69--Volition and Point of View Essay. **Your response must be one full page, single-spaced. At the end of the essay, provide a brief description of how you applied each element of the Story Paradigm (pp. 73-74).** Carefully follow assignment requirements.

THINK AHEAD: Start your Dream Journal

Week 3: February 13th

Discuss Chapters 7, 8, and 9 (The Writer’s Toolkit)

Writing Assignment DUE: Volition and Point of View Essay (10 points).

Discuss upcoming Childhood Essay assignment. Read examples 1 and 2 (pp. 90-92)

DUE NEXT WEEK:

- 1- Read Rabiger Chapters 11 and 12
- 2- Write Assignment 11-1, Childhood Essay, Rabiger pg. 89, just A and C. **Must be one full page, single-spaced.** See examples on Pg. 90-91. Story must include Story Paradigm elements. **At the end of the essay, provide a brief description of how you applied each element of the Story Paradigm (pp. 73-74).**

THINK AHEAD: Chapter 14 – Prepare for Dream Assignment

Week 4: February 20th

Writing Assignment DUE: Childhood Story (10 points).

Lecture/Discussion: “Using the Tools of Drama.” Preview The “Three-Act Structure” Assessment on pages 73-74.

Discuss Myth/Legend/Fairytale assignment. Discuss examples. Show “Freeway” if time allows.

DUE NEXT WEEK:

1- Read Chapters 10 and 13.

2- Write Myth/Legend/Fairytale Retold. This is Assignment 13-1 (including story and analysis) on pg. 115 of the Rabiger book. Aim for about no more than two pages in length, single-spaced. Pick a short myth or legend. See page 117 for an example of this assignment.

3- **At the end of the story, provide a brief description of how you applied each element of the Story Paradigm (pp. 73-74).**

THINK AHEAD: Chapter 15 – Start search for Adapting a Short Story

Week 5: February 27th

Writing Assignment DUE: Myth/Legend/Folktale Retold (20 Points).

Students present Myths/Legends/Folktales retold.

Discuss upcoming Dream Story assignment; Show “Inception”

Demonstrate how to start a News Story File.

DUE NEXT WEEK:

1- Read Chapter 14 on the Dream Story

2- Write Rabiger Dream Assignment 14-1, pg. 130. See example on pg. 132. **Must be no more than one page, single-spaced.**

3- Read assigned short story-“Bernice Bobs Her Hair”

THINK AHEAD:

1- Start search for News Story (Exercise 16-2). **START BUILDING NEWS STORY FILE!**

Week 6: March 5th

Writing Assignment DUE: Dream Story (10 Points).

Dream Story Screening—“Inception”

Discuss upcoming Short Story Adaptation assignment; read “Bernice Bobs Her Hair” and take Short Story Quiz (10 points);

DUE NEXT WEEK:

1- Read Chapter 15, “Adapting a Short Story”

2- Short Story Assignment. Follow tips in “Evaluating a Short Story for Adaptation” on Rabiger, pg. 142. Also, follow the Short Story Adaptation Rules on Rabiger, pg. 145. The rules are all the bulleted points on the bottom part of the page. See pg. 147 for an example.

3 - On a separate page, briefly answer the questions listed in “The Three-Act Structure on pages 73-74. **Also, provide a brief description of how you applied each element of the Story Paradigm.**

Week 7: March 12th

Writing Assignment DUE: Adapting a Short Story (20 Points).

Short Story Screening-“Bernice Bobs Her Hair”

Introduce Photo Story Assignment: A Picture and Its Consequences.

DUE NEXT WEEK: (after Spring Break)

1—Find a photo and use it to write Assignment 16-1 on pg. 158. Your story must be no more than one page, single-spaced. **Attach a copy of the photo with your story. At the end of the treatment, provide a brief description of how you applied each element of the Story Paradigm (pp. 73-74).**

SPRING BREAK (Week of March 19th)

Week 8: March 26th

Writing Assignment DUE: Photo Story Assignment w/photo attached (10 Points).

Discuss Photo Stories

Introduce Non-fiction/Documentary Film Assignment; Screening – TBA. Read Chapter 17; your story must be about one of the following topics: Science, Politics, Criminal Justice, and Anthropology; research story ideas in class;

DUE NEXT WEEK:

1- Write Assignment 17-1 on A Documentary Subject. Choose your idea from your News Story File. In preparation, all relevant questions are answered on pg. 166-167; an example of the document you must produce is on pg. 169-171; and your document must be a minimum of one full page, single-spaced. Submit a copy of the non-fiction source (news) article that you used for this assignment. At the end of document, provide a brief description of how you will apply the Story Paradigm; what visuals would you use to tell your story?; what media (cable network) would you pitch your story to?;

Week 9: April 2nd

Writing Assignment DUE: Documentary Film Assignment (20 Points).

Discuss documentary film story ideas.

Introduce Sound/Audio Documentary Assignment. Your story must be about one of the following topics: Science, Politics, Criminal Justice, and Anthropology; research story ideas in class;

DUE NEXT WEEK:

1- Read Chapters 18, 19

2- Sound/Audio Story. Follow the same instructions of Assignment 17-1 on pg. 168, but write your story as if it is a radio/audio documentary. NOTE: The subject must be different from the one you chose last week. There are no images, only sounds/audio. Describe how you will tell the story creatively. What sounds would you use to convey your story? Your document must not be more than one and one-half pages; single-spaced. Submit a copy of the non-fiction source (news) article that you used for this assignment. **Also, at the end of the essay, provide a brief description of how you will apply each element of the Story Paradigm.**

Week 10: April 9th

Writing Assignment DUE: Audio Documentary Assignment (20 Points).

