Class Schedule

Friday, January 18

9:00  Coffee & Snacks
10:00-12:00  Session I  Tom Lazarus  Cheri Steinkellner
12:30-1:30  Lunch  (Indian)
1:30-4:00  Session II  Perry Lang  Cheri Steinkellner

Saturday January 19

9:00  Coffee & Snacks
10:00-12:00  Session I  Christina L. Eliason  Glenn Leopold
11:45  Lunch
1:00-3:00  Session II  Michael Miner  Omar Najam (Plus)
3:15-3:30  Snacks
3:30-6:00  Session III  Tom Silvestri  Harrison Reiner

Sunday January 20

9:00  Coffee & Snacks
10:00-12:00  Session I  Josh Pruett  Tara Miele
1:00-3:00  Session II  Amy Pocha  Toni Graphia
Word Farm Bios

Jace Armstrong
Jace is a producer at Abet Lutely Productions and has been one of the producers on such shows as Check It Out! with Dr. Steve Brule, The Eric Andre Show, Comedy Bang! Bang!, the upcoming Nathan For You, and most recently The Eric Andre New Year’s Eve Spooktacular! He is also a performer at the UpRight Citizens Brigade and has released many independent projects online.

Christina Eliason
Born and raised in Santa Barbara, California, Christina studied acting at UCLA, Playhouse West in Los Angeles, HB Studios in New York and the National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA) in Sydney, Australia. She performed in American College Theatre Festival winning productions of BILLOUN BLUES and STEEL MAGNOLIAS (for which she earned a Best Actress nomination for the role of Shelby) and on-stages from Santa Barbara, Los Angeles and New York, to the Kennedy Center in Washington DC. In 2003, Christina starred in the Sydney premier of PRIOOF at the Sydney Opera House, Australia. Christina graduated summa cum laude with a B.A. in Film Directing from UCLA, and has made award-winning short films as well as a documentary on women’s surfing in Australia. She returned to UCLA to complete her M.F.A. in Screenwriting, where her screenplay DI-VINE MISTRRESS won the Alfred P. Sloan Fellowship in Screenwriting and the UCLA Screenwriter’s Showcase. Christina is a member of SAG, AFTRA, MEAA (Australia) and the WGAW. She currently works as a screenwriter, script editor and consultant, as well as an actress and filmmaker.

Perry Lang
Starting to work in film as an actor at 17, Perry Lang has acted in over thirty films and seventy hours of television. His film work includes Sam Fuller’s The Big Red One, Steven Spielberg’s 1941 and John Sayles’ Sunshine State as well as Eight Men Out where Perry played one of the indicted eight who threw the 1919 World Series. His television work as an actor includes MASH, the title character in the Emmy winning television special Hewitt’s Just Different, A Rumor Of War and numerous guest appearances, including many projects that he has himself either written or directed. As a writer and director, Perry started professionally writing doing Tales From The Darkside in New York. Among a number of studio assignments, he wrote the first film he directed, Little Vegas then re wrote the second, The Action Adventure: Men of War. Since then Perry Lang has directed over sixty hours of television including NYPD Blue, ER, Alias, Woods and Eli Stone. Perry lives with his family in Santa Barbara, California.

Tom Lazarus
Tom Lazarus teaches The Master Class in Screenwriting at UCLA Extension, is the author of two books on screenwriting, has written eight features, nine movies of the week and has worked as a Producer/Writer on seven series. He has also directed four features and fifty hours of television.

Glenn Leopold
A three time Emmy nominee, Glenn has written hundreds of animated episodes for such shows as Disney’s Dog (Emmy nomination), The Smurfs (Emmy nomination), Adventures From The Book Of Virtues, Scooby-Doo, The Real Adventures Of Johnny Quest, Pink Panther And Sons, Fantastic Four and many more. His NBC prime time specials include Tia The Season To Be Smurly, The Twelve Days Of Christmas, and the Emmy nominated The Town Santa Forgot starring Dick Van Dyke. Among his feature-length animation credits are the best-selling direct-to-video Scooby-Doo On Zombie Island (3 million copies and counting! Zeitik!), Scooby-Doo And The Witch’s Ghost, Scooby-Doo And The Ghoul School, and A Flintstone’ Christmas Carol. He has also written live-action sitcoms, features (The Powder, Too Scared To Scram) and is an accomplished singer-songwriter. His songs have appeared in Disney’s Dog, Tia The Season To Be Smurly, and are utilized (count ‘em) on the Rhino Records CD’s. He even had a hit record (“Back When My Hair Was Short” with his group Gunhill Road) that actually got him on American Bandstand. Cool, huh?

