

SCWR 101 SCREENWRITING FOR MAJORS

Spring 2020 | MW 11:50-1:20 | Online- D2L

Instructor: Wendy Roderweiss Office: A Zoom meeting room

Email: wroderwe@depaul.edu (please allow 24 hours for a response)

Course Management system: D2L

Type of Instruction: Lecture/discussion/workshop

Drop dates and deadlines: <https://academics.depaul.edu/calendar/Pages/default.aspx>

This syllabus is subject to change (Document date 3/23/20)

Office Hours: Wed 10:00-11:30 by zoom appointment, please email for a slot by Tuesday of that week

Summary of Course and Outcomes

This course introduces digital cinema majors to scripted dramatic writing for media production. The topics covered include screenplay format, visual writing style, scene craft, story structure, character development, and dialogue. In addition to completing several writing assignments, students will develop and write one short screenplay.

Learning Outcomes:

- Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
- employ standard screenplay format
- identify elements of scene craft, character development, and narrative structure
- demonstrate expanded visual writing skills
- apply a work-flow process to their creative writing
- prepare original writing projects on a deadline
- analyze and assess their own work and that of their peers

Texts and Films:

Required:

- Tools of Screenwriting by David Howard and Edward Mabley ISBN-10: 031211908
- The Hollywood Standard by Christopher Riley ISBN-10: 1932907637

Additional essays may be provided by the instructor.

Short films and feature films will be required viewing. Specifics to be outlined during the course.

Required Software:

You will be required to use screenwriting software throughout the course. A word processing program is not acceptable.

Final Draft is the industry standard but there are other options – The software is \$99 with this code EDUWRK2019 at:

<https://store.finaldraft.com/final-draft-11-edu.html>

Another alternative that I have just started using is Writer Duet. It is a monthly plan and they have student pricing available. It is the best in terms of collaborating and having your desktop version sync to an online version. <https://writerduet.com/>

<https://writerduet.com/students>

Another alternative (and cheaper) option is Fade In which is \$50 for students:

<https://www.fadeinpro.com/page.pl?content=students>

You can also obtain a free version of Celtx screenwriting program at:

<https://www.celtx.com/index.html>

D2L:

We will be using D2L for this course. To log on, go to <https://d2l.depaul.edu/d2l/home>
Enter your campus connect login and password. Once you are logged in, click on the course link and you will find links to the syllabus, course outline, submission folders, discussion forums and weekly assignments.

We will also be using Panopto for screenings, which is within d2l.

Grading

20% Participation (including watching the online lectures, participating in discussions, workshop/feedback, Morning Pages/Spark Journals)

15% Creative Assignments

5% Loglines

15% Step Outline

15% First Draft

15% Second Draft

15% Third Draft

Grading Scale

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

F=62-0

A indicates excellence

B indicates good work

C indicates minimum satisfactory work

D work is unsatisfactory in some respect

F is substantially unsatisfactory work

Assignments and Exercises – Class Work Assignments must be handed in on time. I will not accept late work.

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

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.

Class Outline:

Before class begins please read: Tools of Screenwriting, from page ix through page 27

Week 1 3/30

LECTURE: Introduction to the course and syllabus
Storytelling Basics
Intro to Visual Storytelling
Screenplay Formatting

ASSIGNMENTS:

Read: Tools of Screenwriting, pages 28 and 29; 43 through 54; 63 through 76; 78 through 83
Read Scriptfrenzy Short script on formatting

Watch: "Next Floor" (Short)

Write: Creative Assignment I: (Mood and Atmosphere) *Due by Thursday 4/2 at 11:59pm*
Spark Journal Pages

Post: Video to Discussion Forum about you, guidelines in the lecture this week (can be recorded on your phone or laptop via quicktime, etc)
Discussion Forum on "Next Floor"
Read and give feedback on your group's Assignment #1 in discussion forum *due by Sunday 4/5 at 11:59pm*

Week 2 4/6

LECTURE: Conflict and Characters

ASSIGNMENTS:

Read: Tools of Screenwriting, pages 30 through 39; 60 through 62; 84 through 90

Watch: "New Boy" (Short)
"Star Wars Episode 4- A New Hope" (Feature)

Write: Creative Assignment II: (Preparation for a date) *Due by Thursday 4/9 at 11:59pm*
Spark Journal Pages

Post: Discussion Forum on "The New Boy"
Video to Show and Tell if your last name begins with A-C
Respond to Show and Tells, be social
Visit Spark Journal Corner
Read and give feedback on your group's Assignment #2 in discussion forum *due by Sunday 4/12 at 11:59pm*

Week 3 4/13

LECTURE: Exposition, Visual Storytelling and Dialogue
Structure (features and shorts)

ASSIGNMENTS:

Write: Creative Assignment III: (The Wrongest Person) *Thursday 4/16 at 11:59pm*
Spark Journal Pages

