



WORD FARM

2016



3 DAYS of WORDS & STORIES

January 29-31st
Department of Film & Media Studies, UCSB



Word Farm 2016 Students

Aubrie Amstutz

Joe Arciniega

December Brown

Charlotte Burns

Derek Buss

Isabelle Carasso

Christopher Connor

Brendan Dassey

Phoebe DeLeon

Phi Do

Julia Dumas

Sylvia Garcia

Gustavo A. Gonzalez

Christine Hwynh

Jae Hwan Kim

Phalguni Laishram

Gustavo Melo

Claudia Niles

Mia Roncati

Melvin Singh

Corine Toren

Mel Weisberger

Sydney Wiklund

Dwight Yao

Class Schedule

Friday, January 29

9:00		Coffee & Snacks	Sign-In
10:00-12:00	Session 1	Bryce & Jackie Zabel	Tom Lazarus
12:00-1:00	Lunch		
1:00-3:00	Session 2	David Gerrold	Mitchell Kreigman

Saturday, January 24

9:00		Coffee & Snacks	
10:00-12:00	Session 3	Cheri Steinkellner	J Kahn
12:00-1:00	Lunch		
1:00-3:00	Session 4	Matt Allen & Lisa Mathis Dean Pitchford	
3:00-3:30	Snacks		
3:30-5:30	Session 5	Anne Cofell Saunders	Toni Graphia
6:30	Dinner	Annenberg Conference Room - 4315 SSMS	

Sunday, January 25

9:00		Coffee & Snacks	
10:00-12:00	Session 6	Glenn Leopold	Kevin McKiernan
12:00-1:00	Lunch		
1:00-3:00	Session 7	Amy Pocha	Allison Anders
3:00-3:30	Snacks		
3:30-5:00	Session 8	Omar Najam & Mia Resella	

Word Farm Bios

Allison Anders

Allison Anders is an award-winning film and television writer and director. She attended UCLA film school and in 1984 had her first professional break working for her film mentor Wim Wenders on his movie *Paris, Texas* (1984). After graduation, Anders had her first film debut, *Border Radio* (1987), which she co-wrote and co-directed with Kurt Voss. The influential indie film examined the Los Angeles punk scene in the 1980s and went on to be nominated by the Independent Feature Project for Best First Feature, and it recently had its TCM premiere. Anders and Voss would partner again on *Sugar Town* (1999), another film about the Los Angeles music industry, starring several of their friends, including the lead singer of X, John Doe. *Sugar Town* was also nominated for two Independent Spirit Awards.

Anders' other credits include *Gas, Food Lodging* (1992), *Mi Vida Loca (My Crazy Life)* (1993), *Grace of My Heart* (1996) and *Four Rooms* (1995). In 2001, Don Cheadle was nominated for an Emmy for Best Supporting Actor for his work on Anders' film *Things Behind the Sun* (2001). The powerful movie about the long-term effects of rape went on to garner the SHINE Award as well as the Peabody Award.

Anders is also well known in television for directing episodes of hit shows such as *Sex and the City*, *Gross Pointe, Cold Case*, *The L Word*, *Men in Trees*, *What About Brian?*, *Southland*, *The Mentalist*, *Orange Is The New Black*, *Gang Related*, *The Divide*, *Murder In The First*, *Proof*, and AMC's *Turn*.

In 2003, Anders became a professor of the Film and Media Studies Department at UC Santa Barbara, and in 2006 she made an appearance in the film documentary *Wanderlust*. Anders and her daughter Tiffany Anders together co-founded the "Don't Knock the Rock Film and Music Festival" in Los Angeles. Throughout her career she has been recognized for her achievements in film and nominated for various awards and prizes; other major highlights include a New York Film Critics Circle Award, as well as the prestigious MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. Anders recent film *Strutter* had its Los Angeles premiere April 2013, and the film she directed for Lifetime TV *Ring Of Fire*, on the life of country singer June Carter Cash with singer Jewel in the title role, aired in May 2013 and garnered Anders an Emmy nomination for best director.

Matt R. Allen & Lisa Mathis

Matt Allen has worked steadily as a feature screenwriter for New Line, Paramount, Disney, Sony, Warner Brothers, Fox, Lionsgate, and Universal for fifteen years. Matt is best known for the Vince Vaughn & Reese Witherspoon comedy, *Four Christmases*, he wrote with his former partner, Caleb Wilson. In April of 2016, Europacorp is set to release Allen and Wilson's Barry Sonnenfeld comedy, *Nine Lives*, starring Kevin Spacey, Jennifer Garner, and Christopher Walken. This past year Matt Allen and another frequent collaborator, Chris Borrelli, sold an action film to producer Chris Morgan (Fast & Furious Franchise) and Universal Studios, for Dwayne Johnson to star.

