

## DC 201 Introduction to Screenwriting

Spring 2014 | Monday/Wednesday 3:10pm – 4:40pm | CS&TC 228

Instructor: James Choi

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Office Hours: Monday 12pm – 1:30pm CS&TC 228 or by appointment

*\*April 11, 2014 Last to drop classes with no penalty*

*\*May 16, 2014 Last day to withdraw from SQ2014 classes*

This syllabus is subject to change

### Course Description:

This course is an introduction to and overview of the elements of theme, plot, character, and dialogue in dramatic writing for cinema. Emphasis is placed on telling a story in terms of action and the reality of characters. The difference between the literary and visual medium is explored through individual writing projects and group analysis. Development of synopsis and treatment for a short theatrical screen play: theme, plot, character, mise-en-scene and utilization of cinematic elements. PREREQUISITE(S): None.

### Course Objectives:

*By the end of the term students will:*

- demonstrate an understanding of the fundamentals of effective storytelling.
- demonstrate an understanding of the three act screenplay structure.
- write a complete short screenplay focusing on developing characters and creating tension.

### Learning Domain Description

DC 201, Introduction to Screenwriting is included in the Liberal Studies program as a course with credit in the Arts and Literature domain. Courses in the Arts and Literature domain ask students to extend their knowledge and experience of the arts by developing their critical and reflective abilities. In these courses, students interpret and analyze particular creative works, investigate the relations of form and meaning and through critical and/or creative activity to come to experience art with greater openness, insight, and enjoyment. These courses focus on works of literature, art, theatre, or music as such, though the process of analysis may also include social and cultural issues. Students who take course in this domain choose three courses from such choices as literature, the visual arts, media arts, music, and theater. No more than two courses can be chosen from one department or program.

### Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to explain, in well-written prose, what a work of art is about and/or how it was produced.
2. Students will be able to comment on the relationship between form and content in a work.
3. Students will be able to assess the formal aspects of their subject and put those qualities into words, using, when appropriate, specialized vocabulary employed in class and readings.

4. Students will be able to contextualize a work of art. They will be able to do so with respect to other works of art in terms of defining its place within a broader style or genre. They will also be able to contextualize a work of art in terms of contemporaneous aesthetic, social, or political concerns, discussing how these might shape the work's reception and how that reception

### **How learning Outcomes Will Be Met**

Students will critically analyze several successful award winning short films – along the way producing a short story outline, creating character bios, and writing 2 drafts of a short screenplay with a final 10 page screenplay.

### **Writing Expectations**

Students will be expected to complete a minimum of 15 pages of writing for this course.

### **How Writing Expectations Will Be Met**

Students will complete an outline and 2 drafts of a short screenplay along with a final 10 page screenplay.

### **Course Management**

This course is housed and managed on **COLWeb**. There, you will find each week's recorded lecture (available after 6PM on Mondays and Wednesdays), the required reading material, most of our assignments, and, as the semester progresses – your current grade.

### **Text:**

The Short Screenplay by Dan Gurskis	<b>ISBN-10:</b> 1598633384
The Writer's Journey by Christopher Vogler	<b>ISBN-10:</b> 193290736X
The Screenplay by Syd Field	<b>ISBN-10:</b> 0385339038

### **Software:**

Celtx screenwriting program – desktop version – free for mac and pc  
Word Processing program (MS Word, Pages, etc)

### **Grading:**

Assignment 1: 3 Loglines	5%
Assignment 2: 3 Act Structure Analyses	10%
Assignment 3: Script Outline	10%
Assignment 3: Character Bios	5%
Assignment 5: Opening Scenes	10%
Assignment 6: Rough Draft	10%
<b>Final Screenplay due 6/9</b>	<b>30%</b>
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. An absence is defined as not showing up for class, or arriving more than 15 minutes late, or missing any 15-minute period during class time. I take attendance every class. If you arrive less than 15 minutes late, and do not hear your name called, make sure you let me know you are present so I do not mark you absent. **Anyone who misses 5 classes will not receive 20% for participation and attendance.** 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. Remember, this is your class, you will get out of it what you put in it. **Also, be advised that many of the assignments that you write for this class, will be read aloud.** My intention is not to embarrass anyone, but rather, have a fostering and openly creative environment where people are comfortable sharing their work.

**Assignments and Exercises** – Class Work Assignments must be handed in on time. **Late work will not be accepted.**

**Written Assignments:** Must be typed.

**Critiques:** Due to limited class time, not everyone's 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.

**COLWEB**-In an attempt to save some trees and cash, all 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. I will indicate in class how each assignment must be turned into 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.

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

**Electronic devices**—Use of cell phones/laptops/tablets in the class is prohibited. Please turn your phone off before entering class.

**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.

**Course Lectures** – This course has a joint online section. All lectures will be recorded and available on the course home page on COLWEB under the lectures tab.

**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.

## **Schedule for the Class (Subject to Change)**

### **Class 1**

*Monday, March 31*

Introduction to class and syllabus

Lecture: Loglines

### **Class 2**

*Wednesday, April 2*

[Loglines Due](#)

Read loglines and choose which story you will develop for your short screenplay

### **Class 3**

*Monday, April 7*

Lecture: Three Act Structure

### **Class 4**

*Wednesday, April 9*

[3 Act Structure Analyses Due](#)

Lecture: Outline/Treatment

### **Class 5**

*Monday, April 14*

Lecture: Character Development

### **Class 6**

*Wednesday, April 16*

[Character Bios Due](#)

Lecture: Formatting

### **Class 7**

*Monday, April 21*

[Outline Due](#)

Presentation/Discussion of Outlines

### **Class 8**

*Wednesday, April 23*

Presentation/Discussion of Outlines

### **Class 9**

*Monday, April 28*

Presentation/Discussion of Outlines

### **Class 10**

*Wednesday, April 30*

Lecture: Opening and endings

**Class 11**

Monday, May 5

[Opening Scene Due](#)

Presentation/Discussion of Opening Scenes

**Class 12**

Wednesday, May 7

Presentation/Discussion of Opening Scenes

**Class 13**

Monday, May 12

Presentation/Discussion of Opening Scenes

**Class 14**

Wednesday, May 14

Lecture: Scene development and dialogue

**Class 15**

Monday, May 19

[Rough Draft Due](#)

Presentation/Discussion of Rough Draft

**Class 16**

Wednesday, May 21

Presentation/Discussion of Rough Draft

**Class 17**

Monday, May 26

Presentation/Discussion of Rough Draft

**Class 18**

Wednesday, May 28

Presentation/Discussion of Rough Draft

**Class 19**

Monday, June 2

Lecture: Rewriting

**Class 20**

Wednesday, June 4

Individual Meetings

**Final**

Monday, June 9 – 2:45pm – 5:00pm

**\*\*Final Script Due\*\***

## **Course Policies (from the university)**

### **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.

### **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 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: [cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment](http://cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment).

### **Excused Absence**

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 <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/dos/forms.html>. 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.

### **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](mailto:csd@depaul.edu).

Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.

Phone number: (312)362-8002

Fax: (312)362-6544

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