

**DePaul University**  
**School of Cinematic Arts**  
**Winter 2023**

**SCWR 309/409: CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT**

Tuesday 1:30 – 4:45PM

14 East Jackson, Room 213

Professor: Anna Hozian

Email: [ahozian@depaul.edu](mailto:ahozian@depaul.edu)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:00 to 11:30 ONLINE or in-person (CDM903) — please sign up on BlueStar to reserve your time. *If this timeframe does not work for you, please reach out to me and we will find a one that does.*

**Course Description**

This course will explore creative methodologies geared at getting deeply into the minds and points of view of dramatic characters. Throughout the course, students will concentrate on one set of characters to refine an existing web series, feature film, or television pilot.

**Course Outcomes**

In addition to weekly exercises geared toward executing deeper, more defined characters, students will create a character bible and plan to rewrite a TV series, web series, or feature film.

**Prerequisites**

SCWR100 or SCWR101

**Course Objectives:**

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

- Define strong character elements across television and film in both drama and comedy
- Analyze how characters are developed in longer works such as feature films and episodic/serialized storytelling
- Apply character and story generation tools in their own creative character work
- Design an execution plan in how to use these characters as the basis for a work for television, film, or the web
- Evaluate the work of their peers and formulate helpful feedback

## **Course Requirements**

You must have access to all content on AppleTV that is currently streaming. Each week you will be assigned a Viewing Assignment in addition to your other assignments.

We will watch:

*Swan Song* (\*Trigger warning: The overall story and themes deal with Death and Dying)

*CODA*: (\*Trigger warning: Bullying towards disabilities occurs in some scenes)  
*Ted Lasso*

## **Trigger Warnings**

Trigger warnings offer a humane way for students to prioritize their mental and emotional well-being when confronting distressing and/or harmful course content by preparing students to engage or, potentially, disengage with sensitive or traumatic classroom material. *In this class, if the content you create has triggering material and themes, please provide an appropriate content warning so that your classmates can prioritize their own mental and emotional well-being.*

## **Course Management**

You will be using D2L extensively in this course. To log on, go to: <https://d2l.depaul.edu/d2l/home> and enter using your campus connect username and password. Once you are logged on, click on the course number link and you will find links to the syllabus, materials, weekly assignments, etc.

## **Grading Policy**

Attendance/Discussions/Class Participation	30 points
First Eight Creative Assignments	40 points
First Draft of Character Bible	10 points
FINAL: Character Bible & Write/Rewrite Plan	20 points

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, F is substantially unsatisfactory.

## **Course Outline**

### **Week One: Tuesday, 01/03**

Class Intros, Discussion of Prior Work, and the Lecture: What Creates an Unforgettable Character?

**Viewing Assignment: Watch the Pilot Episode (Season 1, Episode 1) of *Ted Lasso* and the film, *Swan Song*. Please look at the example of a Brainstorming Exercise, as we will discuss these two pieces next week in terms of ‘What We Need to Know.’**

### **Week Two: Tuesday, 01/10**

Lecture: Art is In the PRECISE, SPECIFIC TO YOUR STORY details. What Do You Know about Your Story, Characters, and World? What is the Hole in the Heart of Your Protagonist?

**Creative Assignment #1: Brainstorming DUE Sunday, January 15th at NOON.**

**Week Three: Tuesday, 01/17**

Lecture: Discovering What You Don't Know and How to Find It Out — Research Plans and Specificities

***Creative Assignment #2: Protagonist Interview and Answering: What Did You Discover? What Do You Not Know? How Will You Find It? DUE Sunday, January 22nd at NOON.***

**Week Four: Tuesday, 01/24**

Lecture: World-Building

***Creative Assignment #3: Primary Source Interview/Experience DUE Sunday, January 29th at NOON***

**Week Five, Tuesday, 01/31**

Lecture: Themes and Ingenuity: What Are You Trying to Say, Who Has Said It Before You, and Why Now? (i.e., How Do We Create Something NEW, and why is this important to You and/or the World Now?)

***Creative Assignment #4: Influences, Why Now, & World Board? DUE before class on Tuesday, February 7th. YOU WILL PRESENT THESE IN CLASS (90 second presentations)!!!***

**Week Six: Tuesday, 02/07**

Lecture: World Board Presentations & Urgency to ALL of Your Characters — They're ALL PROTAGONISTS!

***Creative Assignment #5: Supporting Cast Bios & Character Map DUE Sunday, February 5th at NOON***

**Week Seven: Tuesday, 02/14**

Lecture: So Many Machines, but Only One Perfect One: How Do I Execute It Best?

***Creative Assignment #6: Monologues DUE BEFORE CLASS on Tuesday, February 21st. YOU WILL PERFORM THESE IN CLASS!***

**Week Eight: Tuesday, 02/21**

No Lecture: **Creative Assignment #7: Monologue Performances\***

***Creative Assignment #8: What Makes Your Characters Unforgettable? DUE Sunday, February 26th at NOON***

**Week Nine: Tuesday, 02/28**

Lecture: Putting It All Together: Your Characters, Your World and Your Plan

***Creative Assignment #9: First Draft of Character Bible DUE Sunday, March 5th at NOON***

**Week Ten: Tuesday, 03/07**

Individual Meetings & Next Steps

**Assignment: FINAL — Revised Character Bible with Write/Rewrite Plan DUE Tuesday, MARCH 14th at 1PM.**

**Assignments**

You will execute a total of NINE graded creative exercises prior to completing your FINAL, all that will lead you to develop deepened characters and a plan to rewrite your original work.

*Please save files as a PDF, and use your last name, first initial and the name of the assignment: LastNameFirst Initial\_Brainstorming.pdf*

**In-Class Discussions/Workshops**

By enrolling in this course, you agree to share your ideas and writings with the professor and other students in the class. You must acquire express written consent from any writer in the class should you wish to share his/her work with someone who is not enrolled in this course. Feedback is an essential part of the writing process. We must respect each other, our collaboration, and the work at hand. Be truthful, but sensitive when giving notes. Be prepared to solve problems instead of just pointing them out.

**Creative Subject Matter**

As this is a creative writing course, controversial subject matter may enter into the conversation. Students have the 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 for the remainder of that class without penalty. Inclusion of individuals from the class, or direct personal attacks on members of the class will not be tolerated in course material. If you feel you are being individually targeted by material written or discussed in class, please inform the instructor as soon as possible.

**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.

**Laptops/Cell Phones**

If your computer and the mind attached to it drift away from class, and I so much as suspect you of online activities not related to the task at hand, you will lose laptop privileges for the entire semester. Phones must be silenced and stowed.

### **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.

### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. 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>

### **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>

### **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>

### **Excused Absences**

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 <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/support-services/academic/Pages/absence-notification.aspx> 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.

### **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.

### **Students with Disabilities**

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

- Loop Campus – Lewis Center #1420 – (312) 362-8002
- Lincoln Park Campus – Student Center #370 – (773) 325-1677

Students who register with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact Dr. Gregory Moorehead, Director of the Center, privately to discuss how he may assist in facilitating the accommodations to be used in a course. This is best done early in the term. The conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible.

Please see <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx> for Services and Contact Information.