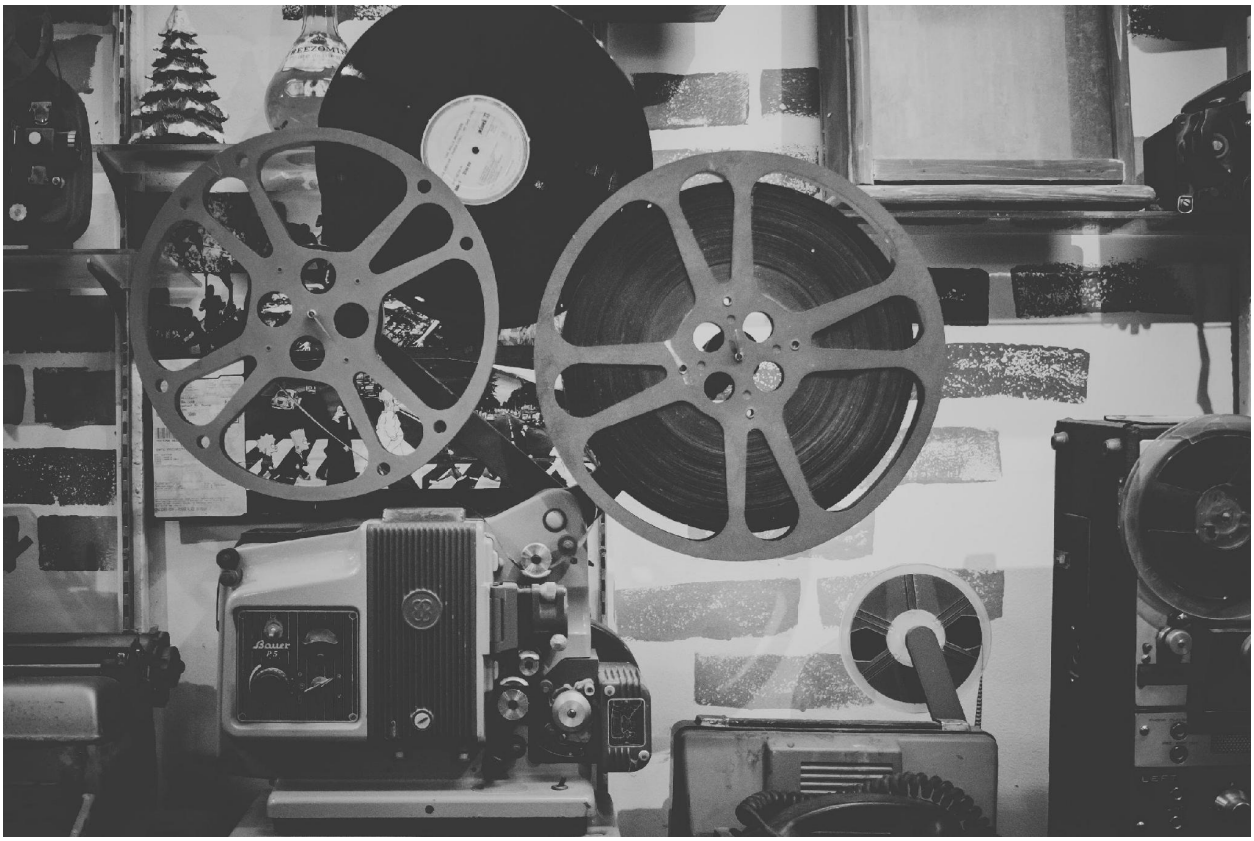
ENGLISH 190F **Autumn 2026**

FICTION INTO FILM



Monday & Wednesday 1:30 pm – 3:20 pm
Classroom: 540-103

Instructors:	Georgina Beaty gbeaty@stanford.edu	Kate Folk katefolk@stanford.edu

Office hours: by appointment. Talk to us after class or send an email and we'll set a time.

Course Description:

English 190F is designed as a bridge from fiction writing to writing for film. We will be reading adapted screenplays and source material, examining strategies for adaptation, engaging in exercises to help us learn the form and craft of screenplays, and watching and analyzing movies to see how film structure works.

Our major writing project will be a 25-page screenplay that will either be a self-contained short or the beginning of a feature-length project. We'll workshop these screenplays as a class, and students will complete a revision as the final assignment of the quarter.

Texts and Materials:

1. *Screenwriting software*: Final Draft or Movie Magic Screenwriter (Write Bros.) are industry standards but expensive. Celtx (free trial), Fade-In (free trial), and Scrivener ($50) are all good options. We will be reading and submitting our drafts in **PDF format**, but please note that Microsoft Word or typical word processing software will not suffice as it is not built to handle the formatting of scripts.

