

# SCWR 306 Scene Writing

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**When:** Wednesday · 5:45pm – 9:00pm  
**Where:** 14 East Jackson / RM 207 / Loop Campus

**Instructor:** Matt Quinn · [mquinn@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:mquinn@cdm.depaul.edu) · 312-362-5807  
**Office hours:** Tuesday · 2:00pm – 5:00pm & Wednesday · 2:00pm – 5:00pm

## Summary of Course

This course focuses on analyzing and developing the fundamental building block of film and television writing: the scene. Students will gain a greater understanding of how to craft engaging scenes and refine their unique voice on the page through weekly lectures, writing exercises, and workshops.

## Course Objectives

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

- recognize various scene types in a screenplay or film
- express the narrative function(s) of given scenes in a screenplay or film
- apply the scene techniques they've studied in class to their own writing
- revise their scenes based on feedback from the professor and their peers
- evaluate the work of their peers and formulate helpful feedback

## 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, discussion forums, weekly assignments, etc.

## Prerequisites

SCWR 302 or SCWR 352 or SCWR 353

## Grading

Participation	10%
Scene Assignments	90%

*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.*

### **Textbooks**

"The Hollywood Standard" by Christopher Riley ISBN-10: 1932907637 (Recommended)

### **Attendance**

Attendance and participation is mandatory. An absence, which is defined as not showing up to class or arriving more than 10 minutes late to class, constitutes a reduction in your overall grade.

### **In-Class Workshops**

Feedback is an essential part of the writing process. To facilitate this, you will be participating in weekly small group workshop sessions that will enable you to showcase your scene/sequence assignments. Please refer to the course outline for specific workshop dates.

### **Course Outline**

#### **Week 1 – September 8<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Course Intro, Elements of a Scene  
*Assignment: Writing Sample*

#### **Week 2 – September 15<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop: Scene Assignment  
Lecture: Maximizing Dramatic Situations  
*Assignment: Scene Assignment (Conflict)*

#### **Week 3 – September 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Workshop: Scene Assignment  
Lecture: Beyond Character Archetypes  
*Assignment: Scene Assignment (Character)*

#### **Week 4 – September 29<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop: Scene Assignment  
Lecture: Plot Exposition vs. World Exposition  
*Assignment: Scene Assignment (Exposition)*

#### **Week 5 – October 6<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop: Scene Assignment  
Lecture: Dialogue

*Assignment: Scene Assignment (Dialogue)*

### **Week 6 – October 13<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop: Scene Assignment  
Lecture: Visual Active Screenwriting  
*Assignment: Scene Assignment (Action)*

### **Week 7 – October 20<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop Scene Assignment  
Lecture: Cause and Effect Storytelling  
*Assignment: Scene Assignment (Setup & Payoff)*

### **Week 8 – October 27<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop: Scene Assignment  
Lecture: Fulfilling the Promise of Concept & Genre  
*Assignment: Scene Assignment (Genre)*

### **Week 9 – November 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Workshop: Scene Assignment  
Lecture: Tone  
*Assignment: Scene Assignment (Tone)*

### **Week 10 – November 10<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop: Scene Assignment  
Lecture: Refining the Writer's Voice  
*Assignment: Scene Assignment (Writer's Voice)*

### **Week 11 – November 17<sup>th</sup>**

*Due: Scene Assignment (Writer's Voice)*

## **Assignments**

### **Scene Assignments (90% of final grade)**

You will write a total of nine scene exercises throughout the quarter based on the screenwriting techniques covered in-class. Specific guidelines for each exercise will coincide with the lecture of the week and will be critiqued in-class the following week. You are expected to upload the scene assignment as a PDF document to your assigned D2L group discussion forum to the corresponding D2L submission link. Each scene assignment is 10% of your final grade (90% in total).

*Starting Week 4: Students have the option of revising existing projects for the scene writing*

*exercises. Please ensure the selected scene addresses the topic for the week.*

### 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.

### COVID Social Distance and Mask Policy

Keeping our DePaul community safe is of utmost importance in the pandemic. Students, faculty and staff are expected to (1) wear a mask as required at all times while indoors on campus; (2) refrain from eating and drinking in classrooms; (3) keep current with their COVID-19 vaccinations or exemptions; (4) stay home if sick; (5) participate in any required COVID-19 testing; (6) complete the online Health and Safety Guidelines for Returning to Campus training; and (7) abide by the City of Chicago Emergency Travel Advisory. By doing these things, we are Taking Care of DePaul, Together. The recommendations may change as local, state, and federal guidelines evolve. Students who do not abide by the mask requirement may be subject to the student conduct process and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office. Students who have a medical reason for not complying with any requirements should register with DePaul's Center for Student with Disabilities (CSD).

### Respect for Diversity and Inclusion at DePaul University

At DePaul, our mission calls us to explore "what must be done" in order to respect the inherent dignity and identity of each human person. We value diversity because it is part of our history, our traditions and our future. We see diversity as an asset and a strength that adds to the richness of classroom learning. In my course, I strive to include diverse authors, perspectives and teaching pedagogies. I also encourage open dialogue and spaces for students to express their unique identities and perspectives. I am open to having difficult conversations and I will strive to create an inclusive classroom that values all perspectives. If at any time, the classroom experience does not live up to this expectation, please feel free to contact me via email or during office hours.

### 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. All students are expected to abide by the University's Academic Integrity Policy which prohibits cheating and other misconduct in student coursework. Publicly sharing or posting online any prior or current materials from this course (including exam questions or answers), is considered to be providing unauthorized assistance prohibited by the policy. Both students who share/post and students who access or use such materials are considered to be cheating under the Policy and will be subject to sanctions for violations of Academic Integrity.

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>

## 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

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist your success. There are two office locations:

Loop Campus - Lewis Center #1420 - (312) 362-8002

Lincoln Park Campus - Student Center #370 - (773) 325-1677

Students can also email the office at [csd@depaul.edu](mailto:csd@depaul.edu)

Students who are registered with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact me privately to discuss how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will use in this course. This is best done early in the term. Our conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible.

## University Counseling Services

DePaul University Counseling Services (UCS) is committed to providing a range of culturally aware and sensitive clinical services to help currently enrolled DePaul students remove barriers to academic and personal success by addressing emotional, psychological, and interpersonal concerns through multiple treatment modalities. Services offered include: group counseling, individual counseling, couples counseling, crisis management, consultation, referrals, and telereach/outreach workshops. All services are currently being offered on a virtual, remote basis with no fees due to COVID-19. To connect with the counseling center, contact our main number at (773) 325-7779 during regular business hours (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm) to schedule an initial consultation, which is typically scheduled within 1-2 business days of your call.

If you need more immediate assistance or are in acute distress, you can call the main number during regular business hours and ask to speak with a counselor. If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room. The Counseling Services staff has extensive experience with providing support services to individuals of varying social identities and backgrounds. Further, our counselors know that commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and anti-racism is an ongoing and open-ended journey and, as such, our counselors frequently and regularly engage in self-reflection and training opportunities to increase cultural awareness and to challenge one's own privileges and biases.