

DePaul University
School of Cinema and Interactive Media

DC 304/405 Topics in Screenwriting: Adaptation

Winter 2014

W 1:30PM-4:45 PM, CDM 228, Loop Campus

Professor Brad Riddell: briddell@cim.depaul.edu, 312-362-5212

Office Hours: T 3:30-5, W 11:30-1 in CDM 521 and by appointment

Course Description:

This course will introduce students to the concepts and processes behind adapting existing works into screenplays for film and television.

Objectives:

- Students will comparatively analyze source material and adapted screenplays to observe the techniques and choices required for a successful adaptation.
- Students will learn to negotiate the public domain when searching for material to adapt, as well as key steps toward acquiring copyrighted material.
- Students will engage in adapting public domain source material for the screen, choosing between feature film or television for their material.

Outcomes:

- Graduate students will complete a treatment for a long-form adaptation (feature screenplay, significant teleplay), as well as 45 pages of the script.
- Undergraduate students will complete a treatment for a long-form adaptation (feature screenplay, significant teleplay), as well as 30 pages of the script.
- Students will identify a copyrighted work that they could reasonably acquire, and present a query letter and plan for acquiring and adapting that material.

Textbooks and Printed Resources:

Required text: The Art of Adaptation: Turning Fact and Fiction into Film by Linda Seger. ISBN: 0-8050-1626-0. The Instructor will provide additional readings.

Course Management:

This course is housed and managed on **D2L**. Additional reading content, lecture slides, attendance records, grades, discussion boards, and dropboxes can be found there, as well as video-recorded lectures and discussions.

Assignments:

The class will break into two groups: A and B. This is to minimize the reading load and to make sure everyone receives an equal amount of feedback. Assignments are to be submitted to D2L on MONDAYS by NOON.

Students are expected to have read and annotated the work submitted by their classmates each week BEFORE class, in addition to the assigned course reading.

Grading:

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

Loglines = 10 points

One sheet = 10 points

Development doc = 10 points

Pitch = 10 points

Look book = 10 points

Treatment = 20 points

Copyrighted Material Query Letter / Adaptation Plan = 10 points

Final = 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 in some respect, F is substantially unsatisfactory work.

Schedule:

Each session may include a lecture, screening, or guest speaker in addition to the workshop.

CLASS 1, JANUARY 7: Course introduction. Discussion of adaptation in general and an introduction to the public domain. Student backgrounds and interests.

Due Monday Jan. 12: Everyone delivers three Loglines for potential long-form public domain adaptations. *Short Works are recommended unless the writer is very familiar with the work.* Read Intro & Part 1 of Seger's book before class.

CLASS 2, JANUARY 14: Discuss reading, project selection, material challenges, and review everyone's Loglines for project selection.

Due Monday Jan. 19: Project selected. One Sheet and Development Doc due for Group A. Group A will make 5-minute Pitches in class on Weds. Read *Argo* original article and screenplay before class.

CLASS 3, JANUARY 21: Discuss story breaking, expansion and contraction. Discuss *Argo*. Group A pitches, discuss One Sheet and Development Doc.

Due Monday Jan. 26: One sheet, Development Doc due for Group B. Group B will make 5-minute long-form adaptation pitches in class on Weds. Read Part 2 of Seger Book before class.

CLASS 4, JANUARY 28: Discuss tightening, eliminating, and combining. Also treatment/outlines. Discuss Seger Book Part 2. Group B pitches, discuss One Sheets and Development Doc.

Due Monday Feb. 2: Group A Treatment and Look Book due. Read *Fantastic Mr. Fox* original story and screenplay before class.

CLASS 5, FEBRUARY 4: Discuss "Key Scenes." Discuss *Mr. Fox*. Discuss Group A Treatments and Look Books.

Due Monday Feb. 9: Group B Treatment and Look Book due. Read *Back Where She Came From* and *The Ceiling Leak* adaptations.

CLASS 6, FEBRUARY 11: Discuss making the second original, and why you shouldn't be too faithful. Discuss reading. Discuss Group B Treatments and Look Books.

Due Monday Feb. 16: Group A submits first 20 pages. Read Seger Book Part 3.

CLASS 7, FEBRUARY 18: Discuss acquiring copyrighted material. Review A Pages.

Due Monday Feb 23: Group B submits first 15 pages.

CLASS 8, FEBRUARY 25: Review B Pages, Guest Speaker

Due Monday March 2: Group A submits next 20 pages.

CLASS 9, MARCH 4: Review A Pages, Guest Speaker

Due Monday March 9: Group B submits next 15 pages.

CLASS 10, MARCH 11: Review B Pages, Guest Speaker

FINAL DUE on Weds MARCH 18, on D2L by 5:00 PM: Finished, revised pages (30 undergrad, 45 grad), query letter and plan for copyrighted material.

Laptops/Cell Phones:

Laptops may remain open during lectures discussions. If the instructor suspects you are using the laptop for applications not related to participating in class, you may lose laptop privileges.

Attitude

A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Measurable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitude include but are not limited to: talking to others when the instructor is speaking, mocking another's opinion, cell phones ringing, emailing, texting or using the internet whether on a phone or computer. If any issues arise a student may be asked to leave the classroom. The professor will work with the Dean of Students Office to navigate such student issues.

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.

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. But know this: plagiarism will earn you an immediate F in this course and possible expulsion.

Alterations:

The professor reserves the right to alter the syllabus at any time. Students will be apprised of any and all changes with clear instructions should they occur.

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.

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
TTY: (773)325.7296

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.