

WORD FARM!

2022



FEBRUARY 18, 19, 20

Word Farm 2022 Students

Lily Aiwohi
Colin Anderson
Javier Barajas
Brady Berryhill
Rodrigo Calderon
Mason Campbell
Joseph Chiaro
Matt Cinnamon
Catherine Conmy
Angel Diaz
Nolan Doherty
Rowan Esquer
Peter Figueira
Karizma Garcia
Ethan Gomez-Zahnley
Destiny Hernandez
Andalyn Honselaar
Mateo Huerta
Katie Jordan
Crystal Kodsuntie
Amanda Lennon
Vidhisha Mahesh
Karl-Erik Mills
Rowan Oliphant
Jordan Parrish
Brie Peterson
Aileen Pulchny
Shane Rockenstein Carlson
Audrey Sherev
Magan Tran
Michael Tran
Aubrey Valerio
Cameron Vincent
Daijah Williams

Class Schedule

Friday, February 18

- 10:00 -12:00 **Mitchell Kriegman (Zoom)**
- 12:00 -1:00 Lunch
- 1:00 - 2:00 **James McNamara (in-person) - SSMS 2135**
- 2:30 - 4:30 **Documentary writing workshop or Pitching workshop
Quinnolyn Benson-Yates, Michael Tran, Mason Campbell
(in-person) - SSMS 2135**

Saturday, February 19

- 10:00-12:00 **Omar Najam (in-person) - SSMS 2013
Cheri Steinkellner (in-person) - SSMS 2135**
- 12:00-1:00 Lunch
- 1:00-3:00 **Noah Harpster (in-person) - SSMS 2135)**
- 3:00-3:30 Break
- 3:30-5:30 **Script to Screen: Captain America: The First Avenger
with Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely
(in-person) - Pollock Theater**
- 5:30 **The Scott Frank Dinner with Markus, McFeely, and Harpster**
Annenberg Conference Room - 4315 SSMS

Sunday, February 19

- 10:00-12:00 **Mia Resella (Zoom)
Amy Pocha (Zoom)**
- 12:00-1:00 Lunch SSMS 2303
- 1:00-3:00 **Michael Weithorn (in-person) - SSMS 2013
Joe Medjuck (in-person) - SSMS 2017**

Word Farm Bios

Noah Harpster

Noah Harpster is an Emmy-nominated and Peabody Award winning actor, writer and producer. He's known mostly for playing Remy on Tig Notaro's *One Mississippi* and for writing, producing and acting on the show *Transparent*. He is currently starring in the new Apple series, *For All Mankind*. He and his writing partner, Micah Fitzerman-Blue, run *Blue Harp*, a production company. At Amazon, they're currently producing the series based on the national bestseller *Girl in Snow*, and the adaptation of Weike Wang's acclaimed novel *Chemistry*. At FX, they're producing the NYT best seller *Let's Pretend This Never Happened* and Scott McClanahan's *Crapalacia*. They are currently writing *Painkiller*, a one-hour series about the incredible true story of the opioid crisis, and *Christians*, a half-hour comedy about hipster Christians living in San Diego. They recently finished writing a limited series about John Hinckley Jr for *Vice*, the sequel to *Maleficent* for Disney, and the adaptation of *Beautiful Ruins* for Sam Mendes and Fox. And -- it took eight years to finally get here -- but their project *You Are My Friend* just wrapped filming in Pittsburgh, in which Tom Hanks plays Mister Rogers. Noah is a UCSB Alum.

Mitchell Kriegman

Mitchell Kriegman began his career performing in the dark "An Evening of Stories and Tricks You Won't See Anywhere" and other original performance art works in New York at Dance Theater Workshop, the Kitchen, La Mama and others. He joined the team of *Saturday Night Live* as a filmmaker, performer and writer and contributed to the cult classic *Mr. Mike's Mondo Video*. In television Kriegman is the creator of the groundbreaking television series *Clarissa Explains It All*, and story editor of the original *Ren and Stimpy*. *Rugrats*, *Doug* and *Rocko's Modern Life*. Kriegman also created the children classics *Bear in the Big Blue House*, *Book of Pooh* and *It's a Big Big World* and wrote *Elmo in Grouchland*.

He is the winner of three Emmy Awards, the Director's Guild Award and an American Film Institute Fellowship (AFI).

Being Audrey Hepburn his first novel was published by St. Martin's Press Fall 2014. *Things I Can't Explain* his second novel based on *Clarissa Explains It All* was published in Fall 2015.

