

DC 201 Introduction to Screenwriting

Fall 2014/2015 | Monday/Wednesday 1:30pm – 3:00pm | CS&TC 224

Instructor: James Choi

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Office Hours: Monday 11:30pm – 1:30pm, 3pm – 5pm CS&TC 464 or by appointment

***This syllabus is subject to change*

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to and overview of the elements of theme, plot, character, and dialogue in dramatic writing for cinema. Emphasis is placed on telling a story in terms of action and the reality of characters. The difference between the literary and visual medium is explored through individual writing projects and group analysis. Development of synopsis and treatment for a short theatrical screenplay: theme, plot, character and utilization of cinematic elements.

PREREQUISITE(S): None.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the term students will:

- demonstrate an understanding of the fundamentals of effective storytelling.
- demonstrate an understanding of the three act screenplay structure.
- write a complete short screenplay focusing on developing characters and creating tension.

Learning Domain Description

DC 201, Introduction to Screenwriting is included in the Liberal Studies program as a course with credit in the Arts and Literature domain. Courses in the Arts and Literature domain ask students to extend their knowledge and experience of the arts by developing their critical and reflective abilities. In these courses, students interpret and analyze particular creative works, investigate the relations of form and meaning and through critical and/or creative activity to come to experience art with greater openness, insight, and enjoyment. These courses focus on works of literature, art, theatre, or music as such, though the process of analysis may also include social and cultural issues. Students who take course in this domain choose three courses from such choices as literature, the visual arts, media arts, music, and theater. No more than two courses can be chosen from one department or program.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to explain, in well-written prose, what a screenplay is about and/or how it was produced.
2. Students will be able to comment on the relationship between form and content in a work.
3. Students will be able to assess the formal aspects of their subject and put those qualities into words, using, when appropriate, specialized vocabulary employed in class and readings.
4. Students will be able to contextualize a screenplay. They will be able to do so with respect to other screenplays in terms of defining its place within a broader style or genre. They will also be able to contextualize a screenplay in terms of contemporaneous aesthetic, social, or political concerns, discussing how these might shape the work's reception and how that reception might differ amongst various peoples and historical periods.

How learning Outcomes Will Be Met

Students will critically analyze several successful award winning short films – along the way producing a short story outline, creating character bios, and writing a rough draft of a short screenplay with a **FINAL 8-10 page screenplay**.

Writing Expectations

Students will be expected to complete a minimum of 15 pages of writing for this course.

How Writing Expectations Will Be Met

Students will complete an outline and 2 drafts of a short screenplay along with a final 10 page screenplay.

Course Management

This course is housed and managed on **D2L**. There, you will find each week's recorded lecture (available after 6PM on Mondays and Wednesdays), the required reading material, most of our assignments, and, as the semester progresses – your current grade.

Text:

The Short Screenplay by Dan Gurskis	ISBN-10: 1598633384
The Writer's Journey by Christopher Vogler	ISBN-10: 193290736X
The Screenplay by Syd Field	ISBN-10: 0385339038

Software:

Celtx screenwriting program – desktop version – free for mac and pc
Word Processing program (MS Word, Pages, etc)

Grading:

Assignment 1: 3 Loglines	5%
Assignment 2: 3 Act Structure Analyses	5%
Assignment 3: Script Outline	10%
Assignment 3: Character Bios	5%
Assignment 5: Opening Scenes	15%
Assignment 6: Rough Draft	15%
Final Screenplay (8-10 pages)	30%
Attendance/Participation:	15%

A = 110-93, A- = 92-90, B+ = 89-88, B = 87-83, B- = 82-80, C+ = 79-78, C = 77-73, C- = 72-70, D+ = 69-68, D = 67-63, D- = 62-60, F = 59-0

Attendance – Attendance is mandatory. An absence is defined as not showing up for class, or arriving more than 15 minutes late, or missing any 15-minute period during class time. I take attendance every class. If you arrive less than 15 minutes late, and do not hear your name called, make sure you let me know you are present so I do not mark you absent. **Anyone who misses 5 classes will not receive 20% for participation and attendance.** If you have to miss class, contact me PRIOR to class time to discuss the circumstances. Please email me at jchoi26@cdm.depaul.edu

Class Participation—Along with showing up, you are expected to join in class discussions, and critique other people's work. Remember, this is your class, you will get out of it what you put in it. **Also, be advised that many of the assignments that you write for this class, will be read aloud.** My intention is not to embarrass anyone, but rather, have a fostering and openly creative environment where people are comfortable sharing their work.