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Tara Miele
Tara Miele’s first short film, Miss Gentilbelle, based on the Charles Beaumont story of the same name, earned several grants and awards including the Covington-Metropolitan Theatres Award. The film premiered at the Slamdance Film Festival and has since screened around the world. Tara’s second short film, Smokers, has also screened at dozens of festivals, including South by Southwest and was recognized as one of the “Best of Fest” at the Newport Beach Film Festival. Clocking in at a mere minute and a half, the short parables the downfall of Junior High royalty. While writing and directing theatre in Los Angeles, Tara, along with writing partner Kristine M. Skee, sold her first script, Congrats, to Gold Circle Films. She also completed her passion project, a coming of age dramedy entitled Titis, which Silverwood Films snapped up the rights to, with Tara attached to direct. In 2007, New Line Cinema preemptively purchased Miele and Skee’s romantic comedy pitch, Cover Your Assets. The project has found a new home at Lionsgate. Most recently, Tara directed her first feature film, The Lake Effect, starring Ross Partridge and Kay Panabaker (ABC’s No Ordinary Family). The film was awarded The Spirit of Moomance at the Moondance Film Festival. In 2011, Tara was recognized as one of the Top Ten American Indie Director’s to watch by London’s prestigious Raindance Film Festival and currently writes and resides in Los Angeles.

Omar Najam
Omar is an editor/product for the YouTube channel SMBC Theater as well as the co-creator of 2 Broke Geeks and co-writer of Talented, a graphic novel that is going to be published by Arcana Comics in 2014.

Harrison Reiner
Harrison Reiner is an Edibles Guild story analyst for CBS Television’s Cable Series and Alternative Programming Division. He produced and co-wrote AMAR A MORIR, a foreign language feature film nominated for 7 Mexican Golden Globe Awards in 2010 and awarded the Santa Barbara International Film Festival Best Spanish Language Film Award in 2009. He taught screenwriting for the Professional Programs at UCLA’s School of Film and Television and at the University of California Santa Barbara. Mr. Reiner was Production Executive on the Academy Award winning film, CINEMA PARADISO, and was Story Editor at ROQ Pictures for the film being EIGHT MEN OUT, directed by iconic indie filmmaker John Sayles. He has lectured on screenwriting for the Directors Guild of America, for the Producers Guild of America, and at the Scottish Film Academy in Scotland. He began his film and television career working on screenplay development for the Emmy Award-winning, Academy Award-nominated PBS series, AMERICAN PLAYHOUSE. He mentors emerging minority screenwriters for the National Association of Latino Independent Producers and the Hollywood Black Film Festival and is currently developing an epic television series set in New Orleans with producing partner Lynn Whitfield, recipient of the Best Actress Emmy Award for her work on THE JOSEPHINE BAKER STORY. Mr. Reiner holds an interdisciplinary master’s in film, business, and law from Columbia University in the City of New York.

Brittany Sandler
Brittany currently works as a Network Representative for Machinima, Inc. focusing on channel and brand development, contributing writer for Tubefilter.com, and advisor to the LA Film Project.}

Cheri Steinkellner
Cheri Steinkellner has earned four Emmys, three Golden Globes, two Writers Guild Awards, a People’s Choice, Parents’ Choice, and a BAFTA, for writing and producing television (Cheers, Jeftersons, Family Ties, etc), and animation and film (Disney’s Teacher’s Pet, etc). For stage, she has written the books for Princesses (with David Zippel, Matthew Wilder, and Bill Steinkellner – NAMT 2003, Goodspeed Norma Terris 2003, Seattle 5th Avenue Theatre 2004), Sister Act (with Alan Menken, Glenn Slater, and Bill Steinkellner – Pasadena Playhouse 2006, Alliance Theater, Atlanta 2007, currently playing the London Palladium, opening on Broadway Spring 2011); Mosaic (with Georgia Stitt, opening off-Broadway in April), and Hello! My Baby (with the great composers of the Golden Age of Tin Pan Alley and Georgia Stitt). When not writing for stage and screens, Cheri teaches writing at the University of California; directs local youth productions including Rent (named Best Youth Theater Production 2009 by Santa Barbara Independent), A Chorus Line, Anything Goes, 13 Piddler On The Roof, and Our Town; and created “The Ultimate Wrap-off” for the Santa Barbara Writers Conference. Cheri and her favorite husband Bill live in Santa Barbara with their three favorite children: Kit, Teddy, and Emma.
Word Farm Bios