Discuss Audio Documentaries.

Introduce 2-Minute Fiction Film Assignment – Must be original, fiction, two minutes long. Use only one interior location where no doors or windows open. Nor can the characters or the viewer be able to see outside of their location. You may only choose from the following interior locations: a typical refrigerator, a coffin, a small closet, a church confessional, or a high school locker.

DUE NEXT WEEK:

1- Chapters 21, 22

2- Write a 2-Minute Fiction Film Treatment. Write Assignment 18-1 on pg. 175. For the treatment, aim for no more than one page, single-spaced, written in present tense. See treatment examples in Rabiger, pages 176-185. The story must adhere to the location requirements. On another page, include the meaning of the story. Again, film idea must be 2 minutes max. **At the end of the treatment, provide a brief description of how you applied each element of the Story Paradigm (pp. 73-74).** Be prepared to present your idea in class.

Week 11: April 16th

Writing Assignment DUE: 2-Minute Fiction Film Treatment (10 of 20 Points).

Present your film idea. Be prepared to take notes and revise, if required.

Discussion: of “proper” script format. See Rabiger, pg. 223-225.

Hand out and review: “Spec Script Writing” by Charles Deemer.

Introduce “Grid Grading Criteria” (see Blackboard)

DUE NEXT WEEK:

- 1- Write your treatment as a screenplay. It must be no more than 2 pages long. Follow Deemer’s annotated notes. For your format, feel free to use any standard screenwriting software. There are free demo versions of *Final Draft* script software and *Celtx* available at www.FinalDraft.com and www.celtx.com/, or assorted MS Word screenwriting software available on the Internet. Note: whatever format you use, it MUST adhere to the required rules for a professional script (see example on page 224).
- 2- At the end of the treatment, briefly answer the questions of how you applied the “Three-Act Structure” Story Paradigm (pp. 73-74).

Week 12: April 23rd

Writing Assignment DUE: 2-Minute Fiction Screenplay (balance of 20 points).

Presentation of Screenplays.

Introduce 4-minute film project. Must be four minutes long.

DUE NEXT WEEK:

- 1- Write Assignment 19-1 on pg. 188. Must be one page, single spaced, written in present tense. But instead of a “feature,” aim for a 4-minute fictional story. See examples on Rabiger pages 188-193. On another page, include the meaning of the story. **At the end of the treatment, provide a brief description of how you applied each element of the Story Paradigm (pp. 73-74).** Be prepared to present your idea in class!

Week 13: April 30th

Writing Assignment DUE: 4-Minute Fiction Treatment (10 of 20 Points).

Present your film idea. Be prepared to take notes and revise, if required.

Review proper script format and Deemer handout.

DUE NEXT WEEK:

- 1- Write the screenplay pages of your 4-Minute Fiction Treatment. Must be no more than 4 pages long. Once again, use demo script software available at www.FinalDraft.com or www.celtx.com/, or one of the numerous MS Word script templates available on the Internet. Again, the format MUST adhere to the rules of a professional screenplay (page 224).
- 2- On a separate sheet, briefly answer the questions on pg. 73-74 regarding the “Three-Act Structure” Story Paradigm.

Week 14: May 7th

Writing Assignment DUE: 4-Minute Film Script (balance of 20 Points).

Presentation of your screenplays.

Introduce “Revising Your Artistic Identity” assignment.

Introduce Setting a Personal Agenda Assignment.

DUE NEXT WEEK:

- 1- Read Chapter 20, “Revisiting Your Artistic Identity.”
- 2- Do Assignments 20-3 on page 204, “Ideas and Ambitions” and 20-4 on page 206 “Discussion and Retrospective.” Be prepared to deliver the answers to this assignment in a 3-minute presentation. Simply presenting a laundry list of responses is unacceptable. Give examples. Be ready to answer follow-up questions, such as “Why?” and “Why not?”
- 3- Do Assignment 20-4 on pg. 204-205, “Setting a Personal Agenda.” The format of your agenda must follow the example of the table on page 205. Do not submit this as an MS Excel document. The more thorough your responses, the better your grade.
- 4- Story Paradigm Final

Week 15: May 14th

Oral Presentation DUE: “Ideas and Ambitions” and “Discussion and Retrospective” (10 Points).

Writing Assignment DUE: “Setting A Personal Agenda.”

Story Paradigm Final (10 points)

Final Exam Period—Tuesday, May 22nd from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.

RESOURCES YOU WILL NEED

1. *Writer's Notebook*

Keep a small notebook with you at all times and jot down descriptions or sketches of what you see around you:

Characters who could be used in a story	Interesting and visual locations
Curious or evocative objects	Loaded or revealing situations
Unusual or revealing behavior	Any theme that intrigues you.

2. *Dream Journal*

This is entirely private, kept at home and used for the Dream Story assignment. Keep a record of your dreams here.

3. *News Story File*

Save good news stories in a folder for use in the News Story and Documentary assignments. You'll find valuable material in old magazines and newspapers.

4. *Picture File*

Save pictures from magazines and newspapers. Strong inspiration can come from your choice of a war photograph, crime report, fashion ad, or a landscape, or take your own picture with a digital camera.

Consultations:

During office hours and other various times, you can find me in MC 112E. Besides regularly scheduled office hours, I will usually have time before and after class sessions to answer any questions or concerns you may have. If these times are unsatisfactory, an appointment can be scheduled. Don't hesitate to contact me by phone, e-mail, or in person if you have a question or concern about class matters. **If e-mailing a question to me, be sure to put EMF 120 in the subject line of your e-mail.**