****Online students will have peer review assignments which will take place of attendance/participation throughout the quarter that will be assigned on D2L.**

Assignments and Exercises – Class Work Assignments must be handed in on time. **Late work will not be accepted.**

Written Assignments: Must be typed.

Critiques: Due to limited class time, not everyone's work will get a full review during class. If you'd like more feedback, arrange to discuss your work with me during my office hours.

D2L - In an attempt to save some trees and cash, all assignments will be turned in via D2L. If you are unfamiliar with D2L please see me. In some cases, you must print and bring in an assignment. I will indicate in class how each assignment must be turned into me.

BACK UP YOUR WORK: Failure of computer software and or Hardware will not be accepted as an extenuating circumstance for late projects or incomplete grades so back up your work daily.

Special Accommodations: If you have any special considerations please see me.

Electronic devices—Use of cell phones/laptops/tablets in the class is prohibited. Please turn your phone off before entering class.

Examinations – Students who do not take exams during the regularly scheduled time will receive a failing grade for the exam unless they have contacted the instructor in advance to arrange for a make-up exam. Make-up exams will be administered by the College according to its make-up exam schedule.

Course Lectures – This course has a joint online section. All lectures will be recorded and available on the course home page on D2L under the lectures tab.

Content Changes – Depending on time factors, the assignments projected for the term may require slight alteration or rescheduling. I will contact you via email with any deviations from the syllabus. Please ensure that mail sent to the email address that you provided to the school is readily accessible.

Schedule for the Class (Subject to Change)

Class 1

Wednesday, Sept 10

Introduction to class and syllabus

Lecture: Loglines

Class 2

Monday, Sept 15

[Loglines Due](#)

Read loglines and choose which story you will develop for your short screenplay

Class 3

Wednesday, Sept 17

Lecture: Three Act Structure

Class 4

Monday, Sept 22

[3 Act Structure Analyses Due](#)

Lecture: Outline/Treatment

Class 5

Wednesday, Sept 24

Lecture: Character Development

Class 6

Monday, Sept 29

[Character Bios Due](#)

Lecture: Formatting

Class 7

Wednesday, Oct 1

[Outline Due](#)

Presentation/Discussion of Outlines

Class 8

Monday, Oct 6

Presentation/Discussion of Outlines

Class 9

Wednesday, Oct 8

Presentation/Discussion of Outlines

Class 10

Monday, Oct 13

Lecture: Opening and endings

Class 11

Wednesday, Oct 15

[Opening Scene Due](#)

Presentation/Discussion of Opening Scenes

Class 12

Monday, Oct 20

Presentation/Discussion of Opening Scenes

Class 13

Wednesday, Oct 22

Presentation/Discussion of Opening Scenes

Class 14

Monday, Oct 27

Lecture: Scene development and dialogue

Class 15

Wednesday, Oct 29

Rough Draft Due

Presentation/Discussion of Rough Draft

Class 16

Monday, Nov 3

Presentation/Discussion of Rough Draft

Class 17

Wednesday, Nov 5

Presentation/Discussion of Rough Draft

Class 18

Monday, Nov 10

Presentation/Discussion of Rough Draft

Class 19

Wednesday, Nov 12

Lecture: Rewriting

Class 20

Monday, Nov 17

Individual Meetings

Final

Wednesday, Nov 19

****Final Script Due****

Course Policies (from the University)

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>. If you have any questions be sure to consult with your professor.

Online Course Evaluations

Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the student's identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online in [CampusConnect](#).

Academic Policies

All students are required to manage their class schedules each term in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the [University Academic Calendar](#). Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at: cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment.

Excused Absence

In order to petition for an excused absence, students who miss class due to illness or significant personal circumstances should complete the Absence Notification process through the Dean of Students office. The form can be accessed at <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/dos/forms.html>. Students must submit supporting documentation alongside the form. The professor reserves the sole right whether to offer an excused absence and/or academic accommodations for an excused absence.

Students with Disabilities

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at: csd@depaul.edu.

Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.

Phone number: (312)362-8002

Fax: (312)362-6544

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