



“If it can be written, or thought, it can be filmed.”  
~filmmaker Stanley Kubrick

**PLAY MONTAGE:**  
-Anna and Elsa roll giant snowballs and build a snowman together. Elsa moves his stick arms around.  
YOUNG ELSA (CONT'D)  
(goofy voice)  
Hi, I'm Olaf and I like warm hugs.  
Anna jumps up and hugs him.  
YOUNG ANNA  
I love you, Olaf.  
-Anna and Olaf appear to be dancing. REVEAL: Elsa is actually propelling them across the ice floor with her magic.  
-The girls slide down snowbanks together!  
-Anna fearlessly jumps off a snow peak into mid air.  
YOUNG ANNA (CONT'D)  
Catch me!  
Elsa makes another peak to catch Anna.  
YOUNG ELSA  
Gotcha!  
Anna keeps jumping. Elsa keeps casting magic.

Welcome to Screenwriting! Before becoming a teacher, I attended the Graduate Screenwriting Program at the University of Southern California's School of Cinema-Television. I proposed this course in 2005 because I wanted to share my passion for the craft of screenwriting with LTHS students. 😊

**Course Goals:**

- To engage students in all aspects of the craft of screenwriting, including the following:
  - creating their own original characters, scenes, and short screenplays
  - reading, analyzing, and critiquing the elements of cinematic storytelling, such as characterization, conflict and tension, plot, dialogue, description, theme, three-act structure, and how to write in proper screenplay format
  - watching exemplar films and clips with a new perspective—noticing the writers' choices and craft
  - learning and practicing the writing techniques commonly employed by screenwriters, including how to write for a visual medium
- To further develop each student's creative voice and confidence as a writer
- To create a safe and supportive environment where students can workshop and receive feedback on their writing
- To have a LOT of fun taking imaginative risks

**Daily Grades:**

- in-class creative warm-ups and practice
- film screening analysis assignments
- critique/workshop feedback of students' writing

**Major Grades:**

- screenplay scene-writing process (first drafts, revisions, final drafts)

## Make-up Work:

- Make-up work is the **student's** responsibility.
- **MAKING UP MISSED FILM SCREENINGS:**  
We watch many films in Screenwriting, and students will be held accountable for film-watching assignments we do in class. Many of the films we watch are on Netflix, or a student may arrange a time to screen a film before or after school in my classroom or even check out the film from me to view at home.
- **MAKING UP COMPUTER LAB WRITING TIME:**  
If a student misses class on a day we are writing in a computer lab, he or she is expected to make-up that writing time at home (or before or after school if access to a computer is an issue)
- **Students can find out what work they missed in four ways:**
  1. Check Ms. Bech's Schoology Page.
  2. Send an email to Ms. Bech at [bechj@ltsdshools.org](mailto:bechj@ltsdshools.org)
  3. Speak to Ms. Bech before or after school.
  4. Speak to a classmate.

## Late Work:

- **Final Drafts of screenplay assignments:** Because this course is an elective, it is my goal to provide you with ample in-class time to complete writing and assignments. However, there may be times when you need a little more time. Above all, I expect you to communicate with me and to turn your writing project as soon after the class deadline as possible. Points will be deducted from writing assignments or scenes that are turned in excessively late.
- **Film Viewing Assignments:** If you are absent for part or all of a film-viewing assignment, the expectation is that you make up the assignment within one week.
- **Planned Absences:** If on Monday you know you will be gone Wednesday for an extra-curricular event or dentist appointment and we have a final draft due on Friday, the expectation is that you will still have your work completed by the due date or that you email me your writing while you are away or the day you return to school.

**Plagiarism/cheating:** Students who plagiarize writing will be disciplined according to the honor code school policy. You are welcome to bounce ideas off of your classmates, but the final product, unless completed with a partner or group, must be written by you and no one else. This also means that your characters and stories must be your own original creations—not taken from another writer's screenplay. For example, someone already thought up Spiderman and Darth Vader. Create your own superheroes and villains. 😊

**Tutorials/Computer Access:** Students may schedule time to work with me before or after school to get help with a writing assignment. Moreover, I am happy to give you access to the English lab computer after school if computer access at home is an issue. Also, the library opens at 7:30 AM each morning and there is late bus transportation available on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 5 PM for students who need to stay after school for tutoring or computer access.

