SCWR 303, 403: REWRITING THE FEATURE

Spring Quarter 2020
Tuesdays, 5:45pm - 9:00pm
Location: Remote

Instructor Information:
Jen Ellison
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Zoom Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:00pm - 2:30pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This class focuses on rewriting the feature film screenplay. Through group workshops and course discussions, students will learn how to identify missteps in their writing and develop a practical means to efficiently address these issues moving forward. Student must possess a complete feature-length script in order to enroll in the course.

This class focuses on practical ways to approach the rewriting process for feature film screenplays. Through group workshops and assignments, students isolate issues with plot, character development, dialogue and pacing in their script and work on addressing them in a full draft rewrite.

COURSE OUTCOMES:
Students will complete a rewrite plan and a full rewrite of an existing original feature screenplay.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:
- Organize and assess script feedback from their peers and the professor
- Devise a detailed plan for a comprehensive rewrite
- Revise their screenplay at a professional pace
- Evaluate the work of their peers and formulate helpful feedback

REQUIRED TEXTS:
"Screenwriting is Rewriting: The Art and Craft of Professional Revision" by Jack Epps Jr.
ISBN-10: 1628927402

Additional assigned readings provided by the instructor posted on D2L.

PREREQUISITE:
None

COURSE MANAGEMENT:
This course is housed and managed on D2L exclusively. There, students will find announcements, reading and writing assignments, discussion forums (Zoom, Slack, etc.), and additional class materials.

GRADING:
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 = 59-0a A indicates excellence, B indicates good work, C indicates satisfactory work, D work is unsatisfactory in some respect, F is substantially unsatisfactory work

Assignments	Value	Submit on D2L By:
Self Critique	5%	DUE: April 7 @ 9:00am
Note Overview	10%	DUE: April 21 @ 9:00am
Rewrite Plan	10%	DUE: April 28 @ 9:00am
Act 1 & Act 2A Rewrites	5%	DUE: May 5 & May12 @ 9:00am
Revised Draft (Pgs 1-50)	25%	DUE: May 19 @ 9:00am
Act 2B & Act 3 Rewrites	5%	DUE: May 26 & June 2 @ 9:00am
Revised Draft, Part 2 (Pgs 50 - 100)	30%	DUE: June 12 @ 11:59pm
Attendance/Participation	10%	Over course of term
TOTAL	100%	

HOW THE CLASS WILL BE RUN

D2L
All information, submissions, assignments, etc. will be posted via D2L.

Zoom
Every week we will meet via Zoom for a short period of time. These will mostly serve as short workshops, meeting facilitations, and check-ins. If you are unable to participate for any reason,m please let me know ASAP via our Slack Channel. I will also be running office hours through Zoom.

Slack
This will serve as a consistent messaging outlet for lecture questions, helpful links, writer support etc.

Prerecorded Lectures
Most lectures will be pre-recorded. In this way, you can engage with the material at your own pace. That said, be careful not to get too far behind. I will often discuss upcoming assignments and reference other resources that will help you.

Email
Email is the primary means of communication between faculty and students enrolled in this course outside of class time. Students should be sure their email listed under "demographic information" at Campus Connect is correct. Please be sure to read all emails concerning this class.

COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK ONE: INTRODUCTION - 3/31/20
      Lecture: Course Introduction & Orientation, Setting the Foundation
      Assignment: Submit your current draft via D2L
      Assignment: Self-Critique
      Assignment: Read text from *Introduction* through *The Pass Method*

WEEK TWO: FEEDBACK - 4/7/20
      Workshop: Self-Critique
      Lecture: Giving, Receiving, and Interpreting Feedback
      Assignment: Read assigned group screenplays, formulate feedback
      Assignment: Read text *Part 1 Foundations and Fundamentals*; Chapters 1-3

WEEK THREE: ORGANIZING NOTES - 4/14/20
  Workshop: Peer Feedback
  Assignment: Notes Overview
  Assignment: Read text *Part 1 Foundations and Fundamentals*; Chapters 4-5

WEEK FOUR: REWRITE PLAN - 4/21/20
  Workshop: Notes overview
  Lecture: The Rewrite Plan, Character
  Assignment: Rewrite Plan
  Assignment: Read text *Part 1 Foundations and Fundamentals*; Chapter 6

WEEK FIVE: MEETINGS - 4/28/20
  Workshop: Individual Story Meetings
  Assignment: Rewrite Feature (Act 1)
  Assignment: Read text *Part 1 Foundations and Fundamentals*; Chapters 7-8

WEEK SIX: STORY & THEME - 5/5/20
  Workshop: Rewrite Feature (Act 1)
  Lecture: Story & Theme
  Assignment: Rewrite Feature (Act 2A)
  Assignment: Read text *Part 1 Foundations and Fundamentals*; Chapters 9-14

WEEK SEVEN: STRUCTURE - 5/12/20
  Workshop: Rewrite Feature (Act 2A)
  Lecture: Structure & Plot
  Assignment: Revised Draft Pgs 1-50

