

SCWR 405-802: Advanced Writing on Assignment

Winter Quarter 2021

Wednesdays, 5:45pm - 9:00pm

Location: Online

Instructor Information:

Jen Ellison

Contact me through the messaging portal on D2L

Office Hours: Thursdays, 1:30pm - 3:30pm (Zoom link on D2L)

Course Description:

Modeled after professional writing assignments, this advanced course challenges students to complete a feature length screenplay within specific parameters provided by the instructor in ten weeks. Lectures and strict weekly page submission deadlines provide a practical framework on how to write quickly without sacrificing quality. Constructive analysis will be used in discussing produced scripts, weekly assignments and group workshops to reveal the writer's unique voice and perspective.

Course Outcomes:

A completed feature screenplay.

Learning Objectives:

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

- create original content within the boundaries of a professional writing assignment
- demonstrate the ability to write at a professional pace
- utilize the sequence approach to create consistent tension and effective story organization
- assess and then apply peer and instructor feedback to revise their screenplays

Required Textbooks:

Any reading material will be provided.

Course Management:

D2L

This course is housed and managed on D2L exclusively. There, students will find announcements, reading and writing assignments, discussion forums, Zoom links, and additional class materials. Students must submit all work to the discussion forums and the assignment portals.

Screenwriting Software:

You are required to use screenwriting software in this course. Students interested in continuing to develop their screenwriting skills beyond this course may consider purchasing the industry standard Final Draft (available to students at a discounted \$99.99 at the [Final Draft Website](#). Click “Products” dropdown menu and go to “Final Draft Educational”). Free options for screenwriting software include Writerduet ([writerduet.com](#)), Celtx ([celtx.com](#)).

Zoom

Every week we will meet via Zoom. In order to avoid Zoom fatigue, we will take multiple breaks, and, where possible, shorten the class time. That said, these meetings are required. If you are unable to participate for any reason, please let me know ASAP. I will also be running office hours through Zoom.

Messaging

All messages regarding this class will come through D2L. Be sure to check your messages frequently.

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend every class even if your group is not workshopping. For the purposes of this class, an absence is defined as not showing up for class, leaving your camera off, or showing up 15 minutes late. Each unexcused absence beyond the first equates to a loss of 2 percentage points from the student’s final score and more than three absences will cause the student to fail the class.

Assignments:

The class will break into groups to minimize the reading load, and to make sure everyone receives an equal amount of feedback. Screenwriting assignments are to be submitted to D2L discussion forums on **Mondays (as listed by due date) by NOON**. Students are expected to have read the work submitted by their classmates each week BEFORE class. Your weekly participation grade will be determined by your demonstrated preparation and consistent conversation in class.

****Late work will not be accepted without a valid excuse, and out of fairness to all, it cannot be workshopped in class.****

Assignments must demonstrate professionalism and investment in the material, showcase techniques and ideas discussed in class, offer a unique take with a clear voice, and demonstrate proper grammar, format, and style.

Title	Percent	Due Date	
Pitch	10%	January 13 @ 9:00am	
Sequence Breakdown	10%	January 20 @ 9:00am	
		GROUP A	GROUP B
Act 1	15%	January 25 @ Noon	February 1 @ Noon
Act 2A	15%	February 8 @ Noon	February 15 @ Noon
Act 2B	15%	February 22 @ Noon	March 1 @ Noon
Act 3	15%	March 8 @ Noon	
Full Compiled Draft	10%	March 19 @ 11:59pm	
Attendance/ Participation	10%	Over course of term	
TOTAL	100%		

Grading Scale:

A=93-100%, A- =90-92%, B+ =87-89%, B =84-86%, B- =80-83%, C+ =77-79%,
C =74-76%, C- =70-73%, D+ =67-69, D =60-66%

Class Schedule Week by Week:

WEEK ONE

Lecture: Course intro, expectations, writing on assignment means, genre, distribution of script assignments, loglines & pitching

Assignment: Story logline and pitch

WEEK TWO

Workshop: Project pitches

Lecture: Sequences

Assignment: Sequence breakdown

WEEK THREE

Workshop: Sequence Breakdown

Assignment: Act 1

WEEK FOUR

Workshop: Act 1 - (Group A)

Lecture/Discussion: Time Management & Deadlines

WEEK FIVE

Workshop: Act 1 - (Group B)

Lecture/Discussion: Act 2A

Assignment: Act 2A

WEEK SIX

Workshop: Act 2A - (Group A)

Lecture/Discussion: Scene structure and narrative challenges

WEEK SEVEN

Workshop: Act 2A - (Group B)

Lecture/Discussion: Act 2B

Assignment: Act 2B

WEEK EIGHT

Workshop: Act 2B - (Group A)

Lecture/Discussion: Scene structure and narrative challenges

WEEK NINE

Workshop: Act 2B - (Group B)

Lecture/Discussion: Act 3

Assignment: Act 3

WEEK TEN

Workshop: Act 3

Assignment: Final Compiled Draft of Screenplay

Class Policies

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 and violence 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.

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 and quizzes completed 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. Midterms and 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). Printed submissions or submissions by email will not be accepted. I also suggest backing up work with a Cloud file storage service, as computers crash.

Technology Statement:

Zoom is a challenging platform, to say the least. However, it is important that you are able to remain focused, giving your eyes and ears to workshops, in-class writing assignments, and lectures. If you need assistance, please feel free to contact me.

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:

Jan. 10 - Last day to add/swap classes

Jan. 17 - Last day to drop classes with no penalty,

Jan. 19 - Last day to select pass/fail option

Feb. 21- 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.

Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd. Phone number: (312)362-8002

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