

DC 201-801 Introduction to Screenwriting

Winter 2013 | Wednesday 6pm – 9:15pm | Levan 305

Instructor: James Choi
Office: Levan 305
Office Hours: By appointment or Levan 305 Wed 4:30pm – 6:00pm
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Course Description:

This course is an introduction to and overview of selecting and developing story concepts, developing an outline and writing a short film screenplay. Emphasis is placed on proper screenplay formatting, character development, effective use of conflict and adherence to three act structure. The cornerstone for this class is the “writer’s workshop.” Each week, writers’ work will be read and given constructive analysis to help each writer reach a solid short script screenplay that showcases his or her unique voice.

Goals For This Course:

By the end of this course you will have a fundamental understanding of the structure of a typical Three-Act screenplay. You will also be introduced to visual storytelling through the screenplay form and will see how key incidents, story progressions, conflict and resolution and character arcs affect a film. Ultimately you will utilize these concepts to complete an 8-12 page screenplay for a short film.

Text:

(Recommended Text) *The Screenplay* by Syd Field

(Recommended Text) *Story: Substance, Structure, Style and The Principles of Screenwriting* by Robert McKee

Grading:

Assignment 1: Initial 3 Pitches	5%
Assignment 2: 3 Act Structure Analysis	5%
Assignment 3: Outline	10%
Assignment 4: Character Bios	5%
Assignment 5: Opening Scene	15%
Assignment 6: Rough Draft	15%
Final Screenplay	25%
Attendance/Participation:	20%

A = 110-93, 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

Attendance – Attendance is mandatory. **Anyone who misses 2 classes will automatically drop a letter grade. Anyone who misses 4 classes will automatically fail.** If you have to miss class, contact me PRIOR to class time to discuss excusing the absence. Please email me at jchoi26@cdm.depaul.edu

Class Participation—Along with showing up, you are expected to join in class discussions, and critique other people's work. You will also be expected to apply everything we discuss in class to your work.

****Online Students:** Each lecture will be viewable online 45 minutes after the end of each class. Since you are not able to participate in class, you will be required to email me every week after viewing each lecture as confirmation of attendance. On days we are critiquing writers' work, you will be required to critique 4 class members' scripts from that day and via written submissions and upload it to colweb.

Requesting an incomplete grade:

An incomplete grade may only be assigned to a student if the student has experienced an extenuating circumstance near the end of the term, the student is in good standing in the class, and the request is made in advance. This being said it is solely up to the discretion of the instructor to grant an incomplete.

Assignments and Exercises – Class Work Assignments must be handed in on time. **I will accept late work but your grade for the late submission will automatically drop a letter.**

Written Assignments: Must be typed.

Critiques: Due to limited class time, some of the online students work will get a full review during class. If you'd like more feedback, arrange to discuss your work with me during my office hours or via email.

COLWEB—In an attempt to save some trees and cash, most assignments will be turned in via COLWEB. If you are unfamiliar with COLWEB please see me. In some cases, you must print and bring in an assignment. All announcements and assignment details will be posted on COLWEB.

Special Accommodations: If you have any special considerations please see me.

BACK UP YOUR WORK: Failure of computer software and or Hardware will not be accepted as an extenuating circumstance for late projects or incomplete grades so back up your work daily.

Examinations – Students who do not take exams during the regularly scheduled time will receive a failing grade for the exam unless they have contacted the instructor in advance to arrange for a make-up exam. Make-up exams will be administered by the College according to its make-up exam schedule.

Plagiarism – Plagiarism on assignments or cheating on exams are serious offenses and earn the student a failing grade for the class. Please read the Academic Integrity Policy (AIP) at: <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/>

Cell Phones—Use of cell phones in the class is prohibited. Please turn your phone off before entering class. Mistakes will happen (to me too), but repeated failure to turn your phone off will result in a lowered grade for the class. Absolutely no texting in class!

Course Lectures/Reading Assignments – The assigned readings offer an opportunity for independent learning that supplements the lectures. It is not my intention to overwhelm you with

reading, but rather to use the textbook as a way to support and reinforce the concepts we learn in class.

Content Changes – Depending on time factors, the assignments projected for the term may require slight alteration or rescheduling. I will contact you via email with any deviations from the syllabus. **Please ensure that mail sent to the email address that you provided to the school is readily accessible.**