His audio work "The Telephone Stories" are part of the permanent collection of The Whitney Museum. His video art works reside in the libraries of the Kitchen Center, The London Institute of Contemporary Art, MOMA, the Paley Center and others. Grants include National Endowment for the Arts and the MacDowell Colony among others. His short stories have been published in *The New Yorker*, *the National Lampoon*, *Army Man*, *Glamour*, *Between C&D*, *New York Press* and *Harper's Bazaar*: His play *Here's Johnny!* was staged for reading at the Ensemble Studio Theater LA at Winterfest 2014.

He writes about art and culture for the Santa Barbara Independent, Inside San Ynez and the Los Angeles Review of Books (LARb).

Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely

Screenwriters Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely hold the record for the highest-grossing film of all time for *Avengers: Endgame*, as well as the fifth highest-grossing film of all time for *Avengers: Infinity War*. Their extensive work in the Marvel Cinematic Universe also includes *Captain America: The First Avenger*, *Thor: The Dark World*, *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, and *Captain America: Civil War*. They are widely credited with advancing the superhero genre by layering in more humanity, complexity, and political self-awareness, while still honoring the Marvel family of characters.

Markus and McFeely are partners with Joe and Anthony Russo in ABGO Films. At ABGO, they are shepherding a growing list of titles, including the adaptation of Simon Stålenhag's *The Electric State*, Matthew Michael Carnahan's *Mosul*, and Jessica Goldberg's *Exit West*, which is based on the Booker Prize-shortlisted novel by Mohsin Hamid.

Past screenwriting credits include Michael Bay's *Pain & Gain*; the first three films in the *Chronicles of Narnia* series; the Emmy and Writers Guild award-winning teleplay for *The Life and Death of Peter Sellers*; and ABC's *Agent Carter*, which they created and executive produced. Born in Buffalo and San Francisco, respectively, the two met in a small Northern California fiction-writing program.

James McNamara

James McNamara is a television writer currently developing and writing shows for Sony Pictures/Playmaker and Goalpost Pictures. Other TV work includes writers rooms for the Academy Award-winning See-Saw Films, NBC Universal/Matchbox, ABC, Porchlight Films, Foxtel, and Endemol Shine. For the theatre, James co-wrote *Radio With Pictures*, which played at the Sydney Opera House. James is also an award-winning non-fiction writer published in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Times Literary Supplement*, and *The Spectator* among others. Clive James has described his non-fiction writing as having "already made a global contribution to cultural analysis," and BAFTA LA recently named James an "international rising star" as a screenwriter. James holds a PhD in English from Oxford and degrees in English and Law from the University of Western Australia. He trained at NIDA, the Upright Citizens Brigade, and Bell Shakespeare, and graduated in screenwriting from AFTRS, Australia's national film school. James teaches screenwriting at UCSB.

Joe Medjuck

Joe Medjuck received his BA in Honours English from McGill University and his MA and PhD from the University of Toronto where he taught for 12 years and founded the Cinema Studies Program at Innis College. While teaching at University of Toronto Medjuck also worked as a journalist for the film magazine *Take One*, Canadian Forum, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation* and *TVOntario*. Often working with Ivan Reitman, his producing credits include the films *Stripes*, *Heavy Metal*, *Ghostbusters*, *Legal Eagles*, *Twins*, *Beethoven*, *Kindergarten Cop*, *Dave*, *Junior*, *Commandments*, *Father's Day*, *Private Parts*, *Space Jam*, *Six Days, Seven Nights*, *Road Trip*, *Old School*, *Eurotrip*, *Disturbia*, *Chloe*, *Up in the Air*, *No Strings Attached*, *Hitchcock* and *Draft Day*. In television his producing credits include the cartoon shows *The Real Ghostbusters*, *Beethoven* and *Mummies Alive!* as well as the Emmy nominated HBO film *The Late Shift*. Medjuck was one of the founders of The Criterion Collection.

Word Farm Bios

Omar Najam

Omar Najam is a writer, director and improviser who loves playing in genre and comedy. He has worked with companies like Loot Crate, Geek&Sundry, Lifetime Networks, DC Comics, BBC America, FX Networks, Comic-Con International and Universal Studios, and has made things for properties such as *Emma Approved*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Firefly* and *Doctor Who*. He is the host of two weekly podcasts, has hosted a weekly show at UCB, has written and hosted two interactive online shows for HyperRPG, and once ran a show for Saving Throw about a haunted VHS store filled with legally distinct blockbuster knockoffs. In his spare time Omar likes to knit, hang out with this cat, play mandolin and read about organization techniques. Omar is a UCSB Alum.