Most recently, Matt has partnered with his wife, Lisa Mathis, on a digital pilot entitled "Adopt-A-Monster" for a major children's network. Matt and Lisa are co-writing, co-producing as well as co-directing. Previously, Lisa Mathis was a producer with the E! Network, Nickelodeon, as well as DEN (Digital Entertainment Network). Aside from their children, this is their first official collaboration.

David Gerrold

David Gerrold has been writing professionally for half a century. He created the tribbles for Star Trek and the Sleestaks for *Land Of The Lost*. His most famous novel is *The Man Who Folded Himself*. His semi-autobiographical tale of his son's adoption, *The Martian Child* won both the Hugo and the Nebula awards, and was the basis for the 2007 movie starring John Cusack and Amanda Peet.

Toni Graphia

After graduating from UCSB, Toni Graphia launched her professional career as a writer on a wide range of primetime network television shows, including *China Beach*, *Quantum Leap*, *Cop Rock*, *Melrose Place*, *Life Goes On*, *Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman*, and *Roswell*. Her original dramatic series, *Orleans*, inspired by her own family in Louisiana, had a run on CBS in 1996. In recent years she has worked extensively as a producer and writer on major cable television series, including *Carnivale*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles*, and now *Outlander*. Graphia was nominated for a Writer's Guild Award in 1993 and received a prestigious George Foster Peabody Award for her work on *Battlestar Galactica* in 2006. She has also taught writing at USC, UCLA, UCSB, and Emerson College, and lectured at Glasgow Caledonian University in the U.K.

Word Farm Bios

James Kahn

James Kahn was working as an emergency room doctor when he got the call to help out resuscitating an alien. He went to the set of *ET: The Extraterrestrial*, where he donned a hazmat suit, pumped on ET's chest, and added medical dialogue to that famous CPR scene. On set, he showed his science fiction novel, *World Enough and Time*, to Spielberg, who liked it - and assigned Kahn to write the novelization of *Poltergeist*. Over the next several years he wrote more novelizations, including *Return of the Jedi*, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, *The Goonies*, and *Poltergeist II* - as well as completing his own sci-fi trilogy with *Time's Dark Laughter* and *Timefall*. From there he sidestepped into a long television writing/producing career, working on a wide range of shows, from *Xena: Warrior Princess* to *Melrose Place*, winding up as a Writer/Supervising Producer for *Star Trek: Voyager*. He's currently producing his own indie feature film, *Wrongside Bob* - based on a CD of roots music he wrote and performed, titled *Man Walks Into A Bar*.

Mitchell Kriegman

Mitchell Kriegman is the author of *Being Audrey Hepburn*, and *Things I Can't Explain* — a modern day sequel to his groundbreaking classic 90s Nickelodeon show, *Clarissa Explains it All*. Mitchell was also the executive story editor of the original *Ren and Stimpy*, *Rugrats*, and *Doug and Rocko's Modern Life*. He created and won three Emmy Awards for his work on other children's classics such as *Bear in the Big Blue House*, *Book of Pooh* and *It's a Big Big World*. Besides writing original screenplays for Rogue, Universal, Disney, Columbia Pictures and others, his short stories and articles have been published in *The New Yorker*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books (LARB)*, *Army Man*, *the National Lampoon*, *Glamour*, *New York Press* and *Harper's Bazaar*.

Before joining the team of SNL as a filmmaker, performer and writer, Mitchell began his career performing "An Evening of Stories and Tricks You Won't See Anywhere" and other original performance art at the New York Dance Theater Workshop, *The Kitchen*, *Franklin Furnace* and more. His video works are part of *The Museum of Broadcasting*, *Whitney Museum*, and *London Institute* among others. He lives in Santa Barbara with his two kids and a dog (named Rumble) and occasionally writes about art, music, food and television for the Santa Barbara Independent.

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 *SWAT Kats*, *Disney's Doug* (Emmy nomination), *The Smurfs* (Emmy nomination), *Scooby-Doo*, *The Real Adventures of Jonny Quest*, *Pink Panther And Sons*, *Snorks*, *Fantastic Four* and many more. His NBC prime time specials include *Tis The Season To Be Smurfy*, *The 12 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! Zoinks!) *Scooby-Doo And The Witch's Ghost*, *Scooby-Doo And The Ghoul School*, and *A Flintstones Christmas Carol*.

He has also written live-action sitcoms, features (*The Prowler*, *Too Scared To Scream*), and is an accomplished singer-songwriter. His songs have appeared in Disney's *Doug*, *Tis The Season To Be Smurfy*, and there are nine (count 'em) on the Rhino Records CD *Scooby-Doo And The Witch's Ghost*. 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? That early *Gunhill Road* album was (finally!) released on CD by *Wounded Birds Records* in 2011, prompting a reunion of the band, who recorded a new album -- *Gunhill Road: Every 40 Years* -- released in 2014. A documentary on the reunion has just been completed.