2. *The Nickel Boys*, by Colson Whitehead. Available from any online book retailers, brick-and-mortar bookstores, or libraries. You must have a **hard copy** (not electronic) of the book in hand by Week 2.

3. *Movie Money*: You will be required to watch two films—*Brokeback Mountain* and *Nickel Boys*. Both of these films are available on multiple platforms—Amazon, iTunes, YouTube, etc.—for modest rental fee. You can watch them however you wish, as long as you watch them by the required date.

4. Other materials will be a combination of online resources and handouts.

5. You will be required to provide hard copies of your work to everyone else in the class, so please budget for this expense. Approximately 14 copies of a 25-page script.

6. The online platform for Fiction into Film will be Canvas. We will send you an invitation, and you'll post many of your assignments on Canvas.

Major Deadlines (all work is due by the start of class on the date listed, unless otherwise noted):

- Monday, October 5 – Adaptation #1 ("The Elephant") due
- Monday, October 12 – Adaptation #2 due
- Monday, October 19 – Verbal pitches and loglines due for workshop screenplay
- Beginning October 21 – Hard-copies of workshop screenplays are due **the class before** your workshop date
- Monday, December 7 – Portfolio due (on Canvas) by 11:59 p.m.

Grading:

- **Class Participation**—30%
  This includes attendance, punctuality, preparedness, and involvement in class discussions. Full attendance is very important in a workshop, as it is impossible to "catch up" on a workshop discussion you have missed, and the discussion itself suffers when voices are missing. If you will miss a class, let us know ahead of time by email.
  If you have an unexpected and unavoidable conflict, please talk with us about it.

- **Adaptations and other short assignments**—20%
  Two short, adapted screenplays, in-class pitches you will present to the entire class, and several other in-class and take-home writing activities.

- **Full-length screenplay**—15%
  A 25-pp. screenplay. This can be a self-contained short film, or the beginning of a feature-length project. It can be either an adaptation of a text of your own choosing or an original script.

- **Written Critiques**—20%
  You will write a feedback letter for every workshopped full-length screenplay, discussing your reading experience of the script, pinpointing strengths and problem areas, and articulating some suggestions or solutions. You will upload a copy to Canvas by the start of class on the day of the workshop, as well as bring a printed copy to give to the writer after their workshop.

- **Final Portfolio**—15%
  A revision of your workshop screenplay accompanied by a process letter.

Attendance:
To be as clear as possible, the policy is: you are allowed two absences, no questions asked. You might be sick, or "sick," or in Berlin, or "in Berlin,"—whatever the case, those two are yours. Each absence beyond those two will result in a lowering of your final grade by one third of a letter (i.e. an A- becomes a B+). If you have extenuating circumstances, just email us.

If, after the first day, you are more than ten minutes late to class (or leave early without our prior permission) that will count as an absence. If there's a valid reason why you may sometimes be late (i.e. a class immediately before or on the other side of campus), please let us know.

Conferences:
Please set up a meeting with one or both of us at any time to discuss your screenplay or any concerns you have regarding class—or just to talk about writing movies! We also highly recommend setting up an appointment to talk sometime in the week following the workshop of your screenplay. This is not required, but generally speaking, students who come in to talk about their revision strategies consistently produce better revisions.

Laptops and Tablets:
May be used during in-class writing exercises. Feel free to bring them to class, **but please don't leave them open during general discussion.** Cell phones must be turned off and should not be checked during class.

Content:
In the work we read/view and in the scripts we write, we will undoubtedly encounter the classic themes of film and literature: love, death, sex, violence, depression, madness, rage, trauma, (joy, too, but no one worries about encountering joy.) Please bring your most mature and compassionate attitudes to class.

On Generative AI:
You are not to use AI to complete any aspect of your coursework, at any time, for any reason. This includes any use pertaining to readings, class discussion, peer feedback, or your own written work, including being "in conversation" with LLM's as you are working, using AI for proofreading, brainstorming, editorial, or organizational purposes.

This policy is in place because outsourcing your own thinking, feeling, and expression is antithetical to the aims of this class. This course, more than anything, is about *you*—what you think and feel and what you might like to say. It is the quirks, idiosyncrasies, and imperfections that constitute a writer's voice. You can only find that 'voice' through engaging with the *difficulty* of writing. We are genuinely interested in your creative process and hope that you will trust the class enough not to give us a mechanically smoothed version of it.