Amy Pocha

Amy Pocha is an award winning television writer and UCSB Alum. She has worked in everything from live TV to half hour comedy to hour drama and animation. Recently she and her partner Seth Cohen were showrunners on the reboot of *Head Of The Class* for HBO Max, which they also Executive Produced. The duo won a Peabody for their work on Netflix's *American Vandal*, and have been nominated for WGA, Emmy and Critics Choice Awards. Other credits include *Tooned Out* (HBO Max), *Whiskey Cavalier* (ABC), *Paradise Pd* (Netflix), *Farzar* (Netflix) *No Activity* (CBS All Access), *Undateable* (NBC), *Bad Teacher* (CBS) and *Trip Tank* (Comedy Central). They are currently working on a show produced by Netflix due to come out later this year.

Mia Resella

Mia Resella is a television writer and alumna of UCSB ('09) who has written for Disney, Nickelodeon, Dreamworks, and Sesame, and was a participant in the Nickelodeon Writing Program. Previously, Mia enjoyed working with companies like Bad Robot and Geek & Sundry before shifting her focus to animation and children's entertainment. She has also received an MFA in Animation from UCLA, where she wrote, directed, and animated three short films funded by Matt Groening. Currently, Mia is staffed on an unannounced Disney Jr. show, and has just received her first development deal.

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*, *Jeffersons*, *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 Theater 2004); *Sister Act* (with Alan Menken, Glenn Slater, and Bill Steinkellner – Pasadena Playhouse 2006, Alliance Theater, Atlanta 2007, opening London Palladium June 2, 2009), and now, *Hello! My Baby* (with Irving Berlin, Gus Kahn, Shelton Brooks, Joe McCarthy, George M. Cohan, Jeff Rizzo, etc -!). When not writing for stage and screens, Cheri teaches writing at the University of California; directs local high school and junior high school musicals; and has created "The Ultimate Write-off" (a competitive writing event at the Santa Barbara Writers Conference). Cheri and her husband Bill live in Santa Barbara with their three favorite children: Kit, Teddy, and Emma. Cheri teaches at UCSB.

Michael J. Weithorn

Michael J. Weithorn has over thirty-five years of experience as a television comedy writer, executive producer and series creator, most notably having co-created and EP'd the CBS show "*The King of Queens*" from 1998 – 2007. Prior to that Weithorn created and executive produced the FOX sitcom "*Ned & Stacey*," which ran for two seasons from 1995-97. With Ralph Farquhar, Weithorn created and executive produced "*South Central*," an edgy, dramatic half-hour which aired to great acclaim on FOX in the spring of 1994. Additionally, Weithorn served as Creator and Executive Producer of the FOX sitcom "*True Colors*" from 1990-92 and as Creator and Executive Producer of the ABC series "*The Pursuit of Happiness*" in 1987. Weithorn's free-lance writing credits include multiple sketches for "*The Tracey Ullman Show*," an episode of "*The Wonder Years*," (for which he earned an Emmy nomination in 1989), and an episode of "*Cheers*" (for which he won the 1984 Writers Guild of America Award).

From 1982-86, Weithorn spent four years as head writer and producer on the hit NBC series "*Family Ties*." He received three Emmy Award nominations for producing and another Emmy nomination for writing the two-part 1985-86 season premiere, "*The Real Thing*". In the animation realm, Weithorn co-created the web series "*Baxter and McGuire*" for Comedy Central's Mother Lode, which was nominated for an Internet Emmy award in 2007. In 2010, Weithorn wrote and directed the indie feature, "*A Little Help*" starring Jenna Fischer and Chris O'Donnell, released theatrically in the summer of 2011 after winning Best Feature in several notable film festivals.

In 2013, Weithorn directed and co-produced (with Rob Benedict) the short film "*The Sidekick*", starring Benedict, Ron Livingston, Lizzy Caplan, Martin Starr and Jordan Peele. The film debuted to great acclaim at the 2013 Comic Con convention, and was released digitally by FilmBuff in 2014. During the 2013-14 television season, Weithorn served as Consulting Producer for the ABC series, "*The Goldbergs*", writing two episodes.

In the 2014-15 season, Weithorn created and executive produced the Fox comedy series, "*Weird Loners*."

A native of Queens, NY, Weithorn earned a BA in Political Science from Swarthmore College in 1978, then taught History at Brentwood School in Los Angeles for three years before beginning his writing career.

Special Thanks

All of our Guests

The Film and Media Studies Department

UCSB Associated Students

Peter Bloom

The Writers' Room

Writers Guild of America

Carsey Wolf Center

Scott & Jennifer Frank

Joe Palladino

Alexandria Tritt

Kathy Murray

Dana Welch

Keith Boynton

Matt Ryan

Wendy Eley Jackson

UCen Catering

Isla Vista Screen Printing