Kevin McKiernan

Kevin McKiernan is a lawyer-turned journalist and filmmaker. He has covered the Middle East for ABC News and other media and has been embedded with U.S. troops in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Among his films are *Bringing King to China*, *The Spirit of Crazy Horse* (PBS Frontline) and *Good Kurds, Bad Kurds* (PBS Independent Lens).

His book, "THE KURDS: A People in Search of Their Homeland", was published by St. Martin's Press in 2006. McKiernan is in in post-production on a new film about American Indians entitled *Wounded Knee, A Line in the Sand*.

Word Farm Bios

Omar Najam

Omar Najam is an action and comedy writer/director, as well as the cohost of *2 Broke Geeks*. His directing resume ranges from music videos to short films to online commercials to the Firefly Online ComicCon trailer featuring Nathan Fillion, and his writing credits include *The Red Shirt Diaries*, *Social Medium* and Arcana comics *The Talented*. In the past, he has worked with Adult Swim, Machinima, QMx, DC Comics, Geek&Sundry, SMBC Theater, Vertigo Entertainment (where he was involved with *The Lego Movie*) and Lifetime (where he was almost attacked by an owl). Currently he is paying the bills by running Loot Crate's YouTube arm of digital marketing as well as appearing as on-air talent. He can be found performing with his improv team Swimming Lessons and on his weekly Buffy The Vampire Slayer podcast Sunnydale Study Group. His passion is writing under-represented characters in larger than life situations, and he one day hopes to be a Disney Imagineer.

Dean Pitchford

Born and raised in Hawai'i and graduated from Yale University, Dean Pitchford performed off- and on-Broadway (*Godspell*; *Pippin*) and acted, sang and danced in soap operas and in over 100 T.V. commercials before turning to songwriting, screenwriting and directing.

Dean was nominated for four Academy Awards (winning the 1981 Best Song Oscar for *Fame*, co-written w/ Michael Gore), three Golden Globes (winning for *Fame*), eight Grammys and two Tonys; his songs - recorded by such artists as Barbra Streisand, Whitney Houston, Cher, Peter Allen, LL Cool J, Kenny Loggins, Hugh Jackman, Dolly Parton, Bette Midler and Martina McBride - have sold over 70 million records.

The musical stage adaptation (with Walter Bobbie) of his original screenplay for *Footloose* ran for more than seven hundred performances on Broadway and is now seen all over the world. Dean also provided the lyrics for *Carrie, the Musical*, which was produced in 1988 by the Royal Shakespeare Company – first in England and then on Broadway - and was then revived in 2012 by New York's MCC Theater. Major productions have recently been seen in London (Southwark Theatre) and Los Angeles (The Los Angeles Theatre).

Dean's middle-grade novels, *The Big One-Oh* and *Captain Nobody*, are published by Putnam/Penguin; his performances of their audiobook recordings (Listening Library/Random House) were both nominated for Grammys. His third novel, *Nickel Bay Nick*, was published to acclaim in 2013, and Dean voiced that audiobook for Audible.com.

Amy Pocha

Amy Pocha is a Television Comedy Writer. Her credits include over thirty-five episodes of single, multi-cam and animated television from CBS to Comedy Central. She is currently writing on her second season of the critically acclaimed *Undateable Live* (NBC), which is a first of its kind – airing live in two broadcasts for East and West coasts respectively. Before entering the Television world, Pocha started her career as a feature film writer with credits including Disney's *Golden Years* and stand up comedy giant Katt William's project *Cousin Shorty* with her writing partner Seth Cohen.

Before screenwriting Pocha was copywriter for FOX Feature Marketing where she was part of a viral marketing team that worked on movies like *Rio*, *Big Year*, *Parental Guidance* and *This Means War*. She worked in television development on shows including *The George Lopez Show*, *Drew Carey*, *Tom Papa*, *Staring Under: Bernie Mac*, *Smash*, and the Wolf Chicago franchise.

Aside from teaching for Word Farm, Pocha has co-taught UCSB Film 54 and is a judge for both CBS New Voices and NBC's Writers On the Verge (WOTV) screenwriting programs. A graduate of WOTV, UCB and UCSB's Lazarus Fellowship, Pocha actively seeks out new talent and comedians, and loves to continue learning. She is always impressed and pleasantly surprised by the evolving world of television, new media and comedy, and is excited to be entertaining for years to come.

