Welcome Week 2019
[micro] SEMINARS

Intro to Screenwriting and the Power of the Personal Story
Lindsay Stidham
Adjunct Assistant Professor, School of Cinematic Arts

Abstract
Students will be introduced to the basics of screenplay structure, review case studies of the success of personal storytelling in film (the use of personal narrative in pitching and story telling is often called ‘The Deal Closer’). Additionally, students will complete writing exercises designed to generate story ideas from personal narrative and experience. CLASS #1 We will review case studies of both larger budget films and micro budget films focused on deeply intimate personal stories pulled from the filmmaker’s life. We will review what made these stories so successful as well as the power of a well-drawn protagonist with a strong POV, and how to craft your scripts from a well-defined character while embracing theme. Case studies may include: The Duplass Brother’s Puffy Chair and This is John, My Big Fat Greek Wedding, Confessions of A Dangerous Mind, Tiny Furniture, the Before Sunrise trilogy, and more. Students will then participate in several writing exercises to get the personal narrative juices flowing. CLASS #2 Basic screenwriting structure will be reviewed from a continued look at our case studies. After an overview of structure, students will complete a structure exercise of their own and use the previous writing exercise to generate several scenes for a short film or feature script. Students will leave with a log line and writing plan for their in-class generated script idea based on a personal narrative.

Faculty Biography
Lindsay holds an MFA in screenwriting from the American Film Institute as well as a BA in journalism and Spanish from the University of Florida. She has overseen two scripts from script to screen as a writer/producer. SPOONER, starring Matthew Lillard (SLAMDANCE), and DOUCHEBAG (SUNDANCE) both released theatrically. Most recently Lindsay sold PLAY NICE starring Mary Lynn Rajskub. The series was distributed on Hulu. Recent directing endeavors include the Walla Walla premiering (and best screenplay nominated) TIL DEATH DO US PART, and the music video for Bible Belt’s Drinking Song. Lindsay is currently working on an interactive romcom, and loves writing about love.