# Ms. Bech's Classroom Expectations



- 1. Be on time.**
- 2. Bring required materials with you. *\*\*See list below***
- 3. Stuff superfluous to scholarship stays stashed out of sight!**  
(cell phones, iPods, other electronic devices, grooming accoutrements, work for another class) *\*Although, if productive, students may listen to music while writing in the computer lab.*
- 4. Be kind and respectful to everyone and everything—even when you don't feel like it.**
- 5. One person speaks; the rest of us listen.**
- 6. Take care of personal business outside of class.**
- 7. Advocate for yourself. Be willing to ask questions and to ask for help if you need it.**
- 8. Take care of yourself so that you can be awake and alert during class.**

## ***POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES FOR NOT FOLLOWING CLASS EXPECTATIONS:***

- being moved to another seat or area of the classroom or computer lab
- scheduled private conference with Ms. Bech before or after school
- phone call or email home to parent/guardian
- trip to the AP's office with an office referral
- confiscation of items and devices that are supposed to be out of sight

## **SUPPLIES YOU NEED FOR SCREENWRITING**

- loose-leaf 3-hole-punched or perforated paper
- a pen or pencil
- a binder with a section for Screenwriting only or a folder for Screenwriting handouts
- a willing and working imagination!
- USB flash drive or access to Google Drive

**\*\*** I also highly suggest you keep some kind of notebook with you whenever possible to jot down observations, character traits and behaviors, or possible story or scene ideas.



## YOU WILL ALSO NEED:

- While most of the writing for Screenwriting is completed during class time in an LT computer lab, you may still need **regular access to a computer and printer!** You don't need to buy some fancy screenwriting software program.
- At school in the computer lab we will use the basic version of a web-based screenwriting program called Celtx, which can be accessed at no cost to students at <http://celtx.com> . In class, you will sign up an account for the free-version. \*Celtx has fancier options you can access by paying a monthly amount, but this is not necessary for class.

**PS – This is absolutely not required, but Ms. Bech would be extremely grateful if you'd be willing to donate a box of tissues/Kleenex for our classroom supply.**



## COOL WEBSITES WHERE YOU CAN READ SCREENPLAYS

Below are links to three of my favorite websites for reading screenplays. However, some of these scripts are for R-rated films, so make sure to talk to your parent/guardian before visiting them. 😊

[www.script-o-rama.com](http://www.script-o-rama.com)

[www.simplyscripts.com](http://www.simplyscripts.com)

<http://scriptshadow.net/>

**The Writers Guild of America's 101 Greatest Screenplays**

[http://www.wga.org/subpage\\_newsevents.aspx?id=1807](http://www.wga.org/subpage_newsevents.aspx?id=1807)



**LAKE TRAVIS HIGH SCHOOL  
MS. BECH'S SCREENWRITING CLASS**

*I have read, am familiar with, and accept the requirements of the syllabus, classroom expectations, and supplies list for Ms. Bech's Screenwriting class.*

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Contact information:**

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Also, feel free to send an email to Ms. Bech at [bechj@ltidschools.org](mailto:bechj@ltidschools.org) to ensure I have your proper email address.

Home telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**I LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING YOU AT BACK TO  
SCHOOL NIGHT ON SEPTEMBER 12 !**



**WAIT, THERE'S MORE**

Screenwriting Elective  
Lake Travis High School  
3324 Ranch Road 620 South  
Austin, Texas 78738

**CONSENT FORM FOR CLASSROOM VIDEO PRESENTATION**

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE**

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s):

As we begin to work on writing scenes and creating characters, it will be important to examine examples from classic and contemporary cinema. I like to use short scenes and sequences to model examples of elements of screenwriting, such as how a screenwriter crafts characters or conflict, etc. Because of the quantity of scenes involved, I felt it would be most efficient to create a consent form for this specific purpose.

Please be assured, it is my objective that any PG-13 or R-rated film clips screened in class are carefully selected—with the intent of avoiding content that would be inappropriate for the classroom. In other words, I’m not going to show *the key scene(s)* that made the MPAA assign an “R” rating to a film. However, I feel strongly that there are many creatively written moments in modern cinema that can serve as exemplary and inspiring examples for the students as they pursue their own storytelling projects. If you would like a complete list of the clips I plan to use and a description of their content, I can provide that throughout the year.

There may be some clips that contain curse words. As with reading literature in school, I always make a point to establish that choices a writer makes when creating characters—how they speak, the decisions they make—are by no means necessarily a model of how we *should* speak or act. But without characters making poor choices, there is no drama. Over the years I have been very impressed with my students’ ability to observe and analyze the choices writers make and to recognize the difference between creating a compelling story vs. the expectations for their own behavior at school and, for that matter, in their daily lives.

