

DePaul University School of Cinematic Arts

DC 301-501 Advanced Screenwriting I

Winter, 2018

Wednesday 1:30-4:45 PM, 14 East Jackson room 209

Professor Brad Riddell: brad.riddell@depaul.edu, 312-362-5212, @bradriddell

Office Hours: Monday from 1:00 PM-5:30 PM in CDM 521 and by appointment.

Description:

This course focuses on completing the first draft of a feature length screenplay. Emphasis will be placed on a foundation of character, structure, plot, and theme to bring the writer's vetted concept to fruition. The lectures, in-class workshops, and aggressive page deadlines are designed to culminate in a spec screenplay that showcases voice and command of screenwriting conventions. This feature length screenplay should be revised and polished in DC 303. **Prerequisite: DC 300**

Course Outcomes:

Students will complete the first draft of a feature-length screenplay.

Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- demonstrate the ability to write at a professional pace
- write visceral and visual scenes that demonstrate a clear and unique voice
- create three-dimensional characters with unique voices and clear motivations
- apply established narrative techniques to scenes, sequences, and acts
- evaluate the work of their peers and formulate helpful feedback

Required Textbooks:

Screenwriting: The Sequence Approach by Paul Gulino, ISBN 13: 9780826415684

Screenwriting Software:

You will be required to use screenwriting software. Final Draft is strongly recommended for those with a serious career focus on screenwriting, producing, and/or directing. The software is \$99 with a student discount at: <http://www.finaldraft.com/edu>.

You may also obtain a free download of the Celtx screenwriting program at:

<https://www.celtx.com/index.html>. Amazon Story Writer is available at:

<https://storywriter.amazon.com/>. Adobe Story can be found here:

<https://story.adobe.com/en-us/> **All assignments are to be delivered in PDF.**

Course Management:

This course is housed and managed on **D2L**. There you will find course news, reading materials, and discussion boards for posting assignments and holding conversations. The *Checklist* will be utilized in order to help you stay abreast with this syllabus.

To offer equal consideration for everyone, students will be divided into two groups. Assignments for the group being discussed each week are due **Monday at Noon**.

Schedule:

WEEK 1 – JANUARY 3

Course introduction
Lecture: Sequencing Review
Discuss student projects

WEEK 2 – JANUARY 10

Group A: First Sequence Due on Monday
Read: Gulino on Sequences
Lecture: Sequence 2 & The Main Tension

WEEK 3 – JANUARY 17

Group B: First Act Due on Monday
Read: The War of Art
Lecture: The Professional Writing Life

WEEK 4 – JANUARY 24

Group A: First Act Due on Monday
Read: Format Review Docs
Lecture: Format + Up to the Midpoint

WEEK 5 – JANUARY 31

Group B: Midpoint Due on Monday
Read: *Lady Bird* Act 1 for in-class discussion.

WEEK 6 – FEBRUARY 7

Group A: Midpoint Due on Monday
Lecture: To the End of Two

WEEK 7 – FEBRUARY 14

Group B: End Act Two Due on Monday
Lecture: Act Three

WEEK 8 – FEBRUARY 21

Group A: End of Act Two Due on Monday
Read *Lady Bird* Act Two for in-class discussion.

WEEK 9 – FEBRUARY 28

Group B: Act Three

Read: *Lady Bird* Act Three for in-class discussion.

WEEK 10 – MARCH 7

Group A: Act Three

FINAL ACT ONE REVISION DUE: MARCH 14 at 5:00 PM in SUBMISSIONS on D2L

Grading:

Assignments for each group's four workshop sessions are worth a maximum of twenty-five points each, totaling 100, which comprises one third of your grade. You will be evaluated on effort, creativity, originality, structure, character development, format and style, and the application of course materials and discussions to your writing. The attached rubric will be employed for the evaluation of creative work.

You will receive a maximum of ten points per week for participation, adding up to another 100 total points, or a third of your overall grade. You are expected to actively participate in the conversation every week. This means you should thoroughly read all of your classmates' submitted material before class, and then formulate clear, supportive feedback, as well as thoughtful, engaging responses to all of the assigned reading. Your job is to prove to me that you have read and considered the material.

The final, revised screenplay is worth 100 points, and should represent the very best writing you can put forth in the time we've had together. It must be at least 90 pages.

Late work will not often be accepted. 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.

Attendance:

Absent students forfeit both their participation and assignment grade for each class they miss (20 total points or 6% of the final grade). Tardiness will be considered an absence.

Creative Subject Matter:

As this is a creative writing class, controversial subject matter may make its way into the conversation. Students have every right to express themselves artistically in their writing and address challenging issues so long as the work does not glorify hate of any kind. If you become uncomfortable with a conversation for personal reasons, you may be excused from the remainder of that class without penalty. Inclusion of individuals from the class will not be tolerated in submitted material.

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.

Decorum and 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.

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 students will be notified 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:

Autumn Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent winter quarter
 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