Post: Video to Show and Tell if your last name begins with D-G
Respond to Show and Tells, be social
Visit Spark Journal Corner

Read and give feedback on your group's Assignment #3 in discussion forum *due by Sunday 4/19 at 11:59pm*

Week 4 4/20

LECTURE: Plot points
Two Incidents
Loglines
Endings and Beginnings

ASSIGNMENTS:

Watch: Pick a film from the back of the Tools of Screenwriting book and watch it
Read: Read the analysis of the film in the back of the book
Tools of Screenwriting, pages 91 through 94
Write: THREE LOGLINES for potential short films *due by Thursday 4/23 at 11:59pm*
Spark Journal Pages
Post: Video to Show and Tell if your last name begins with H
Respond to Show and Tells, be social
Visit Spark Journal Corner
Discussion forum on movie analysis
Read and give feedback on ALL loglines in discussion forum *due by Sunday 4/26 at 11:59pm*

Week 5 4/27

LECTURE: Step Outlines/Treatments
Climax
More on Endings

ASSIGNMENTS:

Read: Tools of Screenwriting, pages 76 through 78; 55 through 59
Write: STEP OUTLINES for short films *due by Thursday 4/30 at 11:59pm*
Spark Journal Pages
Post: Video to Show and Tell if your last name begins with I-O
Respond to Show and Tells, be social
Visit Spark Journal Corner
Discussion Forum about endings from the three films we saw: I'll Wait for the Next One, Spider, and Inja
Read and give feedback on ALL step outlines in discussion forum *due by Sunday 5/3 at 11:59pm*

Week 6 5/4

LECTURE: Scenes

ASSIGNMENTS:

Write: First draft of short scripts *due by Sunday 5/10 at 11:59pm*
Spark Journal Pages
Post: Video to Show and Tell if your last name begins with P-T
Respond to Show and Tells, be social
Visit Spark Journal Corner

Week 7 5/11

WORKSHOP: GROUP A 1st Draft

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Read: Tools of Screenwriting, pages 95 through 97
Group A 1st Drafts
- Post: Video to Show and Tell if your last name begins with U-Z
Respond to Show and Tells, be social
Visit Spark Journal Corner
Written feedback forms for Group A 1st drafts *due by Thursday 5/14 at 11:59pm*

Week 8 5/18

WORKSHOP: GROUP B 1st Draft

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Read: Group B 1st drafts
- Post: Written feedback forms for Group B 1st draft *due by Thursday 5/21 at 11:59pm*
Visit Spark Journal Corner

Week 9 5/25

WORKSHOP: GROUP C 1st Drafts

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Read: Group C 1st Drafts
- Post: Written feedback forms for Group C 1st draft *due by Thursday 5/28 at 11:59pm*
Visit Spark Journal Corner
- Write: ALL—2nd Drafts *due by Sunday 5/31 at 11:59pm*

Week 10 6/1

Workshop: ALL SECOND DRAFTS

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Read: 2nd drafts assigned to you (1/3 of class)
- Post: Written feedback forms for 2nd Drafts *due by Thursday 6/4 at 11:59pm*
- Write: ALL—3rd Drafts *due by Monday 6/8 at 11:59pm*

Assignments:

Late assignments will not be accepted without the prior consent of the instructor and may result in a reduction in the student's grade.

Three Creative Assignments (15% of final grade)

These exercises will be based on the screenwriting conventions we cover in class. Specific guidelines for each exercise will be provided. You are expected to submit a copy to the corresponding Submissions link on D2L, and upload to a discussion forum. Each assignment is 5% of your final grade (15% in total).

Loglines for Short Script (5% of final grade)

Develop three premise ideas for your short film. You will eventually develop one of these ideas into a short screenplay. Each premise should include character (protagonist), conflict (what is the central

conflict of the narrative?) and a sense of resolution. Be mindful of the aim and limitations of the short film medium. Please submit a copy to the corresponding Submissions link on D2L, and discussion forum.

Outline of Short Script (15%)

Taking your chosen idea, please develop a scene-by-scene outline for your short film. Use your plot points! Please submit a copy to the corresponding Submissions link on D2L, and the discussion forum.

Short Script Draft I (15%)

A few things to keep in mind as you write your scripts:

- Show don't tell. Show don't tell. Show don't tell. Show don't tell.
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation count - Proofread your work, proofread it again, and then proofread it one more time just to be sure.
- Re-read your narrative for clarity - It may be a good idea to have a friend/family member look over the script as well.
- Standard screenwriting formatting is required. Refer to texts for the course, the scripts we read in class, and your instructor for assistance.
- Action description should be lean - Only revealing what can be heard/seen on screen.
- Use your plot points as a guide.
- Avoid exposition heavy dialogue - Always ask yourself, "Is there a way I can communicate this information visually?"
- Your script must be at least 6 pages (not including title page), but should not exceed 10 pages.
- Ask questions if you need help.
- Don't wait until the last minute. It takes time to develop a solid narrative - You won't be able to do it in one night.

