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# DC 402

## Writing The Feature I

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(Winter 2106)

14 E Jackson Room 207  
(Wed 5:45 PM – 9:00PM)

Assistant Professor: Tim Peternel  
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Office Hours: Weds: 12:45 pm- 6pm

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### Course Description

This course focuses on creating a well-vetted original concept, step outline, and first act for a feature length screenplay. Students will analyze the conventions of plot and character-driven narratives and participate in workshop sessions in an effort to develop their unique voice on the page. This script should be completed, revised and polished in DC 403 and DC 404.

PREREQUISITE(S): DC 501

This course is repeatable for 8.00 credit hours.

### Course Goals

- Students will enhance their knowledge of screenwriting conventions and script analysis through assigned readings and in-class workshops.
- Students will develop a feature length outline that adheres to three-act dramatic structure.
- Students will learn techniques to enhance audience identification for their story.
- Students will complete two drafts of the first act of a feature length screenplay.

### Grading

Three Loglines	5%
Plot points	5%
Step Outline	20%
Draft of First Act	20%
Discussion Group Feedback	10%
Final Draft of First Act	30%

### Evaluation

A = 100-93, 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. A indicates excellence, B indicates good work, C indicates satisfactory work, D indicates unsatisfactory work, and F is a failure to demonstrate an understanding of course concepts.

## Textbooks

- “Writing Movies For Fun and Profit” by Ben Garant and Thomas Lennon.
- Additional assigned readings provided by the instructor.

## Course Policies

**Attendance:** Classroom attendance is MANDATORY. More than one “excused” absence (doctor’s note, Bears game, etc) will result in a lowering of grade per each absence.

**Deadlines:** Strict Adherence to deadlines is expected. Materials presented or posted late will result in a negative grade for the particular assignment.

## D2L

You will be using D2L extensively in this course. To log on, go to:  
<https://login.depaul.edu/cas/login?service=https://d2l.depaul.edu/d2l/orgtools/CAS/Default.aspx>  
and enter using your campus connect logon and password. Once you are logged on, click on the course number link and you will find links to the syllabus, course outline, discussion forums, weekly assignments, etc.

## In-Class Workshops

Feedback is an essential part of the writing process. To facilitate this, every student will have the loglines, plot points, and two drafts of the first ten pages for their feature length screenplay workshoped in class. The dates for these sessions are provided in the course outline.

## Class Schedule

Note: This schedule is subject to change.

### **Week 1      January 6<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Course Intro, Feature Writing, Loglines

*Assignment: Loglines.*

*Reading: Writing Movies for Fun and Profit (Chapters 1 - 3).*

### **Week 2      January 13<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Structure

Workshop: Loglines

*Assignment: Plot Points.*

*Reading: Writing Movies for Fun and Profit (Chapter 23).*

**Week 3      January 20<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop: Plot Points

*Assignment: Step Outline.*

*Reading: Writing Movies for Fun and Profit (Chapter 24 and 25).*

**Week 4      January 27<sup>th</sup>**

*Workshop Plot Points.*

*Assignment: Continue Working on Step Outline.*

*Reading: Writing Movies for Fun and Profit (Appendix Sample Outlines).*

**Week 5      February 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Lecture: Act One.

*Assignment: Pages 1-10.*

*Reading: Writing Movies for Fun and Profit (Chapter 6 and 26).*

**Week 6      February 10<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop: First Ten

*Assignment: Pages 10-20.*

*Reading: Writing Movies for Fun and Profit (Chapter 11)*

**Week 7      February 17<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop: First Ten

*Assignment: Pages 20-30*

**Week 8      February 24<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Rewriting

*Assignment: Rewrite First Act, Group Discussion Feedback Act One*

**Week 9      March 1<sup>st</sup>**

Workshop: First Ten Rewrite

*Assignment: Rewrite First Act*

## **Week 10      March 8<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop: First Ten Rewrite  
Assignment: *Rewrite First Act*

### **School policies:**

#### **Changes to Syllabus**

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L and sent via email.

