SCWR 354/454 - REWRITING THE ORIGINAL PILOT - Spring 2020   **Instructor — Jess King**
Thursdays, 5:45-9:00pm on Zoom   Office Hours: Thursdays -2:30-5:30 pm
Lecture/Discussion/Workshop   email: jking5@cdm.depaul.edu

Course Description

This class focuses on practical ways to approach the process of rewriting a script; specifically this class will focus on students' original television pilots. Through group workshops, lectures, readings, and assignments, students identify and improve problems in various areas of their teleplay including, but not limited to: plot, character development, dialogue and pacing. By the end of the quarter, students will have completed a full rewrite of their complete pilot script; therefore, students must posses a complete television pilot in order to enroll in the course. This course is repeatable.

PREREQUISITE(S): SCWR 352/452-Writing the Sitcom - OR - SCWR 353/453-Writing the Episodic Drama

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
• Evaluate storytelling conventions to enhance plot, structure, dialogue, character development, pacing and tone
• Complete a rewrite of their television pilot script
• Critique television scripts from professionally produced shows, as well as scripts from their peers' television scripts
• Write a polished, peer-reviewed original series pilot ready for production

Course Outcomes

• Students will learn various rewriting techniques designed to enhance their television pilot scripts in the areas of plot, structure, dialogue, character development, pacing, tone, etc.
• Students will learn and execute skills pertaining to exchanging constructive criticism with writing peers.
• Students will complete a revised show "bible" for their individual television pilot script.
• Students will complete a rewrite of their television pilot script.

Required Texts

All readings will be posted by the instructor on D2L

Required Software

Final Draft is strongly recommended for this course.

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 and possibly network you are writing for (especially in terms of concept, audience, and budget).

GRADE PROFILES

A level writing demonstrates clear, relevant, accurate & deep comprehension of key concepts with a specific point of view. It offers independent, creative thought.

B level writing demonstrates mostly clear, relevant, accurate & deep comprehension of key concepts and attempts a creative take or point of view.

C level writing is inconsistently clear, relevant, accurate & comprehensive. May be vague. Does not present a notable creative approach to discussing the material.

D level indicates a serious lack of effort, a total failure to comprehend the material, and no effort toward an original point of view.

F level writing is a failure to make any attempt.

(Work that contains grammatical errors, misspellings, or generally poor and unclear construction will rarely if ever achieve a grade of A or B no matter how good the actual thinking presented might be.)

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):
Initial Pilot/Revision Reflection (10%); Protagonist Hot Seat (5%); Peer Pilot Script Synopsis, Notes & Pitch (15%); Revised Show Bible (10%); Revised Pilot Outline (10%); Revised Pilot (40%); Class Participation / Verbal & Written Peer Feedback (10%)

Course Schedule - *(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.)*

WEEK 1 – COURSE INTRODUCTION (4/2)
Class/student introductions. Who are you? What new shows are you watching? What shows do you not like? What do you think makes the shows you've been watching a hit or a flop? Is tv/the pilot changing?
    DISCUSS: *Atlanta*, script + televised pilot, Donald Glover

    HOMEWORK 1: Submit Pilot + one-page revision reflection to appropriate Submissions folders + put your pilot in the appropriate Discussions folder entitled "Week #1 - Drama/ Comedy Initial Pilot Draft" Pilot = Due TOMORROW (4/3); Reflection due: 4/5

    HOMEWORK 2: Read all of your classmates' pilot scripts <u>in your genre</u> by Class #2. I recommend making notes on them, as well.

WEEK 2 – CHARACTER (4/9)
Character (Methods of Analyzing and Adding Dimension to Your Cast)

Classroom Activity: *Protagonist Hot Seat (For 3-5 minutes, speak to the class as your own script's Protagonist)

HOMEWORK 1: Re-read classmate's script randomly assigned to you.

HOMEWORK 2: Write a 2-page minimum Synopsis, Notes and Pitch of Peer's Pilot (DUE Week 3 – YOU WILL BE PITCHING YOUR CLASSMATE'S PILOT DURING WEEK #3'S CLASS.

WEEK 3 – DIALOGUE (4/16)
*Lecture: *Dialogue (Tips and Common Mistakes) + How to give/receive notes*
Classroom Exercise Part 1: PITCHING YOUR CLASSMATE'S PILOT

Classroom Exercise Part 2: Writer takes Q&A and suggestions. Author pitches how they see the series arc and future story lines and character development

HOMEWORK 1: Bible Plan – Based on feedback, write up your revised Bible. (DUE Week 5 | SUBMISSIONS + DISCUSSIONS).

HOMEWORK 2: Problem Scenes – Post the scene in your TV pilot you feel needs the most work on D2L. (Due Week 4 by 5:00pm).

WEEK 4 – COMMON PROBLEMS (4/23)
Lecture: Bad Pacing, Inconsistent Tone. What is a series bible?
Classroom Exercise #1: BRING OUT YOUR DEAD – Workshop your "problem" scene with your group.

HOMEWORK 1: Bible Plan – Based on feedback, write up your revised Bible. (DUE Week 5 by 5:00pm | SUBMISSIONS + DISCUSSIONS. HOMEWORK 2: Read *Mr. Robot* Pilot.

WEEK 5 – STORY, THEME & VOICE (4/30)
Lecture: Story, theme & voice: Great writers have a voice, an agenda and an attitude; how about yours?
Classroom Discussion: *Mr. Robot*, pilot, created by Sam Esmail

Classroom Activity: Workshop Bible

HOMEWORK 1: Write your revised Pilot Episode Outline (DUE Week 6 by 5:00 pm | SUBMISSIONS + DISCUSSIONS). HOMEWORK 2: Read *ODAAT* Pilot

WEEK 6 – NARRATIVE (5/7)
Lecture: Plot & Structure
    Classroom Discussion: *One Day at a Time*, pilot, created by Gloria Calderon Kellett
    & Mike Royce w/ Norman Lear

    Classroom Activity: Workshop Outline

    HOMEWORK 1: Revise Cold Open and Act One (DUE Week 7 by 5:00 pm | SUBMISSIONS
    + DISCUSSIONS)

WEEK 7 – WORKSHOP (5/14)
    Classroom Activity: Workshop Cold Open + Act One

    HOMEWORK 1: Revise Act Two (DUE Week 8 by 5:00 pm | SUBMISSIONS +
    DISCUSSIONS)

WEEK 8 – WORKSHOP (5/28)
    Classroom Activity: Workshop Act Two

    HOMEWORK: Revise Act Three & Tag + Act 4 (if hour long) (DUE Week 9 by 5:00 pm |
    SUBMISSIONS + DISCUSSIONS)

WEEK 9 – WORKSHOP (6/4)
    Classroom Activity: Workshop Act Three & Tag + Act 4 (if hour long)

    HOMEWORK: Revise opening 10 pages for table read - post to DISCUSSIONS (DUE Week
    10 by 5:00 pm)

WEEK 10 – TABLE READS (6/11)
    Table Reads + critiques

    HOMEWORK: Final Draft of Revised Pilot. (DUE June 18th by 11:30 pm. Proof for typos
    (seriously, don't just rely on spell check.)

FINALS WEEK – "FINAL" DRAFT OF REVISED PILOT (6/18)
"FINAL" DRAFT OF REVISED PILOT with revision reflection

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. 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.

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.

Your Name Preference & 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

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. If you become uncomfortable with a conversation for personal reasons, you may be excused from the remainder of that class without penalty. Obvious inclusion of individuals from the class will not be tolerated in submitted material.

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 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