

# SCWR 390 Topics in Screenwriting: Script Lab

---

**When:** Monday or Wednesday Workshop 5:45pm-9:00pm  
**Where:** Hybrid Online Learning

**Instructor:** Matt Quinn · [mquinn@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:mquinn@cdm.depaul.edu) · 312-362-5807  
**Remote Office hours:** Monday and Wednesday 11:00am – 1:00pm

## Summary of Course

Advanced study in screenwriting focusing on a specific genre each quarter such as: Science Fiction, Comedy, Action-Adventure, Nonfiction, etc. The topic this quarter is Script Lab.

Topic Overview: This advanced course is designed to take existing writing projects (including but not limited to features, pilots, television specs, web series, short scripts) at various stages of development and provide the practical means to move forward through constructive workshop sessions. Stories will be broken down to examine concept viability and the overall execution of the narrative. Instructor and peer critiques will challenge the writer to enhance their voice on the page with the goal of creating work that is unique, engaging, and commercial.

## Learning Outcomes

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

## Prerequisites

None

## Hybrid Online Learning

This course will be delivered using a hybrid model, featuring a blend of asynchronous and synchronous online learning. For the asynchronous portion of the course, the lecture and assignments can be accessed on your own time via the D2L Content page and must be completed by an assigned due date. For the synchronous portion of the course, you will log in using a Zoom Video Conferencing link provided by the instructor for small group workshops. These meetings are held on select Mondays and Wednesdays 1:30pm – 4:45pm Central Time throughout the Summer I Session. See Course Outline for specific meeting dates.

## D2L

You will be using D2L extensively in this course. To log on, go to:

<https://login.depaul.edu/ldap/login?service=https%3a%2f%2fd2l.depaul.edu%2fd2l%2fcustom%2fcas> and enter using your campus connect logon and password. Once you are logged on, click on the course number link and you will find links to the syllabus, course outline, video lectures, discussion forums, weekly assignments, etc.

## Textbooks

Readings provided by instructor

## Grading

One Sheet / Rewrite Plan	10%
Step Outline	10%
Script Submission I	20%
Script Submission II	20%
Script Submission III	20%
Workshop	20%

*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. A indicates excellence, B indicates good work, C indicates satisfactory work, D work is unsatisfactory in some respect, F is substantially unsatisfactory work.*

## Course Outline

### Class 1 – June 15<sup>th</sup>

Lecture: Course Overview, Concept Ideation / Rewriting  
 No Zoom Workshop  
*Assignment: Project Pitch*

### Class 2 – June 17<sup>th</sup>

Workshop: Group A & Group B  
*Assignment: One Sheet / Rewrite Plan*

### Class 3 – June 22<sup>nd</sup>

Lecture: The Foundation Pass  
 Workshop: Group A – *One Sheet / Rewrite Plan*  
*Assignment: Step Outline*

**Class 4 – June 24<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop: Group B – One Sheet  
*Assignment: Step Outline*

**Class 5 – June 29<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Character, Complications, and Relationships  
Workshop: Group A – Step Outline  
*Assignment: Script Submission I*

**Class 6 – July 1<sup>st</sup>**

Workshop: Group B – Step Outline  
*Assignment: Script Submission I*

**Class 7 – July 6<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Genre Consistency  
Workshop: Group A – Script Submission I  
*Assignment: Script Submission II*

**Class 8 – July 8<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop: Group B – Script Submission I  
*Assignment: Script Submission II*

**Class 9 – July 13<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Dialogue  
Workshop: Group A – Script Submission II  
*Assignment: Script Submission III*

**Class 10 – July 15<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop: Group B – Script Submission II  
*Assignment: Script Submission III*

**Assignments****One Sheet / Rewrite Plan (10% of final grade)**

You will select a one sheet or a rewrite plan depending on the project you are developing:

One Sheet (new project) – This document must include: Title, contact information, logline, genre, plot overview. One sheets for TV and web series will differ slightly from a feature/short one sheet, as they focus more on pivotal character breakdowns and the aim/arc of the series. Examples provided on the D2L Content page. This assignment must be saved as a PDF and uploaded to the corresponding D2L Submission link and your assigned D2L Group Discussion Forum by 1:30pm on

Monday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Rewrite Plan (rewrite) – 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 self-evaluation, broken into the appropriate categories, and then order by severity. 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 overview, as it will act as the foundation for your rewrite. This assignment must be saved as a PDF and uploaded to the corresponding D2L Submission link and your assigned D2L Group Discussion Forum by 1:30pm on Monday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Step Outline (10% of final grade)**

The Step Outline is worth a total of 10 points and must be saved as a PDF and uploaded to the corresponding D2L Submission link and your assigned D2L Group Discussion Forum by 1:30pm on Monday, June 29<sup>th</sup>.