(*Student Name*) \_\_\_\_\_ **has my permission to view scenes and sequences from PG-13 and R-rated films for educational purposes while participating in Lake Travis High School’s Screenwriting course.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signed by parent or guardian* *Date*

\_\_\_\_\_ **No, I have concerns about viewing PG-13 and R-rated film clips in the classroom and would like to speak with Ms. Bech to discuss alternate activities.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signed by parent or guardian* *Date*

**CONSENT FORM FOR CLASSROOM VIDEO PRESENTATION**

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE**

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s):

This form gives your child permission to view the following complete films in Screenwriting class at LTHS sometime during the school year. We will not watch all of them—this is a list of *possible* titles. (I have not included titles rated PG or G.) While these films contain some mature subject matter, they have been carefully selected because the screenplays offer exemplary examples of this craft. I often think if the MPAA were to assign ratings to any of Shakespeare’s plays or the art of Michelangelo, most works would probably warrant an R rating. All films will be shown with a specific assignment and purpose connected to what we are studying in class. Some scenes may be skipped for content reasons.

***Psycho*** – 1960 (Rated R)

- Nominated: Writer’s Guild Award for Best Screenplay
- WGA 100 Best Screenplays

***One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest*** – 1975  
(Rated R)

- Winner: Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay
- Winner: Golden Globe and Writer’s Guild Awards for Best Screenplay
- WGA 100 Best Screenplays

***Alien*** – 1980 (Rated R)

- Winner: Saturn Award for Best Science Fiction Writing

***Ordinary People*** – 1981 (Rated R)

- Winner: Academy Award for Best Picture
- Winner: Academy Award and Writer’s Guild Award for Best Adapted Screenplay
- WGA 100 Best Screenplays

***Witness*** – 1985 (Rated R)

- Winner: Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay
- Winner: Writer’s Guild Award for Best Original Screenplay; Golden Globe nomination for Best Original Screenplay
- WGA 100 Best Screenplays

***Stand By Me*** – 1986 (Rated R)

- Nominated: Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay
- Nominated: Writer’s Guild Award for Best Adapted Screenplay
- Nominated: Independent Spirit Award for Best Adapted Screenplay

***Rain Man*** – 1988 (Rated R)

- Winner: Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay and Best Picture
- Nominated: Golden Globe and Writer’s Guild Award for Best Original Screenplay

***Crimes and Misdemeanors*** – 1990 (Rated PG-13)

- Nominated: Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay and Best Picture and Writer’s Guild Award for Best Original Screenplay
- WGA 100 Best Screenplays

***Thelma and Louise*** – 1991 (Rated R)

- Winner: Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay
- Winner: Writer’s Guild and Golden Globe Award for Best Original Screenplay
- WGA 100 Best Screenplays



***Dogfight***– 1991 (Rated R)

- Winner: Telluride Film Festival Award
- Recently adapted to a stage musical and nominated for both the 2013 Outer Critics Circle and Drama League Awards

***Run Lola Run (Lola Rennt)***– 1991 (Rated R)

- Winner: Independent Spirit Award Awards Best Foreign Film
- Winner: Sundance Film Institute Audience Award for Best Film

***The Shawshank Redemption***– 1994 (Rated R)

- Nominated: Academy Award for Best Picture and Best Adapted Screenplay
- Nominated: Golden Globe and Writer’s Guild Award for Best Adapted Screenplay
- WGA 100 Best Screenplays

***Good Will Hunting***– 1998 (Rated R)

- Winner: Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay
- Winner: Golden Globe for Best Screenplay
- Nominated: Writer’s Guild Award for Best Original Screenplay

***Memento***– 2000 (Rated R)

- Nominated: Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay
- Winner: American Film Institute Screenplay of the Year
- Nominated: Golden Globe for Best Screenplay

***Million Dollar Baby*** – 2004 (Rated PG-13)

- Winner: Academy Award for Best Picture
- Nominated: Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay
- Nominated: Writer’s Guild Award for Best Adapted Screenplay

***Juno*** – 2007 (Rated PG-13)

- Winner: Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay
- Winner: American Film Institute Film of the Year
- Winner: Writer’s Guild Award for Best Original Screenplay

***Source Code*** – 2010 (PG-13)

- Winner: The Blacklist’s yearly list of best unproduced screenplays (2007-2009)

***Whiplash*** – 2014 (R)

- Nominated: Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay
- Nominated: Writers Guild Award for Best Original Screenplay

(Student Name)\_\_\_\_\_ has my permission to view any of the following films during Lake Travis High School’s Screenwriting course.

(Student Name)\_\_\_\_\_ has my permission to view the films from the above list during Lake Travis High School’s Screenwriting course EXCEPT for the following titles:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Student Name)\_\_\_\_\_ does not have my permission to view any of the listed films during Lake Travis High School’s Screenwriting course. I would prefer an alternative assignment be given to my son or daughter when a film from this list is screened.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date