Tom Silvestri
Screenwriter, story analyst, production executive, and founder of Silvestri Storyworks, a story development consulting firm that works with writers, directors, and producers on screenplays for movies, TV, and new media. Silvestri has worked for over 40 major studios and production companies in Los Angeles. He’ll give an interactive talk on “Motion Picture Story Development in Hollywood and Elsewhere, Then and Now” with an emphasis on using knowledge of scripts and screenwriting as a way of launching a career in the movie and TV industry. www.silvestristoryworks.com

Michael Miner
Mr. Miner’s professional career includes time as a director of photography and director/cameraman of twenty music videos. He has written screenplays for Oliver Stone, Sylvester Stallone and Michael Douglas. As co-writer of ROBOCOP, the iconic action story about the part man/part machine law enforcer of the future, Mr. Miner received the SATURN AWARD for Best Science Fiction Screenplay and a nomination for Best Screenplay by the Mystery Writers of America. He is also the co-writer of the pilot for ROBOCOP: THE TELEVISION SHOW, produced by Sky TV and ANACONDAS: SEARCH FOR THE BLOOD ORCHID, the action adventure sequel about humans battling deadly snakes. His solo writing credits include LAWNMOWERMAN II, the science fiction sequel to the virtual reality story about an idiot savant trapped in a computer program and his debut as a writer/director, DEADLY WEAPON, a drama about a teenager who finds a prototype Star Wars weapon and uses it to take a desert town hostage. Most recently, he directed THE BOOK OF STARS, magic realism about the troubled relationship between two sisters and the memory book one of them keeps that has the power to anticipate future events.

Toni Graphia
Toni Graphia is a UCSB alum who recently worked as a writer on Grey’s Anatomy and wrote and co-executive produced for the J.J. Abrams series Alcatraz. Other credits include: Battlestar Galactica, Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles, HBO’s Carnivale, Roswell and many others. Toni’s also sold 17 pilots to NBC, CBS, FOX, USA & LIFETIME Networks. Career highlights include creating a pilot with Interview with a Vampire author Anne Rice, and having a pilot directed by feature film director Mike Newell (Harry Potter & the Goblet of Fire). In 2006, she was a recipient of the highly esteemed George Foster Peabody Award for her work on Battlestar Galactica which was named by Time Magazine as one of the five best dramas.

Amy Pocha
After graduating UCSB, Amy came to Los Angeles where she’s had much success. She and her writing partner, Seth Cohen sold their first feature film to Disney. From there, they developed films for comedians like Katt Williams, created an animated short featured on FUNNY OR DIE, and were commissioned to write youth-driven viral marketing for 20th Century Fox creating copy for comedians like Steve Martin, Jack Black, Owen Wilson, and Joel McHale). They most recently completed the NBC WRITERS ON THE VERGE staffing program, filling one of eight slots out of 1,600 applicants. Amy has also worked in development and current programming for companies including Icon Productions, Mohawk Productions, and NBC.

Josh Pruett
Josh Pruett is a writer and story board artist working in Burbank. His past artist credits include Monsters vs. Aliens, Merry Madagascar, B.O.B.’s Big Break, How to Train Your Dragon, Scared Shrekless, and Croods. He had published such works as “Alexander the Great & The Untied Man”, “Trasparente” and “Ghost Story”. Josh is now a story board artist and writer for Phineas and Ferb.

Mia Resella
Mia works as a new media researcher for the literary management company Michael Siegel & Associates (clients include Mooshot Studios, Roald Dahl, Lauren Child) and is a co-creator of the YouTube channel “2 Broke Geeks.”

Annie Wilkes
Annie is an associate producer at the documentary company Levafilmworks by day and member of the PixelDrip Gallery Artist collective nights and weekends. She recently co-produced the kick-starter backed independent documentary short Six Seasons and A Movie: A Community Art Show.
Special Thanks

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