A feature length outline should have anywhere from 50 - 100 scenes, a one-hour pilot should have anywhere from 25-50 scenes, half-hour comedy should have anywhere from 12 – 25 scenes, and a short/web series should have anywhere from 1- 15 scenes. The length is largely dependent on the type of narrative (general rule of thumb is that there are less scenes for character-driven story/more scenes for plot driven material).

It is critical that you provide enough scenes to sustain the intended length of your narrative – Ex: Coming up with 40 scenes or less for a feature is simply not enough material and will result in a significant deduction in your step outline grade. Please make a point to speak with me if you're planning to write an unconventional narrative that will require an unorthodox outline.

Each scene of your step outline will contain a slug line for the location and time of day. The scenes should be numbered as they will eventually appear in your screenplay followed by a brief description of what will transpire in that scene.

Example:

Scene 1: INT. DON CORELONE'S OFFICE - DAY

AMERIGO BONASERA, undertaker, tells DON VITO CORLEONE, the aging head of the successful Corleone crime family, the story of how his daughter was assaulted by two men. Don Corelone will help Amerigo deal with his problem in exchange for a favor in the future. The meeting, which is being held during the wedding of Corelone's daughter, is very matter-of-fact/business-like.

General Guidelines

- Use 12 pt. Courier New Font
- Make sure your scene descriptions are in present tense
- Use all CAPS when introducing a new character.
- Must be submitted as a PDF file

### **Script Submission I (20% of Final Grade)**

You are required to write a minimum of 10 of pages for your original/rewrite for a feature length screenplay, television pilot, web series or short film. This assignment must be saved as a PDF and uploaded to the corresponding D2L Submission link and your assigned D2L Group Discussion Forum by 1:30pm on Monday, July 6<sup>th</sup>.

A few things to keep in mind:

- You must include a cover page
- Your submission must be at least 10 pages
- 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.
- 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 make sure the script is saved as a PDF

### **Script Submission II (20% of Final Grade)**

You are required to write a minimum of 10 of pages for your original/rewrite for a feature length screenplay, television pilot, web series or short film. This assignment must be saved as a PDF and uploaded to the corresponding D2L Submission link and your assigned D2L Group Discussion Forum by 1:30pm on Monday, July 13<sup>th</sup>.

A few things to keep in mind:

- You must include a cover page
- Your submission must be at least 10 pages
- 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.
- 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 make sure the script is saved as a PDF

### **Script Submission III (20% of Final Grade)**

You are required to write a minimum of 10 of pages for your original/rewrite for a feature length screenplay, television pilot, web series or short film. This assignment must be saved as a PDF and uploaded to the corresponding D2L Submission link and your assigned D2L Group Discussion Forum by 1:30pm on Monday, July 20<sup>th</sup>.

A few things to keep in mind:

- You must include a cover page
- Your submission must be at least 10 pages
- 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.
- 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 make sure the script is saved as a PDF

### **Workshop (20% of Final Grade)**

Feedback is an essential part of the writing process. To facilitate this, every student will have four Zoom Video Conference workshop sessions (each session is worth 5 points.) You must submit material you would like to cover as a PDF to your D2L Group Discussion Forum before your assigned session.

- Group A – June 22<sup>nd</sup>, June 29<sup>th</sup>, July 6<sup>th</sup>, July 13<sup>th</sup>
- Group B – June 24<sup>th</sup>, July 1<sup>st</sup>, July 8<sup>th</sup>, July 15<sup>th</sup>

### **Attitude**

A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Measurable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitude 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 computer. If any issues arise a student may be asked to leave the classroom. The professor will work with the Dean of Students Office to navigate such student issues.

### **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 the 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**

Instructor and 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 academic integrity policy passed by faculty. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>.

### **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>

### **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>

### **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>

### **Students with Disabilities**

DePaul 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](mailto:csd@depaul.edu).

Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.

Phone number: (312)362-8002

Fax: (312)362-6544

TTY: (773)325.7296