CW-Undergrad Email List
Please sign up for the CW-undergrad email list at
https://mailman.stanford.edu/mailman/listinfo/cw-undergrad

Students with Documented Disabilities:
Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL: http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oae).

Honor Code:
The Honor Code is an undertaking of the Stanford academic community, individually and collectively. Its purpose is to uphold a culture of academic honesty.

Students will support this culture of academic honesty by neither giving nor accepting unpermitted academic aid in any work that serves as a component of grading or evaluation, including assignments, examinations, and research.

Use of or consultation with generative AI shall be treated analogously to assistance from another person. In particular, using generative AI tools to complete a writing assignment is not permitted. Students should acknowledge the use of generative AI and default to disclosing such assistance when in doubt.

Violations of the Honor Code
Examples of conduct that have been regarded as being in violation of the Honor Code include:

- Copying from another's examination paper or allowing another to copy from one's own paper
- Unpermitted collaboration (including the use of AI)
- Plagiarism
- Giving or receiving unpermitted aid on a take-home examination

- Representing as one's own work the work of another
- Giving or receiving aid on an academic assignment under circumstances in which a reasonable person should have known that such aid was not permitted

Sanctions for Violating the Honor Code

In recent years, most student disciplinary cases have involved Honor Code violations; of these, the most frequent arise when a student submits another's work as his or her own or gives or receives unpermitted aid. The standard sanction for a first offense includes a one-quarter suspension from the University and 40 hours of community service and a "No Pass" or "No Credit" for the course in which the violation occurred. The standard sanction for multiple violations (e.g. cheating more than once in the same course) is a three-quarter suspension and 40 or more hours of community service.

Course Material Support:

Stanford University and its faculty are committed to ensuring that all courses are financially accessible to all students. If you are an undergraduate who needs assistance with the cost of course textbooks, supplies, materials and/or fees, you are welcome to ask the First Generation and/or Low-Income Student Success Center (520 Lasuen Mall, Suite 200) and FLI staff email. They will connect you with resources and support while ensuring your privacy.

Schedule

* subject to change - always check Canvas for updated assignments *

Note: HW is listed on the date that it is *due*. Assignments submitted to Canvas by the start of class, unless otherwise noted.

Week One

Weds 9/23 — In class: Welcome and Introduction
Read the screenplay formatting guide at Studio Binder. Come prepared with any questions about formatting. https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/brilliant-script-screenplay-format/

Week Two

Mon 9/28 — Read "Brokeback Mountain" by Annie Proulx
Due: Screenplay formatting exercise ("The Birthday Party")

Weds 9/30 — Read the *Brokeback Mountain* screenplay and "The Elephant" by Slawomir Mrozek

Week Three

Mon 10/5 — Watch *Brokeback Mountain*
Due: Adaptation #1 (of "The Elephant")

Wed 10/7 — Read the batch of all short stories for Adaptation #2

Week Four

Mon 10/12 — Read *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead
Due: Adaptation #2

Wed 10/14 — Read the *Nickel Boys* screenplay by RaMell Ross and Joslyn Barnes
Due: Three pitches for possible workshop script

Week Five

Mon 10/19 — Watch *Nickel Boys*
In class: Full-class pitches
Due: Final pitch and logline to share with the group

Wed 10/21 — In class: Full-class pitches
Workshops 1 & 2 submit hard copies in class

Week Six

Mon 10/26 — In class: Workshops 1 and 2
Read Submissions 1 & 2 and write feedback letters
Due: Submit letters on Canvas and bring a printed copy to class (all workshops)
Workshops 3 & 4 submit

Wed 10/28 In class: Workshops 3 and 4
Workshops 5 & 6 submit

Week Seven

Mon 11/2 In class: Workshops 5 and 6
Workshops 7 & 8 submit

Wed 11/4 In class: Workshops 7 and 8
Workshops 9 & 10 submit

Week Eight

Mon 11/9 In class: Workshops 9 and 10
Workshops 11 & 12 submit

Wed 11/11 In class: Workshops 11 and 12
Workshop 13 submit

Week Nine

Mon 11/16 In class: Visiting screenwriter and Workshop 13
Workshops 14 and 15 submit

Wed 11/18 In class: Workshop 14 and 15

NO CLASS 11/23 – 11/27; THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 10

Mon 11/30 In class: Revision readings and class celebration
Due: Bring a 2-3 page scene from your screenplay (new or a significant revision) to do a table reading

Wed 12/2 TBD

Final Portfolio due Monday, 12/7 by 11:59 p.m. on Canvas.