

DC 401/343 Writing the Short Motion Picture

Winter 2016 | Monday 5:45pm – 9:00pm | 14EAST 211

Instructor: James Choi

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Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 1:30pm – 5:30pm in CDM Room 515 or by appointment

***This syllabus is subject to change*

Course Description

This course focuses on the fundamentals and art of cinematic storytelling in the short format screenplay. Emphasis is placed on telling a story that relies on rising action and compelling characters. Students will explore the elements of classic three-act narratives as they pertain to the visual medium. Constructive analysis will be used in discussing produced scripts, weekly assignments, and group workshops to reveal the writer's unique voice and perspective.

The short script created for this course will be written with student production in mind - Limitations in terms of budget, cast, locations and special effects must be taken into consideration.

Course Objectives

By the end of the term students will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the fundamentals of effective storytelling for film.
- Demonstrate an understanding of screenplay structure.
- Write a short screenplay focusing on developed characters and creating conflict.

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 works of art in terms of defining its place within a broader style or genre. They will also be able to contextualize a work of art 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 DRAFT of a 10-13 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 10-12 page screenplay.

Course Management

This course is housed and managed on **D2L**. There, you will find each week's assignments, and, as the semester progresses – your current grade.

Text

The Short Screenplay by Dan Gurskis

The Tools of Screenwriting by David Howard and Edward Mabley

Software needed to complete assignments

[Writer Duet Screenwriting Program](#)

*Final Draft

Celtx

Laptops/Cell Phones

Use of cell phones in the class is prohibited. Please turn your phone off before entering class.
NO TEXTING!

Alterations

Depending on time factors, the assignments projected for the term may require 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.

Grading

Assignment #1: 3 Loglines	5%
Assignment #2: Structure Analysis	5%
Assignment #3: Script Outline	15%
Assignment #5: Pages 1-3	10%
Assignment #6: Pages 4-8	10%
Assignment #7: Rough Draft	15%
Final Screenplay (10-15 pages)	25%
Attendance/Participation	15%

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

Standards for Achievement

Grade A:

Student performs in an outstanding way. Student exhibits achievement and craftsmanship in all work. Student exhibits commitment to expanding ideas, vocabulary and performance.

Grade B:

Student performs beyond the requirement of the project. Student exhibits above average

progress and craftsmanship. Student exhibits above average interest in expanding idea, vocabulary, and performance.

Grade C:

Criteria of assignment is met, and all requirements are fulfilled. Student shows average quality work and minimum time and effort on projects. Student shows moderate interest.

Grade D:

Student performance is uneven and below average. Requirements for projects are only partially fulfilled. Minimal interest is shown and attendance, participation and involvement are inadequate.

Grade F:

Student fails to meet minimum course requirements and shows no interest. Levels of participation and craftsmanship are extremely poor. Student's attendance is inadequate.

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. **Anyone who misses 5 classes will not receive 15% for participation and attendance.** If you have to miss class contact me PIOR to class time to discuss the circumstances. No exceptions. You can 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. Also be advised that many of the assignments that you write for in this class, will be read aloud. This class is an openly creative environment where people should be comfortable sharing work and be open to constructive feedback from their peers.

Assignments and Exercises

Class work assignments must be handed in on time. All assignments will be turned in via D2L. **Late work will not be accepted.**

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.

CLASS SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)

Class 1 – 1/4

Introduction to class and syllabus
Lecture: Loglines and story

Class 2 – 1/11

Loglines due

Review loglines
Lecture: Structure/Outlines

Watch: Skin, Apocalypse, SLR

Class 3 – 1/18

Blue Ruin Breakdown and Outline due

Workshop Outlines

Class 4 – 1/25

Outlines Due

Workshop Outlines

Class 5 – 2/1

Pages 1-3 Due

Workshop Pages 1-3

Class 6 – 2/8

Pages 1-3 revised due

Workshop revised Page 1-3

Class 7 – 2/15

Pages 4-8 due

Workshop Pages 4-8

Class 8 – 2/22

Workshop Pages 4-8

Class 9 – 2/29

Rough Draft Due

Workshop Rough Draft

Class 10 – 2/7

Workshop Rough Draft

****FINAL – 2/14 – 5:40pm – 9pm****

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

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