DC 428 – WRITING THE WEBISODE — FALL 2014
DC 428 (701): Mondays, 5:45-9:00pm in Lewis 1512
DC 328/428 (401) (: Wednesdays, 1:30-4:45pm in CDM 206 at Loop Campus
LECTURE-DISCUSSION
Course Management system: D2L

Instructor — Jessica King
Office Hours: Monday 4:45-5:45pm in Lewis 1512 & Wednesday 11:30-1:30 in CDM 709
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Course Description
Students will study and practice the essential elements and conventions for writing, producing, marketing, and distributing the web series including but not limited to concept, character, structure, budget, and audience. Students will write a polished 5 episode web series designed to be produced. Graduate level students will shoot, edit, and screen the pilot episode of their web series. PREREQUISITE(S): DC 101 or DC 201

Learning Objectives
• students will practice the essentials of strong, visual storytelling
• students will understand the constraints of & write specifically for the web series format
• students will analyze aspects of successful web series as models for their own work
• students will understand the financing, distribution, and promotion of the web series form
• students will write a polished, peer-reviewed original series ready for production

Required Texts
All readings will be posted by the instructor on D2L

Required Software
Celtx desktop version, free for Mac/ PC or
Final Draft (highly recommended if you plan to write within the industry)

Grading Practices
In your analytical work, I grade for *clarity, precision, accuracy,* and whether or not you apply *relevant* ideas/concepts from class to the material you are analyzing.

In your creative work, I look for the standard requirements for effective screenplay writing (clear characters, precise and revealing visuals, original dialogue, effective structure, etc) as well as that you demonstrate an understanding of the medium you are writing for (especially in terms of concept, audience, and budget).

Grading Scale: A = 90%-100% plus/ minus = top/ bottom 3% of grade range; B = 80%-89%, C = 70%-79%, D = 60%-69%, F = 59% and below

Final grade breakdown (approximate and subject to change):
20% Attendance & Participation; 20% Analysis Essays; 10% Pitches; 10% Script drafts; 10% Peer review notes; 10% Case-Study; 20% "Final" Web Series Script + Pilot

An incomplete grade may only be assigned to a student if: (1) the student has experienced an extenuating circumstance near the end of the term, (2) the student is in good standing in the class, (3) the request is made in advance. It is solely up to the discretion of the instructor to grant an incomplete.

The Way Things Work: Assignments, Due Dates & Late Assignments
Details for all assignments and readings will be discussed in class and posted on D2L. This class will focus on practice not on lecture. It will emphasize both individual and collaborative work in understanding visual media through analysis of successful examples. On a typical class day, you will be working either as a class, in small groups, or by yourself practicing disciplined analytical or creative thinking. You will be regularly responsible for assessing your own work and that of your peers using criteria and standards modeled and discussed in class.

Unless otherwise noted, the due date is the start of class on the day an assignment is due and anything after the start of class is late. This is true even if you are absent, in which case the assignment is to be emailed to me by the due date and time. Graded assignments will lose one full letter grade for each week (or partial week) they are late.

Reading assignments:
Students are expected to fully complete assigned readings on time so they are prepared for class discussions and writing assignments. Reading matters. When done well, it is the most effective and efficient way to access another's intelligence, experience, and wisdom. Students who manage their time to allow for careful reading will more successfully learn and participate in this course.

Writing assignments:
This course requires students to write both analytically (analysis essays) and creatively (writing exercises & web series screenplay). All formal compositions are expected to be typed, properly formatted, and carefully proofread. Creative assignments will undergo multiple drafts.

Attendance
Students are expected to attend each class, arrive on time, and remain for the duration. Coming 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes early constitutes an absence for the student. The overall grade for participation drops one-third after any absence. Three absences for any reason, whether excused of not, may constitute failure for the course.

Class Discussion, Participation, and Community
Over many years of teaching I've found that in addition to careful reading, the best way for students to learn is to process information collaboratively, to ask questions, and to be actively engaged in their own learning. In order for this to happen in the richest way possible, we must remember to behave in a professional and academic manner at all times. We must be

considerate and cooperative, even when we don't agree with one another. Professional academic behavior is expected at all times. Measurable examples of problematic behavior 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 a computer. If any issues arise a student may be asked to leave the classroom.

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 'News' in D2L, and emailed to you.

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 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 me.

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. Students who withdraw from the course do so by using the Campus Connection system (http://campusconnect.depaul.edu) and must do so by 9/23/14 with no penalty.