WEEK EIGHT: COMPLICATIONS - 5/19/20
  DUE: REVISED DRAFT PGS. 1-50
  Lecture: Complications
  Assignment: Read text *Part 2 Layering and Details*; Chapters 15-17
  Assignment: Rewrite Feature (Act 2B)

WEEK NINE: CHARACTER RELATIONSHIPS - 5/26/20
  Workshop: Rewrite Feature (Act 2B)
  Lecture: Relationships
  Assignment: Read text *Part 2 Layering and Details*; Chapters 18 - 23
  Assignment: Rewrite Feature (Act 3)

WEEK TEN: THE FINAL PASS - 6/2/20

    Workshop: Rewrite Feature (Act 3)
    Lecture: Scenes, Dialogue, & Consistency
    Assignment: Final Draft of Completed Rewrite (90 pages Minimum)

FINAL DUE: 6/12/20

    Final Draft of Completed Rewrite (90 pages Minimum)

ASSIGNMENTS:

Self-Critique

Re-read your current draft in one sitting. Give yourself notes. Download the Self Critique Template on D2L for reference and fill it out. Please upload a PDF version to the submissions folder by the due date listed above.

Note Overview

After your [Peer] Notes Meeting, complete the Notes Overview template (available to download on D2L) using feedback on your feature-length screenplay from the instructor, workshop, self-evaluation and Peer Notes Meeting. These vetted concerns should be listed as bullet points under each category heading. Feel free to edit the headings to align with the notes you received and order them by priority. It is important to do a thorough job on this, as the Notes Overview will act as the foundation for your Rewrite Plan. You are expected to submit a PDF copy of the Notes Overview to D2L by the due date listed above.

Rewrite Plan

Complete the Rewrite Plan template (available to download on D2L). Each chart heading is broken into two categories (Concerns/Solutions). The concerns should be taken from your Note Overview assignment, broken into the appropriate categories, and then order by priority. Across from each concern, list possible solutions. The length of your Rewrite Plan will depend on the amount of work that needs to be done. Keep the cause-and-effect nature of cinematic storytelling in mind. You must consider the effect these alterations will have on the rest of the narrative. It is important to do a thorough job on this rewrite plan, as it will act as the foundation for your feature-length rewrite. Submit a PDF of the rewrite plan to D2L by the due date listed.

Rewrite Feature (Act 1, 2A, 2B, 3)

These are shorter benchmark assignments to track your progress and break the process down into more manageable chunks. Submit PDFs to D2L by the due date listed.

Final Draft (Part 1: Pages 1-50, Part 2: Pages 50 - 90)
You are expected to submit your revised draft (minimum of 90 pages) by the due dates listed to the Submissions on D2L. A couple of things to keep in mind, as these assignments are worth a total of 55% of your final grade:

- Show don't tell. Show don't tell. Show don't tell. Show don't tell.
- Action description should be lean - only revealing what can be heard/seen onscreen.
- Avoid exposition-heavy dialogue - Always ask yourself, "Is there a way I can communicate this information visually?"
- Use your plot points as a guide.
- Use notes you received from the instructor, script workshops and coverage assignments to craft your revised draft
- The final version of your script should read as a marked improvement over your first effort.
- Characters, dialogue, structure and scene work should be completely reevaluated and enhanced.
- Spelling, grammar, and punctuation count - Proofread your work.
- Standard screenwriting formatting is required. Refer to Syd Field's Screenplay or The Hollywood Standard, the scripts we read in class, and your instructor for assistance
- Re-read your narrative for clarity - It may be a good idea to have a friend/family member look over the script as well.
- You must include a cover page
- Your submission must be at least ninety pages

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance/Participation:
Now that we working remotely, your participation in the class is imperative. We will be working in groups, offering feedback, and discussing the writing process through a variety of online media. Not completing your peer feedback assignments or neglecting to log into class will result in a loss of the 10% participation grade.

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.

Late Work:
Assignments must be completed and uploaded to D2L in PDF format by the date and time specified in the Class Schedule. Late written work will receive a 20% grade deduction for each day it is submitted late. Final Draft Screenplays, however, must be turned in by the assigned due date/time (the Final Draft deadline marks the official end of the course). Submissions by email will not be accepted. I also suggest backing up work with a Cloud file storage service, as computers crash.

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. 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 with your professor.

If the instructor finds a student has violated the Academic Integrity Policy/plagiarized their work, the student will fail the course, receiving an automatic F grade. (Note: Turnitin is used to check the originality of submissions on D2L.) Actions taken by the instructor in this regard do not preclude the university from taking further action, including dismissal from the university. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could also result in criminal or civil prosecution.

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

IMPORTANT DATES:
April 3 by 11:59pm - Last day to add/swap classes
April 14 - Last day to drop classes with no penalty, last day to select pass/fail option
May 15- Last day to withdraw from classes, receiving a grade of "W"

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.

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