Please submit a pdf to the corresponding Submissions link on D2L.

Rewrite(s) of Short Script (15% each)

A few things to keep in mind as you REWRITE your scripts:

- The rewrite of your script be a marked improvement over your first draft.
- You must include a cover page.
- Use notes you received from the instructor, workshops and self-evaluation in order to craft your revised draft.
- Characters, dialogue, structure and scene work should be completely reevaluated and enhanced.
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation count - Proofread your work, proofread it again and then proofread it one more time just to be sure.
- Standard screenwriting formatting is required. Refer to the textbook for this class, the scripts we read in class, and your instructor for assistance.
- Your script must be at least 6 pages (not including the title page), but should not exceed 10 pages.

Workshops, Attendance, and Participation (20% of your final grade):

Participation

You are expected to watch the weekly lectures before completing your writing work for the week. You will fall behind if you do not stay on track. I will be suggesting a work schedule to keep you on track. Because this is an online course, you must be disciplined in your approach to the work. You are also expected to post to the discussion forums and give feedback. All of this will be outlined on d2l for you and during the lectures.

Workshops

Feedback is an essential part of the writing process. To facilitate this, you will be participating in weekly written workshop sessions that will enable you to showcase your assignments and the first draft of your short screenplay. Please be sure to adhere to the following workshop guidelines.

Workshop Guidelines

- First and foremost, a workshop is about the piece of writing, not the writer. Both the writer and those critiquing the piece need to keep in mind that the goal is to make the writing the best it possibly can be.
- Workshops are never destructive. They are constructive. Writing is never “bad.” The writing is addressed so that it can get stronger.
- We will always start with something that is working in the piece.
- Then we will go to the aspects that are not yet fully developed or that are not quite working yet.
- If the majority of the readers agree on a particular element of the piece that is working or not working, listen. If the readers are completely divided, it simply may just be a matter of opinion.
- The writer should always listen, but ultimately must trust her or his gut. The writer’s name will be on the page when all is said and done.

Additional Policies and Information:

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

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. Please see <https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/Pages/online-teaching-evaluations.aspx> for additional information.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/academic-integrity/Pages/default.aspx>.

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: <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/PoliciesandProcedures.aspx>

Incomplete Grades

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. All incomplete requests must be approved by the instructor of the course and a CDM Associate Dean. Only exceptions cases will receive such approval. Information about the Incomplete Grades policy can be found at <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Grading-Policies.aspx>

Preferred Name & Gender Pronouns

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the quarter so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. Please also note that students may choose to identify within the University community with a preferred first name that differs from their legal name and may also update their gender. The preferred first name will appear in University related systems and documents except where the use of the legal name is necessitated or required by University business or legal need. For more information and instructions on how to do so, please see the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at <http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332>

Students with Disabilities

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for

Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling them to access accommodations and support services to assist with their success. There are two office locations:

- _Loop Campus – Lewis Center #1420 – (312) 362-8002
- _Lincoln Park Campus – Student Center #370 – (773) 325-1677

Students who register with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact Dr. Gergory Moorhead, Director of the Center, privately to discuss how he may assist in facilitating the accommodations to be used in a course. This is best done early in the term. The conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible.

Please see <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx> for Services and Contact Information.

SPRING 2020 COVID INFORMATION

CHANGES TO SYLLABUS

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. Depending on many variables outside of our control, the assignments projected for the term may require alteration or rescheduling. If a change occurs, it will be posted under Announcements in D2L. Please ensure that campus connect and D2L have your correct email address. Also, make sure you are receiving all notifications via D2L.

UNIVERSITY:

DePaul University will continue to update their [COVID-19 Updates and Guidance page](#). Please visit that page for the most current information and a list of [university FAQ](#).

CDM

For more specific questions about CDM, check out this page for current info: [Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 & CDM](#).

TECHNICAL ISSUES

If you're having any tech issues this quarter, please email scaavsupport@depaul.edu.

This new resource is for general tech support and will serve as a unified point of contact for various issues. This includes any issues with installing or running the software.

This email address will be monitored during the following hours:

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Monday - Friday: | 8:30am – 8:30pm |
| Saturday: | 10:00am – 6:00pm |
| Sunday: | 12:00pm – 6:00pm |

OUR CLASS

DePaul has closed labs and other facilities until further notice.

SOFTWARE

CDM and DePaul Information Services are working to make sure students are able to access the same software that is available in CDM labs. [This spreadsheet](#) includes information about free downloads and requesting access to that software. We will continue to update the list with software as it becomes available. (via CDM)

ASSIGNMENTS

The class assignments have been modified to allow you to create the best work possible, with limited means and a restriction on movement.

We don't know how long these restrictions will last, therefore it is important to be flexible and respond to any changes as appropriate. We can do this together. Please communicate any concerns or suggestions for the class as soon as possible and I'll do my best to help you find solutions.