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, TTY: (773)325.7296

Course Schedule
WEEK 1 (9/10) – COURSE INTRODUCTION & DEVELOPING CONCEPTS
Class/student introductions. What do you already know about web series? What series do you watch and why? How does an awareness of audience influence a series concept?
Screening 1: The Guild - Eps. 1-3 (2007), creator: Felicia Day, Runtime: 12min.
Screening 2: Ted & Gracie - Eps 1-3 (2011), creator: Jena Friedman, Runtime: 12min.
ASSIGNMENT: Write 3 pitches for web series geared toward a specific audience.
READ: "Now Watching: Black Web Series and the Promised Land of New Media" by TreaAndrea Russworm. http://flowtv.org/2012/02/now-watching-black-web-series/

WEEK 2 (9/17) – CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND REPRESENTATION
Assignment due: Three Pitches
Who are your favorite tv/film characters and why? What traits to they possess? Can we like "bad" characters? What constitutes effective and believable inner and outer conflict for a character? What are some interesting character types?
Screening 1: Little Horribles - Eps 1-5 (2013), creator: Amy York Rubin, Runtime: 20min.
Screening 2: Film Essay: "Sympathetic Doesn't Have to Mean Likable"(2014), creator: Jennine Lanouette, Runtime: 8min.
Workshop: Three Pitches - Focus: compelling concept geared toward specific audience
ASSIGNMENT 1: Watch first three episodes of one web series of your choice. Write a one-page analysis of concept, audience & character.
ASSIGNMENT 2: Choose one pitch from workshop, revise, and write pilot episode.
READ: TBD

WEEK 3 (9/24) – STORY & STORYWORLD
Assignments due: Revised pitch and pilot + 1 page analysis
Meaning, truth, and mise-en-scene.
Screening: Hotel Chevalier (2007), dir. Wes Anderson, Runtime: 13min.
Workshop: Pilot Episode - Focus: compelling characters & concept designed for specific audience
ASSIGNMENT: Watch an entire season of one web series. Write a one-page analysis of how mise-en-scene reveals concept, audience, character & story.
ASSIGNMENT 2: Revise pilot episode & begin rest of series - first draft due 10/15.

WEEK 4 (10/1) – NARRATIVE STRUCTURE
Assignment due: Series analysis
Plot vs. story, episode structure vs. series structure, conflict & resolution, outlines & organization.
Screening: High Maintenance (2013), creators: Katja Blichfeld & Ben Sinclair, Runtime: 20min.
Screening: The Bannen Way (2009), creator: Jesse Warren, Runtime: 20min.
ASSIGNMENT: First draft due 10/15.

WEEK 5 (10/8) – FIRST DRAFT WORKSHOP (GROUP 1)
Assignment due: first draft
Workshop / Peer Review

WEEK 6 (10/15) – FIRST DRAFT WORKSHOP (GROUP 2)
Assignment due: first draft
Workshop / Peer Review
ASSIGNMENT: Due Week 10: Choose one series for case-study analysis. Analysis will include: summary of creative elements, background of creators of show, description of budget, financing, promotion & distribution, and what the show did for creator's career.

WEEK 7 (10/22) – WRITING FOR AN ECONOMICAL PRODUCTION
How do you write for the smallest screen: budget, casting, set-ups, cinematography, etc.?
Screening: The Outs (2012), creator: Adam Goldman, Runtime: 20min.
Screening: Emma Approved (2009), creator: Bernie Su & Pemberly Digital, Runtime: 20min.
ASSIGNMENTS
Read: "What it Takes to Make a Living from YouTube's Partner Earnings" by Carla Marshall. (http://www.reelseo.com/youtube-partner-earnings/)
Read: "How Much Money Do YouTube Stars Make?" by Devon Glen. (http://socialtimes.com/money-youtube-partners-2013-infographic_b128421)
Read: "The Cost of a Web Series" by Freddie Wong (http://www.rocketjump.com/blog/how-much-webseries-cost)

WEEK 8 (10/29) – FINANCING & DISTRIBUTION
Is crowdfunding for me? What other option exist for financing a web series? What platforms exist for distribution?
Screening: Video Game High School (2012), creator: Adam Goldman, Runtime: 20min.
ASSIGNMENTS
Work on case studies for class presentation
Work on final drafts/pilots of web series

WEEK 9 (11/5) – SOCIAL MEDIA & PROMOTION
How do you build and maintain and audience for your work? What social media platforms are effective for web series promotion? Why does social media matter? How do I get influencers to care about and promote my work?
ASSIGNMENTS
Finish case studies for class presentation
Finish final drafts/pilots of web series

WEEK 10 (11/12) – CASE-STUDY PRESENTATIONS
Assignment due: Case Studies
In class presentations and discussion: What are some successful distribution models for web series? Can web series be a path to writing for television? for film?

FINALS WEEK (11/19) – "FINAL" DRAFT
Final Assignment due: "Final" draft | Pilot Episodes (for grad students)

--NOTE: COURSE CALENDAR IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITH NOTIFICATION