Mia Resella

Mia Resella is a writer and artist most known for her work on Felicia Day's Geek & Sundry network as part of the web duo *2 Broke Geeks*. She has written on such web series as *Social Medium*, *The Red Shirt Diaries*, and the upcoming *Future Girl*. Her animated short *Shadow* was funded by Matt Groening and recently premiered at the Los Angeles International Children's Film Festival. Prior to writing independently, Mia worked for two years as a transmedia consultant on projects related to Moonbot Studios and the Roald Dahl Estate. She graduated from UCSB in 2009 and is currently in the UCLA Animation Workshop.

Word Farm Bios

Anne Cofell Saunders

Anne Cofell Saunders first broke into television as an assistant and lead researcher on the ground-breaking series *24*, where she earned her first writing credit. From there she staffed on the critically acclaimed re-imagining of *Battlestar Galactica*, where she shared a Peabody Award and was nominated for a Hugo award for the fan-favorite episode "Pegasus." She earned her first producer credit on two seasons of *Chuck*, followed by the final two seasons of *Smallville*. She won two Saturn awards for her work as Co-Executive Producer on NBC's *Revolution*. As a Consulting Producer she wrote the 2nd season finale of *The Last Ship*.

This year Anne sold a pilot to 20th Century Fox/FOX network and currently has a deal with Sony Television, where she is developing a show with Josephson Entertainment.

Anne has a BA from Northwestern University and earned an MFA in playwriting from Ohio University. She has taught tv writing at the USC School of Film And Television, and has been a guest speaker at USC, UC Santa Barbara, Writer's Boot Camp and San Diego Comic Con. She was also a panelist and judge at this year's Austin Film Festival.

Cheri Steinkellner

Cheri Steinkellner has Four Emmys, two Golden Globes, a Writers Guild, People's Choice, Parents' Choice and BAFTA award for writing/producing TV's *Cheers* and Disney's *Teacher's Pet* with husband, Bill. A Tony nominee for *Sister Act the Musical*, she's written also the books for musicals *Princesses* (with Steinkellner, David Zippel and Matthew Wilder), *Mosaic* (Georgia Stitt), and currently *At This Performance* (with Dr. Jean Houston). Cheri teaches writing at Stanford and UCSB and directs award-winning youth theatre in Santa Barbara, where she lives with Bill and their three favorite children: Kit, Teddy, and Emma. Please say "Hello!" at <https://www.facebook.com/HelloMyBabyTheMusical/>

Bryce Zabel

Bryce Zabel has created or developed five primetime network television series, including fan favorites *Dark Skies*, *M.A.N.T.I.S.*, and *The Crow: Stairway to Heaven*. Bryce has worked on a dozen TV writing staffs including the hit shows *Lois and Clark* and *L.A. Law*. He was the first writer since Rod Serling elected to serve as Chairman/CEO of the Television Academy, the organization that awards the Emmys. An adjunct professor for the prestigious USC School of Cinematic Arts, he continues to teach advanced television writing and series creation. In long-form, he has received screenwriting credit on *Atlantis: The Lost Empire*, *Mortal Kombat: Annihilation*, *Blackbeard* and the NBC miniseries *The Poseidon Adventure*. Bryce's latest screenplay, a true World War II thriller, *The Last Battle*, has been acquired by StudioCanal, and he's developing the true alien abduction drama, *Captured*, with Gotham Entertainment. He won the Writers Guild of America (WGA) award for the miniseries, *Pandemic*, and the Sidewise Award for Alternate History for his debut novel, *Surrounded by Enemies*. Bryce began his career in TV news, working as a general assignment reporter and anchorman, reporting for CNN's LA bureau, and winning multiple awards for investigative reporting while working for PBS.

Jackie Zabel

As CEO of Stellar Productions, Jackie Zabel works on every aspect of the film and television projects that the company undertakes. The newest project, *The Last Battle*, based on the New York Times bestselling book, was recently sold to Studio Canal to become a big budget film on the last days of WWII. *Captured*, about the first people to claim that they were abducted by aliens is being developed in a partnership with Gotham Entertainment. In the last decade, Jackie Zabel became a nationally published author, and scripted an international miniseries that won the 2008 Writer's Guild Award for "Best Longform Original." *Pandemic*, a Hallmark Channel mini-series co-written with her husband Bryce, aired as a "special event" picture. She also co-wrote, *Chasing a Dream*, starring Treat Williams as the father of a son who wants to break the four-minute mile in high school. She has also completed a script for the indie comedy, *Let's Do It*, about the making of the first student film ever that is in pre-production.

Special Thanks

All of our Guests

The Film and Media Studies Department

Janet Walker

The Writers' Room

Writers Guild of America

Carsey Wolf Center

Christina Venegas

Charles Wolfe

Scott & Jennifer Frank

Jane Espenson

Michael Miner

Joe Palladino

Joe Arciniega

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