

## DC 101-502 Screenwriting for Majors

Winter 2016 | Monday and Wednesday 11:50pm – 1:20pm | 14EAST 801

Instructor: James Choi

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Office Hours: Monday / Wednesday 1:30pm – 5:30pm in CDM Room 515 or by appointment

*\*\*This syllabus is subject to change*

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### Course Description

This course introduces digital cinema majors to dramatic writing for motion pictures. The topics covered include theme, plot, story structure, character, and dialogue. Emphasis is placed on telling a story in visual terms. Students are expected to develop and write a short screenplay.

PREREQUISITE(S): None

### Course Objectives

*By the end of the term students will:*

- Demonstrate an understanding of the fundamentals of effective storytelling for film.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the three act screenplay structure.
- Write a short screenplay focusing on developed characters and creating conflict.

### Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to explain, in well-written prose, what a screenplay 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 screenplay. 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 might differ amongst various peoples and historical periods.

### 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 a rough draft of a short screenplay with a **FINAL DRAFT of a 8-10 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 8-10 page screenplay.

## Course Management

This course is housed and managed on **D2L**. There, you will find each week's assignments, and, as the semester progresses – your current grade.

## Text

The Short Screenplay by Dan Gurskis  
Screenwriting 101 by Film Crit Hulk!

## Software needed to complete assignments

Celtx Screenwriting Program

\*Final Draft Screenwriting Program

[Writer Duet Screenwriting Program \(will be using in class\)](#)

## Laptops/Cell Phones

Use of cell phones in the class is prohibited. Please turn your phone off before entering class.  
**NO TEXTING!**

## Alterations

Depending on time factors, the assignments projected for the term may require 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.

## Grading

Assignment #1: 3 Loglines	5%
Assignment #2: 3 Act Structure Analysis	5%
Assignment #3: Script Outline	10%
Assignment #4: Character Bios	5%
Assignment #5: Opening Scenes	10%
Assignment #6: Pages 1-2	10%
Assignment #7: Pages 3-6	10%
<b>Final Screenplay (8-10 pages)</b>	<b>30%</b>
Attendance/Participation	15%

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

## Standards for Achievement

Grade A:

Student performs in an outstanding way. Student exhibits achievement and craftsmanship in all work. Student exhibits commitment to expanding ideas, vocabulary and performance.

Grade B:

Student performs beyond the requirement of the project. Student exhibits above average progress and craftsmanship. Student exhibits above average interest in expanding idea, vocabulary, and performance.

#### Grade C:

Criteria of assignment is met, and all requirements are fulfilled. Student shows average quality work and minimum time and effort on projects. Student shows moderate interest.

#### Grade D:

Student performance is uneven and below average. Requirements for projects are only partially fulfilled. Minimal interest is shown and attendance, participation and involvement are inadequate.

#### Grade F:

Student fails to meet minimum course requirements and shows no interest. Levels of participation and craftsmanship are extremely poor. Student's attendance is inadequate.

#### **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. **Anyone who misses 5 classes will not receive 15% for participation and attendance.** If you have to miss class contact me *PIOR* to class time to discuss the circumstances. No exceptions. You can email me at [jchoi26@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:jchoi26@cdm.depaul.edu)

#### **Class Participation**

Along with showing up, you are expected to join in class discussions and critique other people's work. Also be advised that many of the assignments that you write for in this class, will be read aloud. This class is an openly creative environment where people should be comfortable sharing work and be open to constructive feedback from their peers.

#### **Assignments and Exercises**

Class work assignments must be handed in on time. All assignments will be turned in via D2L. **Late work will not be accepted.**

#### **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.

#### **CLASS SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)**

##### Class 1 – 1/4

Introduction to class and syllabus

##### Class 2 – 1/6

Lecture: Loglines and story

##### Class 3 – 1/11

**Loglines due**

Review loglines

Class 4 – 1/13  
Review Loglines

Class 5 – 1/20  
Review Loglines  
Lecture: Structure  
Assignment: 3 Act Structure Analyses

Class 6 – 1/25  
**3 Act Structure Analyses due**  
Lecture: Watch shorts and discuss structure further

Class 7 – 1/27  
Lecture: watch shorts and discuss structure further and Outline/Treatment  
Review Sample Outlines  
Assignment: Outline for shorts

Class 8 – 2/1  
**Outlines due**  
Workshop Outlines

Class 9 – 2/3  
Workshop outlines  
Lecture: Characters

Class 10 – 2/8  
**Character Bios due**  
Workshop Outlines  
Lecture: Formatting/Openings

Class 11 – 2/10  
Lecture: Formatting/Openings  
Assignment: Opening Scenes from Sample Outline

Class 12 – 2/15  
**Opening Scenes Due**  
Workshop Opening Scenes

Class 13 – 2/17  
Opening Scene due  
Workshop Opening Scenes

Class 14 – 2/22  
**Pages 1-3 Due**  
Workshop Pages 1-2

Class 15 – 2/24  
Workshop Pages 1-2  
Assignment: Pages 3-6

Class 16 – 2/29

**Pages 3-6 Due**

Workshop 3-6

Class 17 – 3/2

Workshop Pages 3-6

Class 18 – 3/7

Workshop Pages 3-6

Class 19 – 3/9

Lecture: Rewriting

**\*\*FINAL – 3/14 – 11:30pm – 1:45pm\*\***

### **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.

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