#### **Online Course Evaluations**

Instructor and course evaluations provide valuable feedback that can improve teaching and learning. The greater the level of participation, the more useful the results. As students, you are in the unique position to view the instructor over time. Your comments about what works and what doesn't can help faculty build on the elements of the course that are strong and improve those that are weak. Isolated comments from students and instructors' peers may also be helpful, but evaluation results based on high response rates may be statistically reliable (believable). As you experience this course and material, think about how your learning is impacted. Your honest opinions about your experience in and commitment to the course and your learning may help improve some components of the course for the next group of students. Positive comments also show the department chairs and college deans the commitment of instructors to the university and teaching evaluation results are one component used in annual performance reviews (including salary raises and promotion/tenure). The evaluation of the instructor and course provides you an opportunity to make your voice heard on an important issue – the quality of teaching at DePaul. Don't miss this opportunity to provide feedback!

#### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

This course will be subject to the academic integrity policy passed by faculty. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>.

The university and school policy on plagiarism can be summarized as follows: Students in this course should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work any assignment which has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials be sure to consult the instructor.

#### **Withdrawal**

Students who withdraw from the course do so by using the Campus Connection system (<http://campusconnect.depaul.edu>). Withdrawals processed via this system are effective the day on which they are made. Simply ceasing to attend, or notifying the instructor, or nonpayment of tuition, does not constitute an official withdrawal from class and will result in academic as well as financial penalty.

#### **Retroactive Withdrawal**

This policy exists to assist students for whom extenuating circumstances prevented them from meeting the withdrawal deadline. During their college career students may be allowed one

medical/personal administrative withdrawal and one college office administrative withdrawal, each for one or more courses in a single term. Repeated requests will not be considered. Submitting an appeal for retroactive withdrawal does not guarantee approval.

College office appeals for CDM students must be submitted online via MyCDM. The deadlines for submitting appeals are as follows:

Winter Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent spring quarter  
Spring Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter  
Summer Terms: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter

### **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.

### **Incomplete**

An incomplete grade is a special, temporary grade that may be assigned by an instructor when unforeseeable circumstances prevent a student from completing course requirements by the end of the term and when otherwise the student had a record of satisfactory progress in the course. CDM policy requires the student to initiate the request for incomplete grade before the end of the term in which the course is taken. Prior to submitting the incomplete request, the student must discuss the circumstances with the instructor. Students may initiate the incomplete request process in MyCDM.

- All incomplete requests must be approved by the instructor of the course and a CDM Associate Dean. Only exceptions cases will receive such approval.
- If approved, students are required to complete all remaining course requirement independently in consultation with the instructor by the deadline indicated on the incomplete request form.
- By default, an incomplete grade will automatically change to a grade of F after two quarters have elapsed (excluding summer) unless another grade is recorded by the instructor.
- An incomplete grade does NOT grant the student permission to attend the same course in a future quarter.

### **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:

Student Center, LPC, Suite #370  
Phone number: (773)325.1677

Fax: (773)325.3720

TTY: (773)325.729

Class Discussion: Student participation in class discussions will be measured in two ways. First, students are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the day's topic. Participation allows the instructor to "hear" the student's voice when grading papers. Secondly, students will be called upon by the instructor to offer comments related to the reading assignments. Students must keep up with the reading to participate in class discussion.

Attitude: A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Measurable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitude include but are not limited to: talking to others when the instructor is speaking, mocking another's opinion, cell phones ringing, emailing, texting or using the internet whether on a phone or computer. If any issues arise a student may be asked to leave the classroom. The professor will work with the Dean of Students Office to navigate such student issues.

Civil Discourse: DePaul University is a community that thrives on open discourse that challenges students, both intellectually and personally, to be Socially Responsible Leaders. It is the expectation that all dialogue in this course is civil and respectful of the dignity of each student. Any instances of disrespect or hostility can jeopardize a student's ability to be successful in the course. The professor will partner with the Dean of Students Office to assist in managing such issues.

Cell Phones/On Call: If you bring a cell phone to class, it must be off or set to a silent mode. Should you need to answer a call during class, students must leave the room in an undistruptive manner. Out of respect to fellow students and the professor, texting is never allowable in class. If you are required to be on call as part of your job, please advise me at the start of the course.